

Abstract

Environmental issues are increasingly a global concern and have expanded in scale, scope and complexity. Informed policy decisions can mitigate or avoid environmental problems, but this requires effective integration of science into policy. This thesis examines factors which affect the integration of science into policy and ways to improve this process. The methodology included an extensive consideration of the literature, three case studies (sea level rise managed by Clarence City Council, the Derwent Estuary Program and the Shack Sites Project), an internet survey and key informant interviews.

The results indicate that the factors identified in the literature as affecting the integration of science into policy can be divided into two categories according to their influence in practice. Some of the factors (communication, recognition of constraints and respect for scientific information) were perceived to affect the integration of science into policy. However, other factors (role of scientists, timeframes and presentation of relevant information) were not perceived to affect the incorporation of science into policy in practice. The results also indicated that the most effective way to improve the process would be to increase face-to-face interactions between scientists and policymakers. Intermediaries were also shown to improve the integration of science into policy in many cases.