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KTT & INTEGRATION FOR SWEET – MEETING III 2026



AGENDA

13:00	Welcome and Introduction
13:25	PART I – Writing a Policy Brief: Challenges and Learnings
13:55	PART II – Communicating research for political stakeholders
14:40	<i>Coffee Break</i>
14:55	PART III – Experiences and tips from parliament with Katharina Blaurock and Simon Buri
15:40	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:50	PART IV – Engagement and Dissemination Plan
16:40	Wrap-up



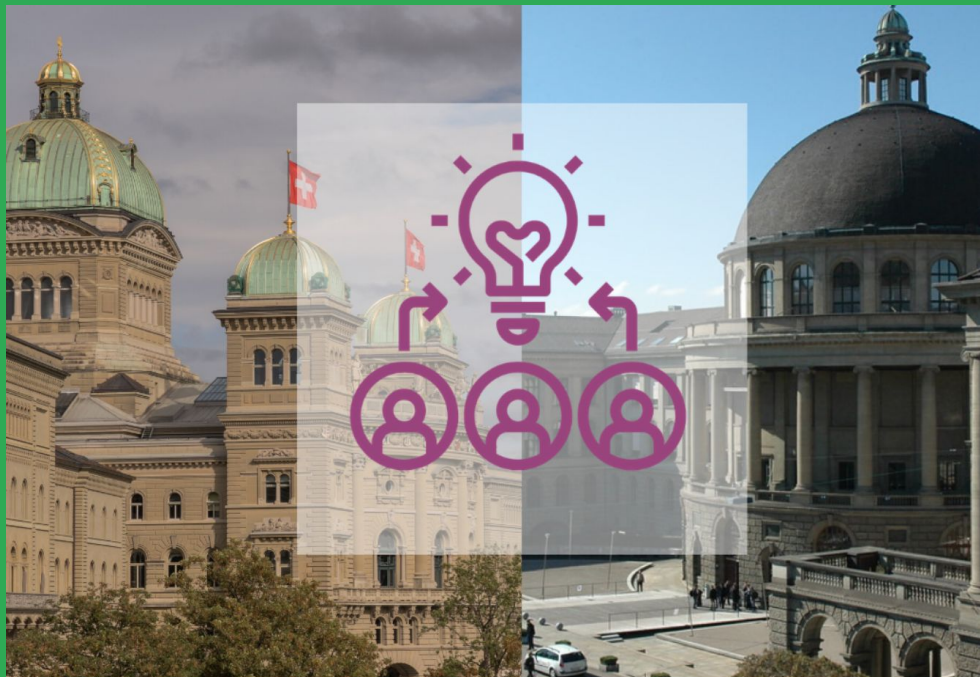
Reatch

Policy Brief Workshop

SWEET

08 Oktober 2026 | Reatch

Learning goals



- You understand the fundamental **roles of science and politics** and can reflect on your **personal role**.
- You know the basics of the **Swiss political system** and **develop a practical understanding** of it.
- You know **where, when and how you can contribute** effectively to the political process.
- You understand **what a policy brief is** and are able to write one within your own field of expertise when appropriate.

Programme

13:10-13:25	Welcome and Introduction		
13:25-13:55	Writing a Policy Brief: Challenges and Learnings Hannah Schoch		
13:55-14:40	Communicating research for political stakeholders Janik Mutter	Janik Mutter Reatch	Hannah Schoch Reatch
Break			
14:55-15:40	Experiences and tips from parliament Katharina Blaurock, Simon Buri		
Break			
15:50-16:40	Policy Brief: Engagement and Dissemination Plan Hannah Schoch		
16:40-17:00	Check-out		

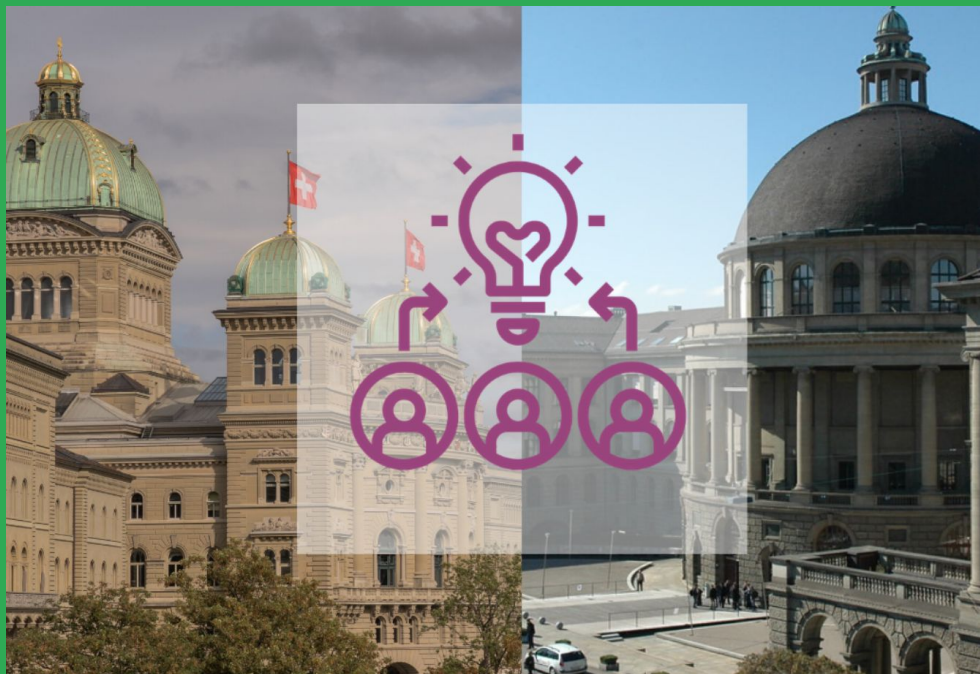


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Writing a Policy Brief: Challenges and Learnings

Hannah Schoch, Reatch

Plenary: Flashlight



→ What was for you personally one of the **biggest challenges** or **most interesting learnings/insights** in writing the policy brief?

