



The art of Influencing Policy Change

An executive training course

Venue: African Academy of Sciences,
Karen Campus, Miotoni Road, Karen,
Nairobi, Kenya

Date: 1st – 3rd July 2026



The Scinnovent Centre
SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

Course overview

The overall aim of research is to generate new knowledge, evidence or discoveries that lead to better lives and better futures. Whether in agriculture, health, engineering, economics and social sciences, the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life. Yet, despite the volumes of research outputs in form of scientific papers, technical reports, theses/dissertations and commissioned reports generated in our research centres – including universities, research institutes, and consulting agencies – the translation of the research findings into policy and development remains minimal.

There is increasing pressure on researchers to demonstrate the impact of their work beyond the traditional academic publications and patents. While it remains important to contribute to the global stock of knowledge, it no longer suffices to list publications as a justification for all the resources being invested in research.

This course addresses the following questions:

- How can researchers enhance the impact of their research/ findings in informing policy and practice?
- How can we bridge the gap between research and policy?
- What tools and approaches are available?
- What is the role of evidence in policymaking?
- How is this evidence obtained and articulated?
- How do you ensure active stakeholder engagement and participation?
- How do you achieve gender and inclusivity in policymaking?

Learning objective

To equip researchers and practitioners with the skills, tools and strategies to enhance the uptake and utilization of their findings for public policy and action.

Course structure

Hybrid (physical and virtual).



Scope of training

Influencing policy change can be a challenging and daunting task for researchers. In most cases, the researchers are ill-equipped with the skills and strategies for making their research findings bear on public policy and action. This training covers the following broad areas in detail:

- Definitions and concepts in policymaking and influence
- The policy process and the research – policy gap
- Jurisdictional rivalries and policy turf wars
- Role of evidence in policy
- Policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement
- Strategic communications and the role of the media in policymaking
- Gender and youth in policymaking.

Expected outcomes: How to design and write an effective policy brief

The emphasis is on “Policy instruments and tools of influence” with special reference to how to design and write an effective policy brief.

The aim is to equip participants with a step-by-step roadmap towards developing an effective policy brief and promote the uptake of their findings for policy advice and influence decision-making.

There will be special emphasis on how to design and write effective policy briefs from research and project reports. Participants will gain hands-on writing experience, peer critique and expert guidance. Templates and review guidelines will be presented and shared with participants.

Participants are required to bring actual research outputs such as published papers, research reports, theses/dissertations. These shall form the basis/materials from which they will develop policy briefs.

At the end of training, the participants will have developed actual publishable/print-ready policy briefs based on their publications, project reports or thesis/dissertations.



TRAINING OUTLINE

Pre-training capacity assessment

A pre-training capacity assessment will be conducted one week prior to the training. All participants are required to fill in and submit the assessment prior to the training. The pre-training assessment will provide baseline data for tracking and evaluating changes in learning and training effectiveness. As the training progresses and at the end of training, a similar assessment (alongside other evaluation tools) will be used to gauge changes in knowledge (awareness), understanding (competencies) and ability to apply (capabilities).

DAY ONE

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION, SCENE AND CONTEXT

Presentation 1: Definitions, terminologies and shared understanding

This plenary presentation and facilitated discussion seek to establish a shared and common understanding amongst the participants on the key principles and terminologies that they will meet during the course. It builds on the capacity assessment in the preceding session and ensures that all the trainees are 'on the same page' in so far as the language/ understanding of terms is concerned.

Exercise

Participants are encouraged to read the policy narrative titled "*Caught off-guard: Biosecurity preparedness, coordination and infrastructure*" presented in chapter 1 of the book "**Beyond Research: influencing policy and practice**". Participants should take 10 minutes to read the narrative and reflect on the questions below.

- What is the policy issue in this narrative?
- Why is it a policy issue?
- What changes are required to make things better? (legal, institutional, organizational, structural, capacity, etc.)
- Who is supposed to make these changes? In other words, whose immediate responsibility is it to effect the changes?
- How would you cause the changes to be effected? In other words, what tools, approaches and strategies would you apply to reach your goals?



