

# Academics at the Science-Policy interface: Minding the Gap

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Translating academic research to policy and practice is primarily a challenge in bridging the ‘know-do’ gap at the interface of science and public policy. In the Philippines and Cambodia for example, the government and other funding agencies demand tangible value for money and impact on policy and practice from academics. Researchers are often frustrated with the failure of their science to reach the public consciousness and their evidence to influence policy. Thus, partnership beyond academia through public engagement is recently recognized by academics to mind this gap. Research directors and administrators must also understand the need to capacitate researchers in public engagement. Accordingly, program initiatives like the ASEAN Science and Technology Fellowship are both timely and relevant. Such a program provides the opportunity for early- and mid-career scientists from ASEAN Member States to immerse themselves in a new environment and capacitate them with skills to face public policy challenges. These fellows are embedded inline ministries or other agencies within their home countries for a year. The following are some of the reflections of the author is both an academic and an ASEAN Science and Technology fellow. Academics will face major challenges at the science-policy interface, unless understood, will result in such initiative with limited impact. Context is also everything, and program managers should embrace uncertainty and nurture the diversity of approaches fellows use to engage the public and their ministries. Likewise, researchers need openness and intellectual humility to learn from citizens and policymakers, and acknowledge that scientific evidence is just one of the many factors shaping policy and practice.

Keywords: science-policy interface, public engagement, ASEAN