Some consolidated learnings

- **Focus:**
 - Specificity of target audience: Who can do what?
 - 1 policy brief solves 1 problem
- **Connect to a policy need:**
 - What is the *specific* problem you want to support *policy makers* in solving?
 - What are the policy considerations/discussions that this is relevant for?
- **Messaging:**
 - Compelling logic of argumentation from evidence to recommendation: What do the policy-makers need to know for a better informed decision?
 - Rather than normative claims and demands, formulate options and actionable insights: 'to achieve x, y could be a solution because of z research findings'
- **Significant Challenge:**
 - Project/research life cycle versus policy cycle

EDGE

- target audience with problem that is very specific for them to solve
- clarity of structure (titles already tell the story)
- reference example

REMINDER: A PB is only one option for sharing scientific evidence with policymakers and other modes of engagement might be better



Workshops and Meetings: direct and personal contact and exchange with policy makers, builds network and trust

Project Reporting: report on project results/activities, often the case for departmental research, allows direct dialogue

Working Groups, Commissions, etc: network with other experts, often mandated with concrete tasks by politics

White Paper: comprehensive report, includes analysis, background information and detailed presentation of solutions

Policy Brief: tool to suggest policy recommendations on the basis of research findings, its value lies in its conciseness and brevity

Public Consultation: evidence sharing using the most institutionalised way

Canvas: Audience and messaging

Part 1: Target Audience and Key Message

- Briefly note down your own target audience and key message on the canvas.
- Read your neighbour's policy: What do you think their key message and target audience are?

3' individual work

**4' read your
neighbour's policy brief**

8' group discussion



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Communicating Science to Political Stakeholders

Janik Mutter, Reatch

Reminder: Knowledge and technology transfer in general

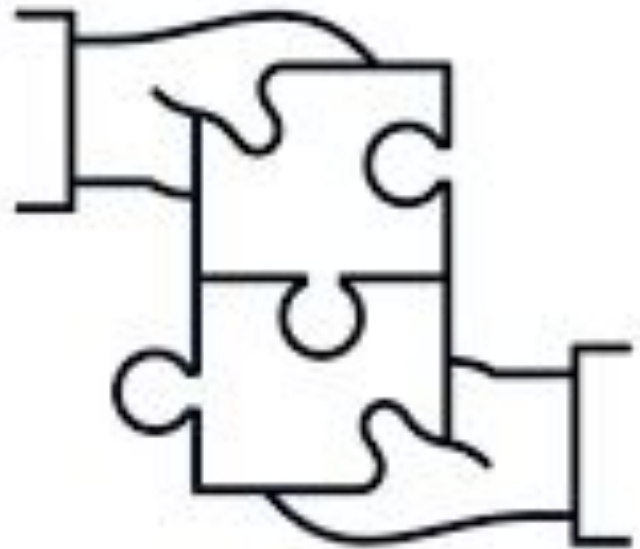
«We need to speak for the facts because the facts don't speak for themselves.»

supply-side model of science communication works only sometimes

- idea that getting the knowledge out in the world is enough, however:
- most major publicly known scientific breakthroughs **reach the public through social discourses** (and thus in political, religious, societal, economic etc. contexts) and **with respective framings**

Experts in democracies (Lisa Herzog)

How can expertise be brought into democratic politics without undermining democratic values?



→ **Partnership Model** (in functioning democracies): **Trust** is fundamental. The **interaction** between expert groups and democratic politics must be approached **consciously, with respect and care**.

But how to speak for the facts and getting heard? (Silvia Maier)

« Whether communication is successful or not is determined by the recipient

— not the sender.»

«Who gets heard?» ≠ «Who gets to say something»

- favorite move of academics: «We just have to argue our cause better, then they will surely understand»
- academics like to lecture, what implies authority, but also creates a power imbalance (power conscious audience)
 - **creating a dialogue on eye level** can help with both
 - **curiosity and appreciation** for the position, role and perspective of the other side is really productive

Perception is an active process (Silvia Maier)

People hear what is relevant to them! Constructivist view of reality & «active inference»

- We perceive information always in the context of what we know & what we expect
- at any given moment, we think in «action plans» based on what we need to do next

Ask yourself:

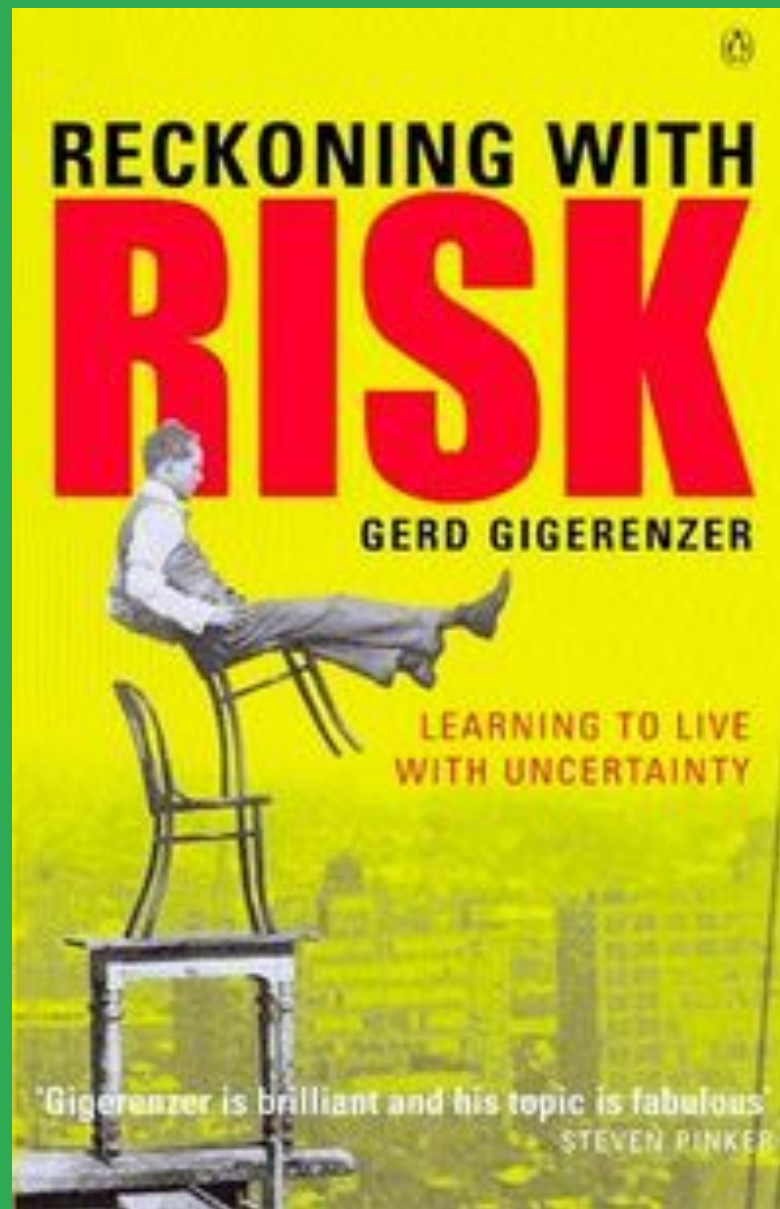
- What does the other person **need to know**?
- How does it **matter to them**?
 - Relevant for their work (to make an informed decision) → Know **what decision(s) they need to take**
 - **Need to know vs. nice to know**
 - Know and take into account **current socio-political context, their values and beliefs**

You want to be heard? Be relevant - not prescriptive.