Presentation 2: Bridging the research – policy gap

This presentation will explore the existence of the gap between research and policy and what researchers can do/should do to bridge the gap. It is intended to be an interactive presentation for about 30 minutes.

Individual exercise (in plenary): Referring to table 1 (chapter 7) in the book, participants discuss key policy definitions and how they apply in the narrative.

Tea/coffee break

Presentation 3: Influencing policy change: A framework for action

This presentation will analyze the context of research-policy interactions and provide participants with a framework for action including what they need to know/consider and how to address them. The presentation will be interactive and should lead to **either** a group work session **or** individual exercises. Based on the pre-training assessment/evaluation, the facilitators will decide which of the two is more appropriate.

Group exercise/case study: Refer to chapter 10 in the book. Consider the case study 6 on “Ban on GMOs Rocks Kenya’s Parliament” and do the exercises (“The desired policy change: Lifting ban on GMO food importation in Kenya):

- (i) **Exercise 9** – assessing the evidence, (ii)
- (ii) **Exercise 10** – analyzing the political context,
- (iii) **Exercise 11** – mapping links and networks,
- (iv) **Exercise 12** – scanning the external environment.

Lunch time

SESSION 2: ROLE OF RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE IN POLICYMAKING

Presentation 4: Evidence-based policymaking

Through an interactive presentation, this session will consider the types/weight of evidence and the role of evidence generally in influencing policy change. Participants are encouraged to read the case study 7 on “influencing policy change on GMO importation Ban” in chapter 11 of the book. The session will elaborate on some of the issues raised in this case study including:

- What constitutes evidence in policymaking?
- What is the role of research/researchers in generating evidence for policy?
- What methodologies/approaches for policy-relevant research?
- How do you deal with issues of credibility?



- How do you package and present the evidence? When is the timing appropriate to present the evidence?

Exercise 13 (page 94):

Drawing from their professional and organizational experiences, participants will discuss/share examples from their own organizations and countries.

Presentation 4: Evidence-based policymaking

This session will focus on manufacturing and industrialization and more specifically the health – industrial policy nexus. Drawing on lessons from local pharmaceutical manufacturing in Africa; and using case studies/local examples as well as international best practices, this presentation will discuss the role of research in policymaking/policy influencing.

Role play/case study – contested nature of policymaking: interests, conflicts and consensus.

Refer to case study 5 on regional biotechnology policy on Bt Maize in West Africa (chapter 9/case study 5 in the book). Participants should take ‘stakeholder positions’ on various issues regarding the introduction of Bt Maize in West Africa (ECOWAS region). The leaders of the stakeholder groups should ‘act out’/defend their strong positions regarding the intended introduction of the Bt maize in the region. A separate script is provided to the group leaders to help them advance their positions. The overall aim of this role play is to showcase how vested interests of the various stakeholders shape/ influence policy decisions.

DAY TWO

SESSION 3: POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS OF INFLUENCE

Individual exercise: Roll up your sleeves: Let’s get practical (based on actual research outputs/abstracts/summaries)

Participants to this course are required to bring actual research outputs such as published journal articles, research reports, theses/ dissertations, etc). These should form the basis/material from which they will develop policy briefs. For this exercise, refer to **chapter 13/** section on “roll up your sleeves” page 115 – 116 in the book. Based on your research output (whether journal article, research report, thesis or other), answer the questions in **exercise 14** (elements of a policy brief – pages 117–120) as detailed as possible.

Tea/coffee break



Presentation 5: Designing and writing policy briefs

[interactive presentation followed by group exercise on policy briefs and plenary]

Group exercise: Case study 8 – “and then dotty died” ...

Refer to **chapter 14**/section on “structuring the brief” in the **case study 8** - titled, “and then dotty died.”