Logic of Argumentation

- **Policy objective / Existing commitment:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- **Problem:** Reserve power plants currently rely exclusively on fossil fuels
- **Evidence (in numbers if possible):** Renewable fuels are technically feasible and can provide climate benefits
- **Policy gap:** Current regulation does not require or incentivise the use of renewable fuels
- **Policy options:** Introduce / adapt law or ordinance
- **Recommendation:** Adapt the regulation to enable / require the use of renewable fuels; Specify the necessary regulatory changes

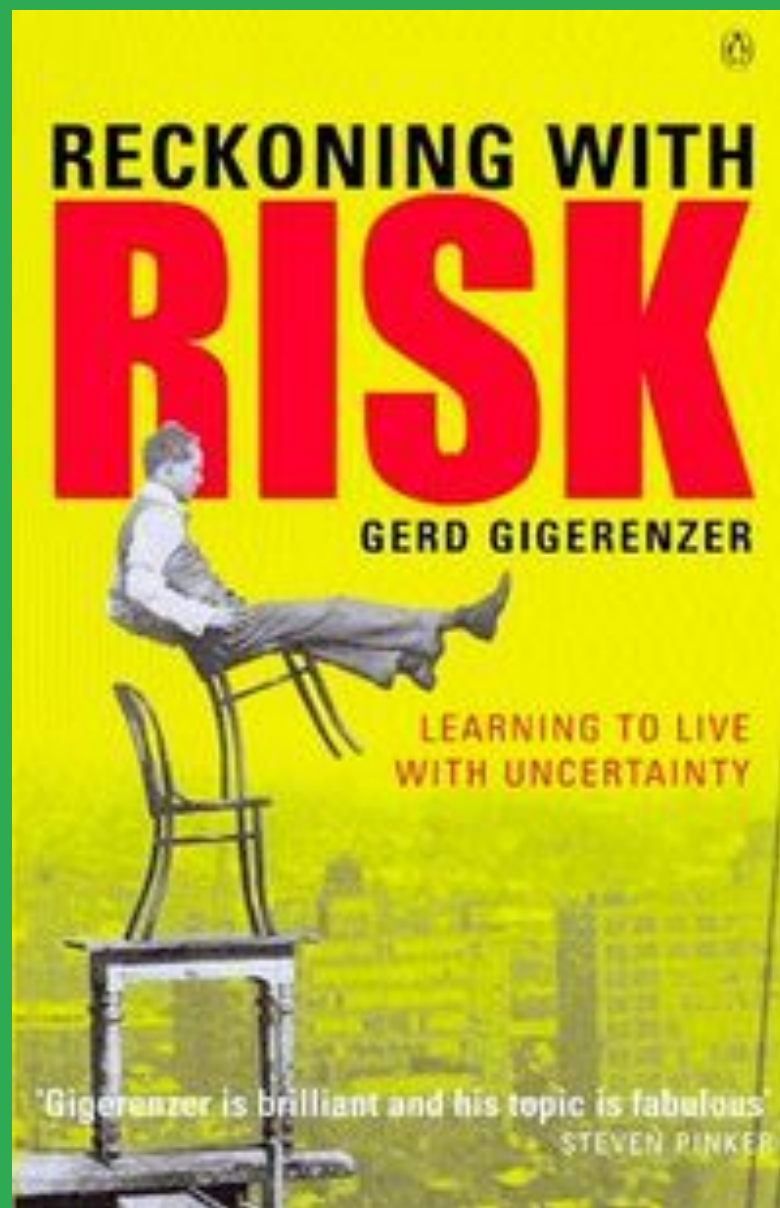
Strategies: the 4-W Rule (Gerd Gigerenzer)



To create trust, the other party needs to know:

- What do we **know**?
- What do we **not know**?
- What do we **do to know more**?
- What **can be done**? (within the framework of existing uncertainty)

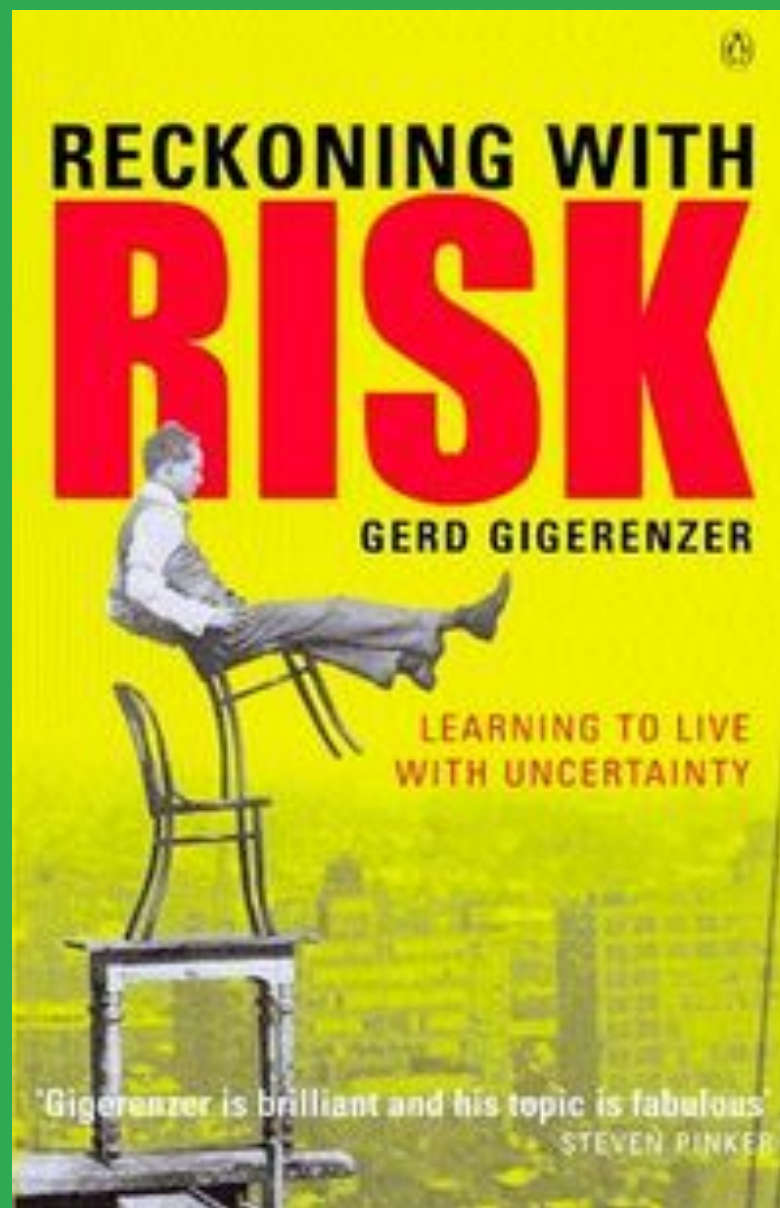
Strategies: Communicating risks (Gerd Gigerenzer)



Core principles for communicating risks:

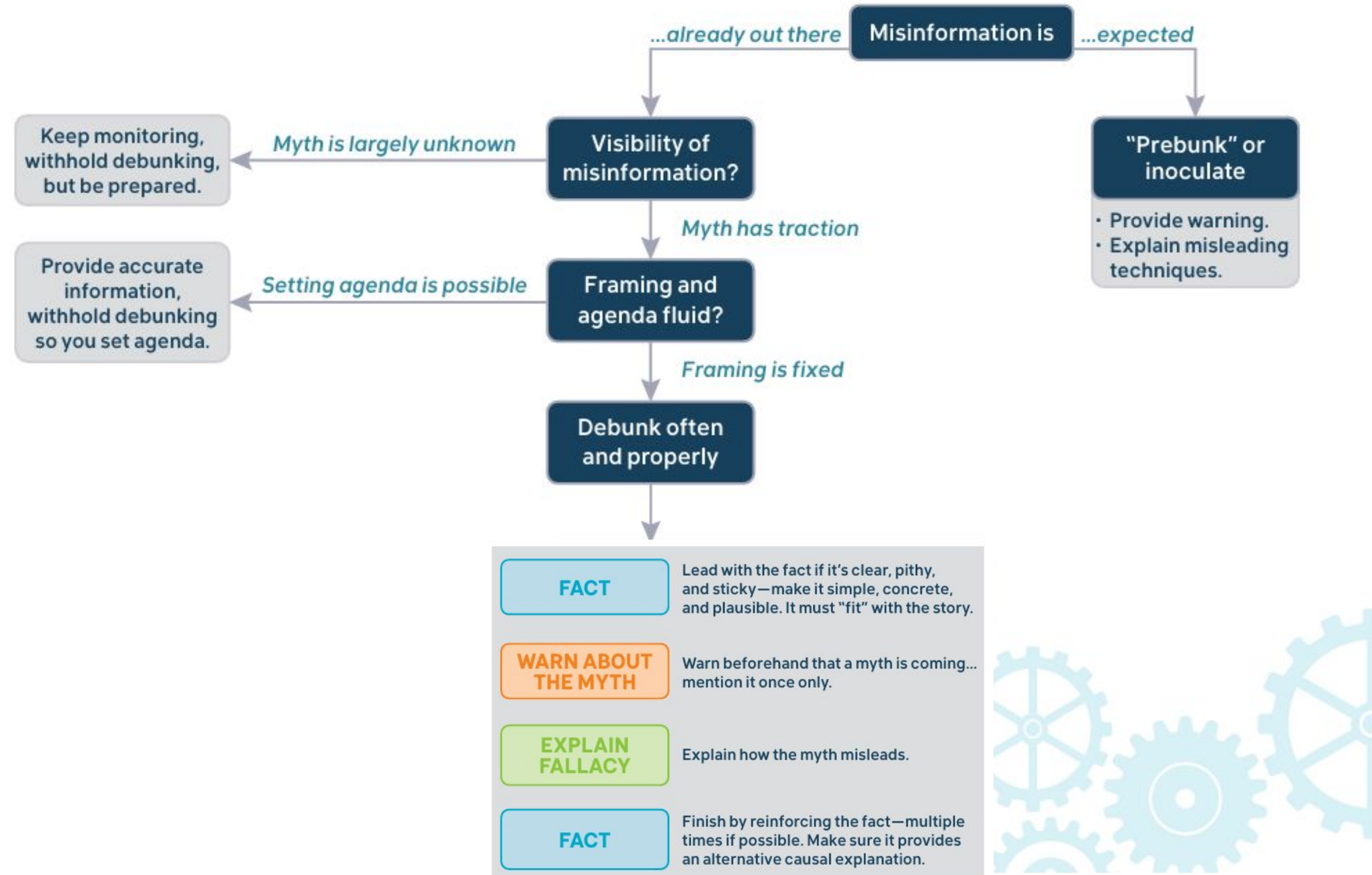
- Statistics are **not intuitive** – especially in complex situations
 - Shock risks are much more emotionally effective than duration/statistical risks (e.g. use of cars vs. airplanes)
- Clarity about **reference class** (percent of what?)
 - e.g., what does a 30% chance of rain mean
 - context and socialization play a crucial role in how reference classes are understood

Strategies: Communicating risks (Gerd Gigerenzer)