- (a) Pick a policy option from exercise 8.2 and design a policy brief to advise the Minister for Agriculture in Country X. Refer to the policy brief structure (see annex 3, box 6 in the training and reference manual provided as an accompaniment to the book).

Individual exercises: Writing session 1

Participants begin writing policy briefs from their own research work. Based on the presentations and group exercises above, participants begin to write draft policy briefs from their research outputs/abstracts/summaries. A **policy brief template** (see annex 3, box 6 in the training manual) is provided for standardization and guidance but participants are encouraged to modify as they deem fit and based on their experience and competencies.

Lunch

Peer critique session 1

During this session, participants exchange policy brief drafts and get feedback from peers and facilitators

At this stage, participants are ‘paired up’. Each peer reviewer assumes the role of *policymaker* while the person whose work is being reviewed assumes the *position of a researcher*. The exchange/review should be cordial, constructive and intended to ensure the message is clear and actionable. The review should highlight areas of strength and weakness and propose changes to make the draft better, more succinct and focused.

A **policy brief review template** (see chapter 14: box 3, page 128 and box 4, page 131 in the book) is shared and participants asked to review each other’s drafts and give detailed feedback.

Individual exercises: Writing session 2

Participants revise their drafts based on peer critiques/comments.

Peer critique session 2

Second drafts reviewed again by peers (same reviewers)... to check if comments have been addressed.

Feedback session: In plenary, participants share their experiences with the writing and review process



DAY THREE**SESSION 4: POLICY ADVOCACY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT****Presentation 6: GUEST LECTURE 1 –
Ethics and Integrity in Research and Innovation**

This session to be led by a renowned policymaker/researcher will expose participants to the practical issues of ethics and integrity in research and innovation. Ethics and integrity apply broadly throughout the research cycle from knowledge creation/generation, analysis, compilation (documentation), storage, uptake and utilization.

Using case studies/anecdotes, the presenter will be expected to use ‘live examples’ of what has worked or not worked, in what contexts and why? After a presentation/lecture of about 30 minutes, the presenter/facilitator will lead a plenary session in which participants ask questions and share their own personal, professional and organizational experiences with ethics and integrity in their contexts

**Presentation 7: GUEST LECTURE 2 –
The Role of Media and Strategic Communications in Policy Advocacy**

This presentation will build on the section on policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement, particularly case study 9 on “*the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB)*”, case study 10 on “*the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)*” and case study 11 on “*presenting negative scientific findings*” (see chapters 15 and 16, case studies 9, 10 and 11 in the book). The session will consider, amongst other issues:

- What strategies work/don’t work when advocating for policymaking/policy change?
- How could the relationship between the media and researchers/practitioners be improved?
- How do you package information for the media and other non-technical audiences?
- How has social media shaped advocacy?
- What could researchers, science councils do to harness the power of strategic communications in influencing policy change and improve policy advice?

Tea/coffee break



Presentation 8: GUEST LECTURE 3 – Gender and Youth in Policy

This session will delve into the role of gender and inclusivity in policy-making and policy influencing. It builds on the role of women and young scientists and researchers in influencing change (**Chapters 17, exercise 18 and Chapter 18, exercise 19 in the book; chapter 19, exercise 20**). After a lecture/presentation of about 30 minutes, participants are engaged in a facilitated discussion on their experiences around gender and inclusivity in policy. Of key importance is the intentional strategies employed by their organizations to enhance the role and participation of women and youth in the policy process. Equally important is sharing lessons, experiences, best practices whether or not these have been applied in their organizational set ups.

Lunch

SESSION 5: POLICY EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Drawing on examples outlined in Chapter 21 of the book, this presentation will consider the role of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) in policymaking and policy influencing. It will seek to broaden the meaning/horizon of influence and reflecting back on the definitions of policy and policymaking (presented in session 1), construct a ‘frame of influence’ to help participants assess their own contribution to the policymaking and change process.