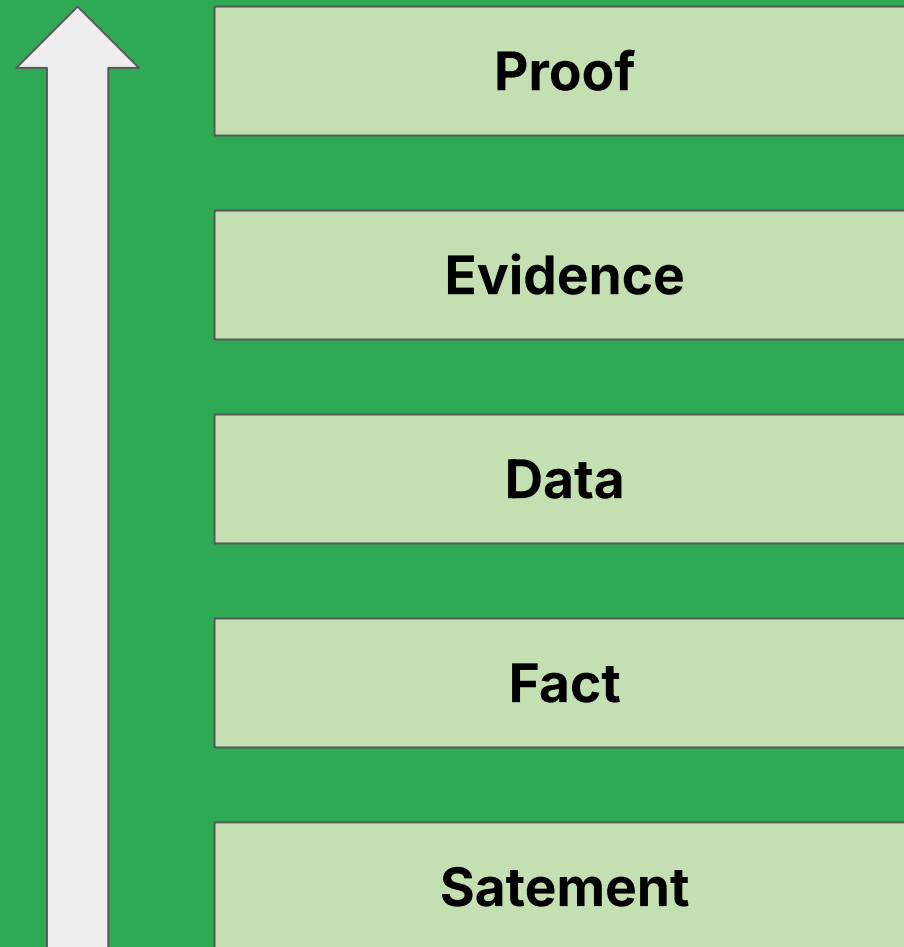


- Absolute and relative risks → **absolute risk often more relevant**
 - relative risk can be (deliberately) misused to emphasize efficacy or effect, or to minimize harm
- Avoid illusion of certainty, **communicate uncertainties clearly**
 - **loss of trust** when possibilities from the space of uncertainties become public (e.g. Covid vaccination is safe → side effects occur → loss of trust)

Strategies: Debunking myths

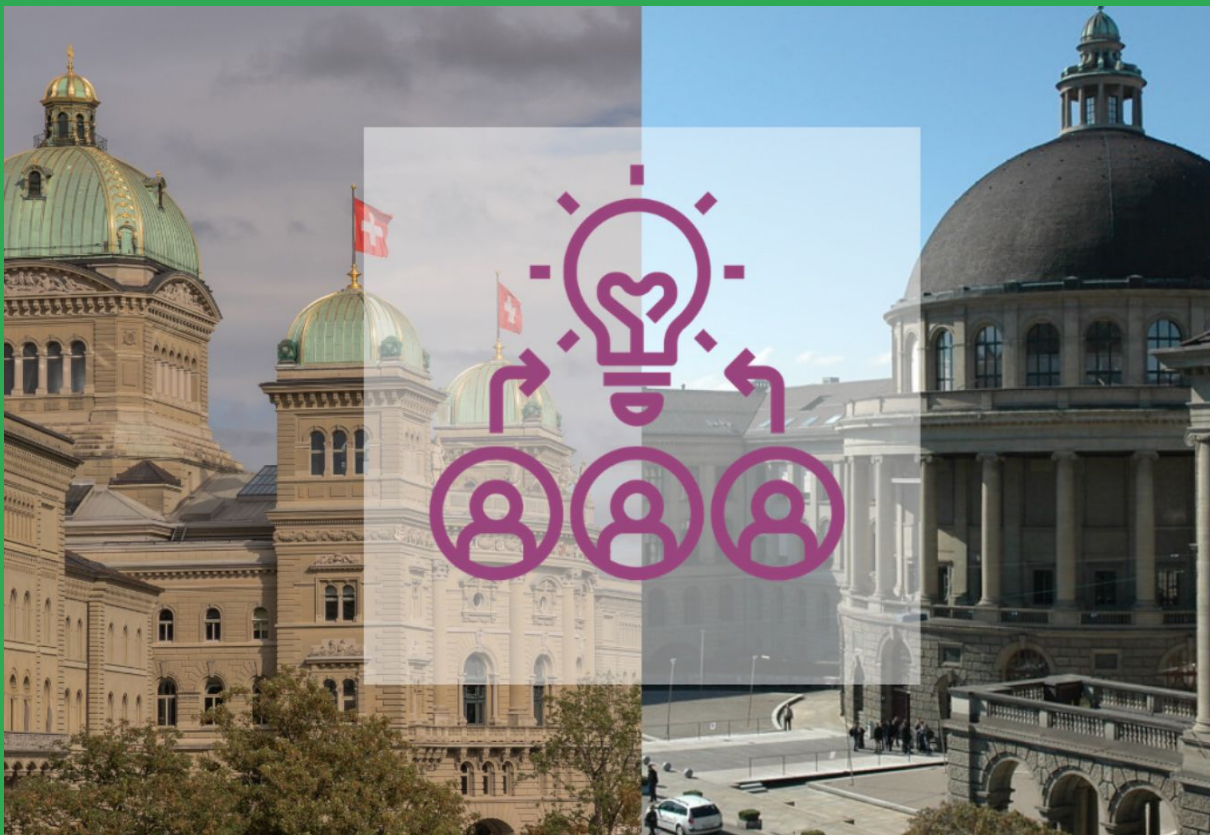


Strategies: Clarity about meaningfulness



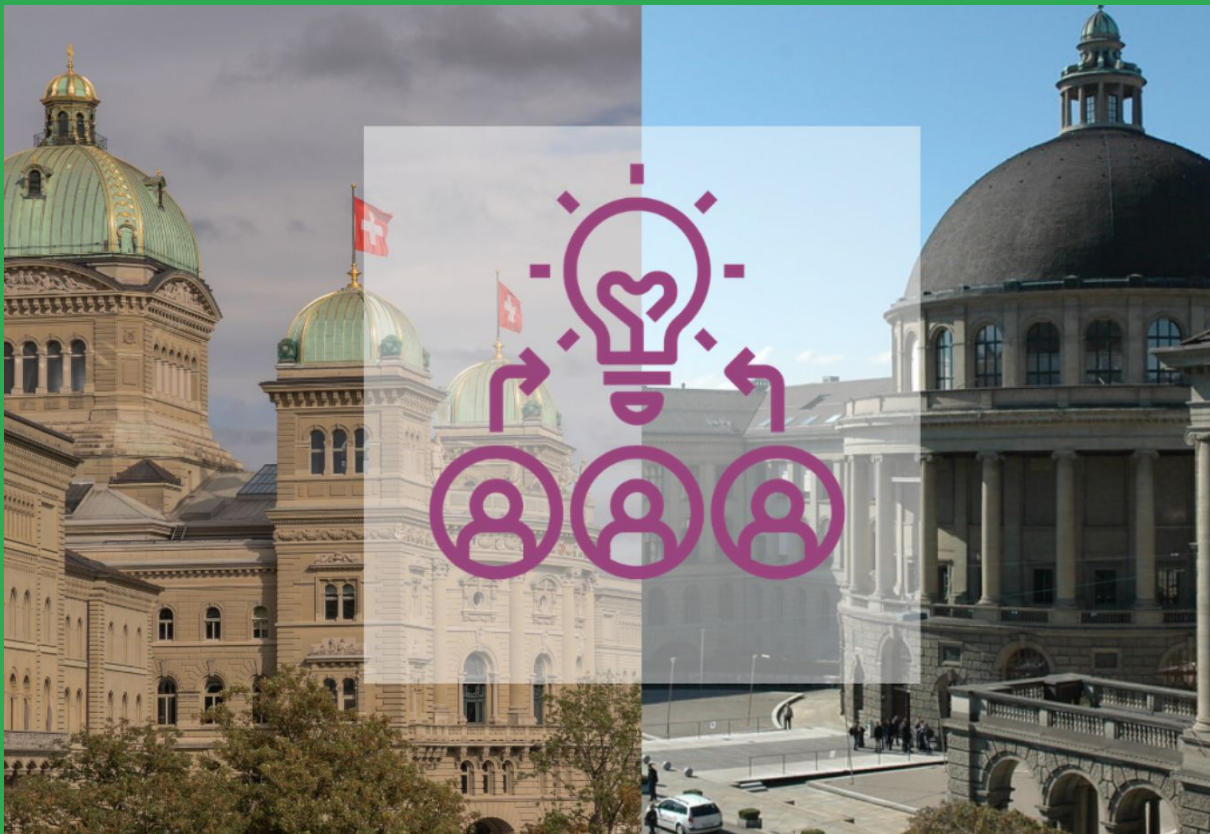
- **Evidence** is not **proof**: it may not be *universal* if it's in a different context. The Marshmallow Studies showed that kids who resist eating a marshmallow (to get two later) do better in life. But they focused on Stanford University children. Kids of less wealthy backgrounds may be better off eating whatever's in front of them, since it may not be there tomorrow.
- **Data** is not **evidence**: it may not be *conclusive* if it's correlation without causation. People who eat whole grains are less likely to have heart disease. But people who choose to eat whole grains may lead healthier lives in general, and this could be causing the lower heart disease, rather than whole grains being a superfood.
- A **fact** is not **data**: it may not be *representative* if it's selectively quoted. Apple is highly successful, and perhaps Apple did "start with why". But there could be tons of other companies who started with why and failed, so a single anecdote doesn't mean it's the secret to success.
- A **statement** is not **fact**: it may not be *accurate*. And even if the facts are 100% accurate, they may still be misleading due to the other three steps.

Core points



- Supply-side model often doesn't work
- Take particular care when **communicating risk/uncertainty**
- Pre-bunking and not just de-bunking
- Help your reader see meaningfulness, it is not just a given
- The **success of communication** (what can and needs to be taken up by the interlocutor) is **decided by the addressee**

Useful Resources



EU Starter Kit:

https://rea.ec.europa.eu/publications/sharing-scientific-evidence-policymakers_en

How to write a Policy Brief:

<https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/funding/resources-idrc-grantees/how-write-policy-brief>

IPCC Handbook on Communication:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2017/08/Climate-Outreach-IPCC-communications-handbook.pdf>

The Debunking Handbook:

<https://skepticalscience.com/debunking-handbook-2020-downloads-translations.html>

Verity Project: <https://verityproject.eu/>

Top Tips for Media Work:

<https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/SMC-Top-Tips-2015.pdf>

Public expert hearing in a parliamentary committee:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7a0pJ-VPjA>

Canvas: Audience and messaging

Part 1: Target Audience and Key Message

- Are there key players (individuals, sub-groups) in your target audience group who function as decision makers and/or amplifiers?
- What is the reason your target audience and particularly the identified key players will be interested in your policy brief?
- What would be the most effective moment for engagement?

15' individual work

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Break



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Experiences and Tips from Parliament