Tea/coffee break

CLOSING: COURSE EVALUATION

This session will focus mainly on training effectiveness and assessments. It will begin with **action planning** – during which participants will be guided to develop personal action/implementation plans highlighting key action points after the training. An **action plan template** will be provided and explained/discussed (see also Chapter 23, table 7 in the book).

Competency assessment sheets will be circulated, explained by the facilitators and filled in by the participants (see also Chapter 23, table 8 in the book and section 4 of the training manual). Participant evaluation and feedback forms will be administered, collected and results analyzed and shared after the training (see section 4 of the training manual on ‘competency assessments and evaluation’).

End of Training



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Book and Pay

Actual fee: USD 1,000 per delegate (Kshs. 120,000)

Virtual participants: USD 500 (Kshs. 50,000) per delegate

Early bird tickets: Book one month before the course date and pay USD 800 per delegate (Kshs. 100,000)

Group discount

Book 2–3 participants: USD 800 per delegate (Kshs. 100,000)

Book 4–5 participants: USD 750 per delegate (Kshs. 90,000)

Book 6 or more participants: (call to discuss special rates)

NB: All pricing are exclusive of any applicable taxes

Payment Mode

Payments will be made by Mobile money (Mpesa or similar platforms), Credit Card, and by Bank transfer. An Invoice will be sent soon after we receive the signed and filled registration form. Payment is required within 5 working days after the receipt of the invoice.

Session Timings

09:00 am – 05:00 pm (please check for the difference in location and time zones)

Participant Information

Fees include tuition, full course documentation, lunches, and refreshments for the duration of the program. Delegates are responsible for their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

Incidental Expenses

Scinnovent is not responsible for covering airfare, hotel stays, or other travel costs incurred by participants. Delegates are strongly advised to obtain the necessary travel visas at least 2 weeks prior to the course start date.

Invoicing and Payment Terms

An invoice will be issued upon receipt of the registration form. Full payment is required within 5 working days of the invoice date. Participation in the course is only confirmed once full payment has been received.

Disclaimer

Scinnovent reserves the right to change or cancel any part of its published program due to unforeseen circumstances.



Cancellation, Transfers and Replacements

- Cancellations must be submitted via email. A full refund, less a \$100 administrative fee, will be given for cancellations received at least 14 working days before the event.
- Cancellations received after this period, or non-attendance (no-show), are subject to the full course fee with no refund.
- A one-time transfer to another course of the same value is allowed, provided the fee has been paid in full; Transfers must be used within 12 months.
- Replacement delegates are welcome at no additional charge, but must be confirmed in writing with full delegate details.

Programme Changes

Scinnovent reserves the right to change the course timing, venue, speakers, or content due to unforeseen circumstances. In the rare event of a cancellation by Scinnovent, a full refund will be issued, less any applicable bank or service charges. Scinnovent is not responsible for any other expenses incurred by the delegate.

Acknowledgement

By registering, the client acknowledges and agrees to these terms. Scinnovent will not be liable for any expectation or financial loss not explicitly covered herein.

Customized (on-site) Training

If you have a number of delegates with similar training needs, then you may wish to consider having an on-site training solution. Our courses can be tailored to specific requirements. Please contact us on +254-20-2173433 or email: info@scinnovent.org or academy@scinnovent.org to discuss further possibilities.

Correspondence

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KEY RESOURCE MATERIALS

All registered participants will receive:
a complimentary copy of the book “Beyond Research: Influencing Policy and Practice”, a training manual “The art of influencing policy change”

Book on policy influencing – “Beyond Research: influencing policy and practice”
as a training and reference guide book

BEYOND RESEARCH: An overview

What would motivate researchers to ‘go beyond research’ and demonstrate the social relevance of their work? What set of skills do they require to achieve that mandate? What kind of tools exist, or should be in place for their use? What strategies have worked, not worked and in what context(s)? How do we know if the policies and processes are achieving the intended outcomes? How do we influence change towards the desired outcomes?