Katharina Blaurock, Parliamentary Services

Simon Buri, Grand Council of Berne



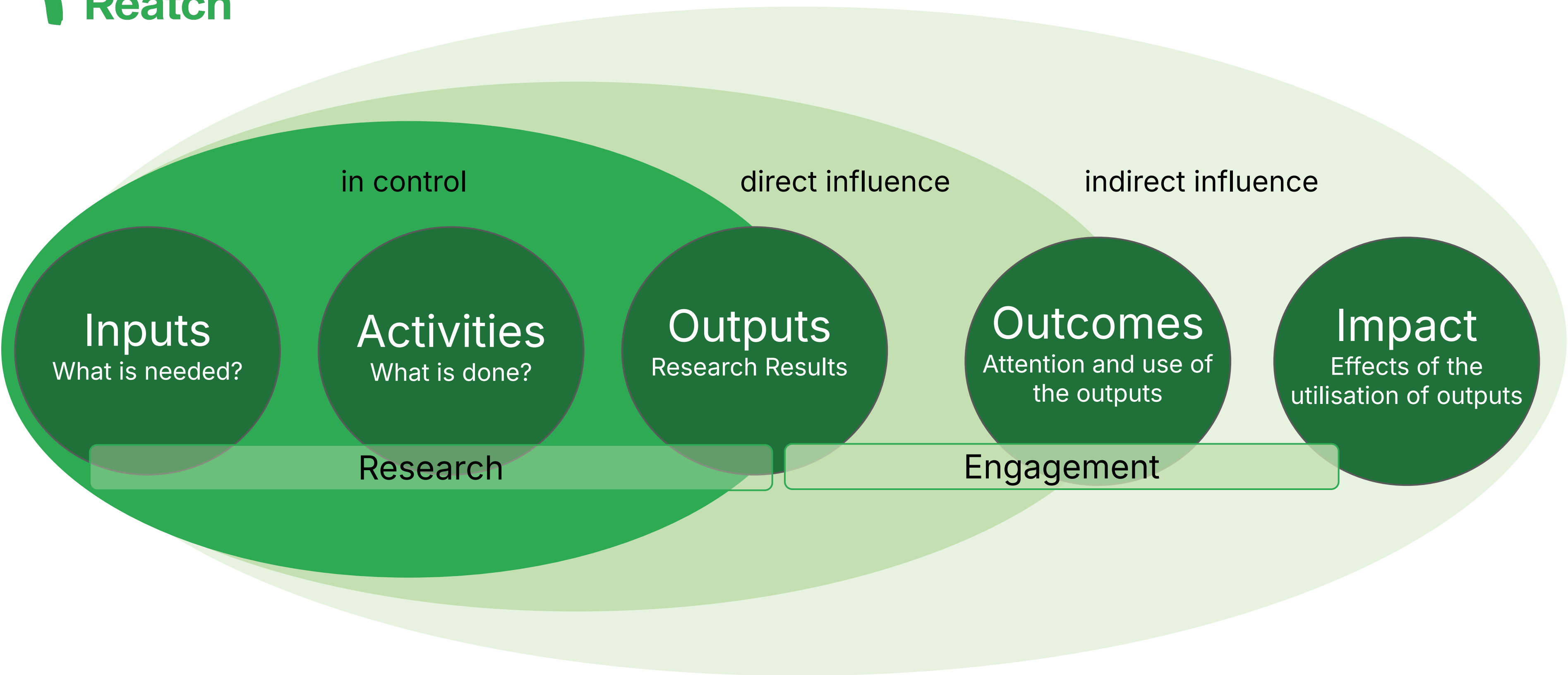
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Impact and Dissemination

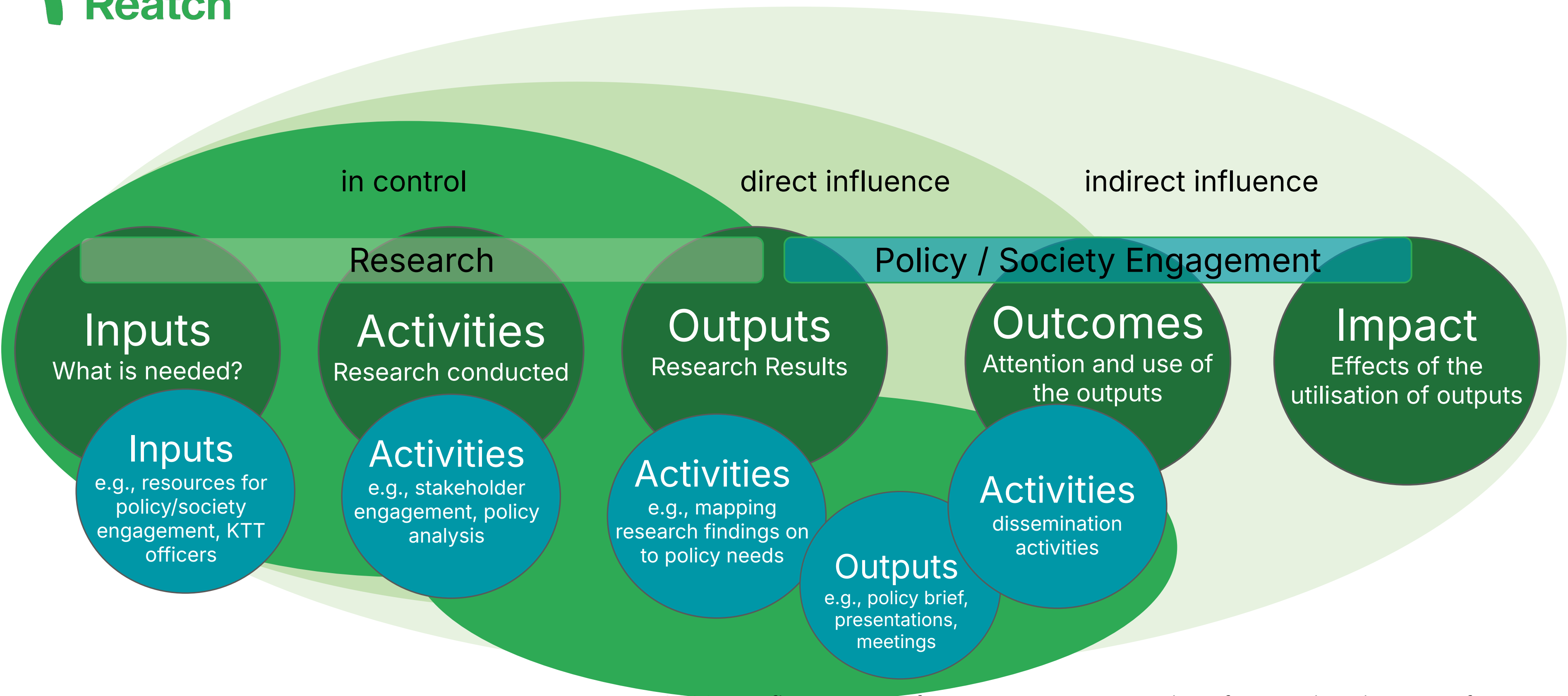
Hannah Schoch, Reatch

Impact readiness

- **Impact:** The observable changes caused by research findings in the world, e.g., socially, economically, culturally, environmentally
- Impact is usually **diverse but also diffuse**:
 - rarely easily quantifiable/attribution to individual research results
 - sometimes immediate, but often with a significant time delay
 - usually the result of accumulated research efforts or collective commitment over a longer period of time
- **Impact is difficult to plan or force**, but you can prepare and be prepared for it → **Readiness & appropriate planning** (including resources and capacity) in the individual project phases



Belcher et al., 2020, A refined method for theory-based evaluation of the societal impacts of research



Belcher et al., 2020, A refined method for theory-based evaluation of the societal impacts of research

Plan and proactively steer dissemination

7. Dissemination

Ensuring that the policy brief reaches **the right people at the right time.**

Important:

- **General channels** (social media, website, newsletter) with **low guarantees** that you will reach the intended audience
- **Targeted channels** for better impact, needs proper planning and resources:
 - **personalised e-mails;**
 - **intermediaries & collaborators** (thematic civil society actors, networks, fora, knowledge hubs);
 - Does someone **in your own network** have **direct contact** to a member of your audience?
 - **hand out** to accompany **presentations** or in **conversations**

Consider: People are more likely to engage if they consider the source as trustworthy/as likely to provide relevant information.

Canvas

Part 2: Dissemination and Engagement

- What are **FOUR forms of engagement (channels)** you can use to reach your target audience with your policy brief?
 - Do you have **stakeholders/allies who can help** with the dissemination?
 - What are potential **follow-up options** after the initial dissemination?
 - What are the **resources/preparatory work** needed?
 - **Rate** effectiveness and resource intensity.
- Who else needs to be informed on the publication of the policy brief?

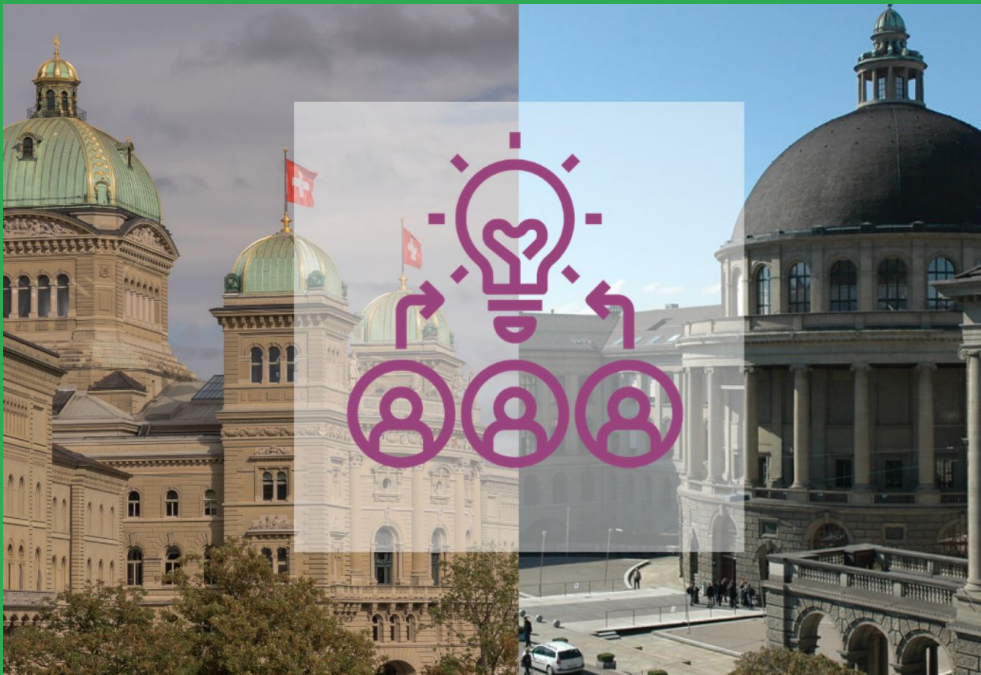
15' individual work

15' group discussion

10' plenary

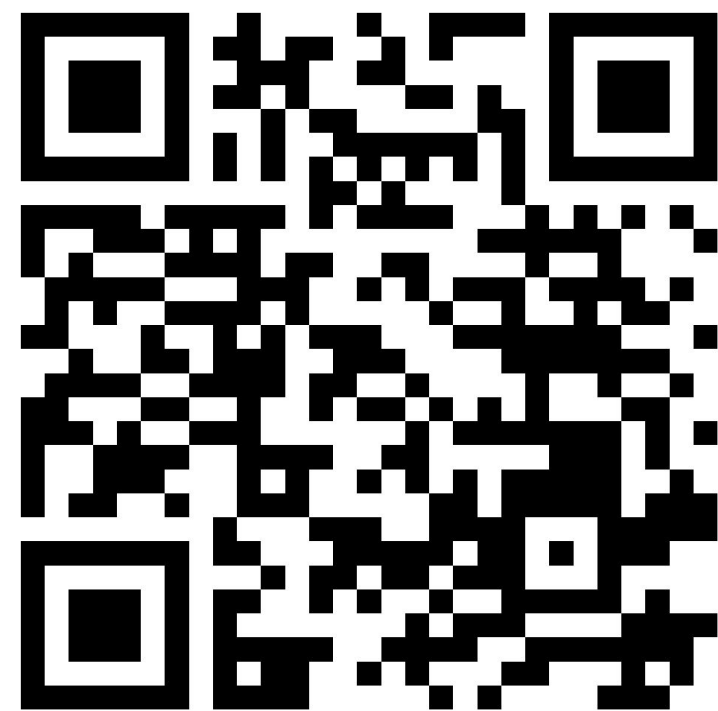
Plenary : Flashlight

→ What is one of your key learnings from today?



What else?

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Newsletter:



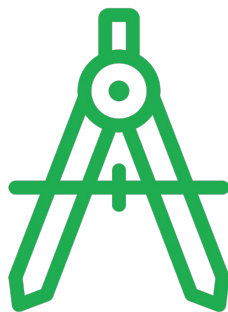
<https://reatch.ch/franxini>



Dialogue



Coaching



Further Education

Contact

Reatch

www.reatch.ch | info@reatch.ch

Janik Mutter | Head of Further Education Science-Policy

janik.mutter@reatch.ch | +49 176 7679 5280

Hannah Schoch | Board Member | Head of Programmes

hannah.schoch@reatch.ch | +41 79 679 37 04

Science and politics in dialogue for a democracy fit for the future.