These questions are at the core of this book, ‘Beyond Research’ as it explores the key concepts and principles of policy making and policy influencing; the role of research and evidence in influencing policy change; the tools and strategies of influence; multi-stakeholder processes, including policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement and policy evaluation and impact assessments



Training manual and coaching roadmap. Below is the overview of the training and reference manual:

It highlights and emphasizes on (i) the key concepts and principles of policymaking – including evidence, conflicts, processes and terminologies (ii) instruments and tools of influence including strategies for designing and writing effective policy briefs and (iii) the big debates surrounding policy influencing such as the role of the media, gender, politics and advocacy.



The manual is conceived as both a curriculum and facilitators' guide. The design, presentation and content are geared towards supporting customized, self-use by the facilitators and professionals/practitioners/researchers to understand and apply the various tools, particularly policy briefs, in influencing policy change. The intended outcome is to improve the quality of policy advice and influencing policy change.



COURSE FACILITATORS



Dr. Maurice Bolo

Maurice Bolo is the Director of Research, Training and Partnerships at the Scinnovent Academy. He is the founding Executive Director of the STI policy think-tank - the Scinnovent Centre.

Dr. Bolo holds a PhD in Science, Technology and Innovation Policy and over 20 years' work experience in research management; capacity development; public policy and strategy development. He has written and published widely on innovation, entrepreneurship, policy, partnerships, regulations and governance of technology and innovation.

Dr. Bolo, is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Policy and Practice (DPP) of the Open University (UK) and a Research Associate at the Innogen Institute (Edinburgh, Scotland).

He currently leads a regional project on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and Commercialization of Research under the Science Granting Councils Initiative (www.sgci africa.org) where he's coordinating research and training projects in 20 African countries.

Dr. Bolo is a hands-on entrepreneur with vast interests in the agribusiness sector, particularly dairy, horticulture, bee keeping and aquaculture. He is the proprietor of Tintomit Industries Ltd – a company dedicated to fish farming and bee keeping value chains.



Professor Julius Mugwagwa

Julius Mugwagwa is a Professor of Health Innovation and Public Policy at University College London, Department of Science, Technology Engineering and Public Policy (UCL STEaPP). He also currently serves as the Global Health Thematic Director of UCL's Global Governance Institute. He has worked in veterinary research, pharmaceutical



R&D and quality assurance and harmonisation of medicines regulatory systems in Africa.

He is an accomplished scholar and published author in the areas of global health, health innovation and health system strengthening, buttressed by his research and teaching interests in the governance and development implications of technologies and innovations.

He holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Biological Sciences, Biotechnology and Business Administration from the University of Zimbabwe, and a PhD in Technology (Biotechnology) Innovation and Regulation from The Open University, United Kingdom. Prof. Mugwagwa teaches on STEaPP's *MPA in Development, Technology and Innovation Policy*.

He also serves as the Global Health Thematic Director for UCL's Global Governance Institute (2019 – date) and UCL's Global Strategic Academic Advisor for Africa since Jan 2024. Julius currently co-leads the STEaPP MPA pathways in Development, Technology and Innovation Policy & Health, Technology and Public Policy, and the elective module on Health Innovation and Public Policy in addition to supervising doctoral students in the broad areas of innovation and development, in addition to supervision of doctoral students. Julius also has several external examination appointments at universities in Europe, Asia and Africa.



Professor Dr. Dr. Moni Wekesa

Prof. Dr. Dr. Moni Wekesa is a distinguished academic with multiple advanced degrees. After earning a First Class Honours in Education from the University of Nairobi, he obtained master's and doctorate degrees in Sports Medicine from Germany, followed by master's and doctorate degrees in Law from the University of Nairobi.

His career encompasses teaching Sports Medicine across African universities and serving as Regional Manager for Special Olympics Africa. He has held significant positions in football



administration, including Secretary General of the Kenya Football Federation. He was founding Dean of law schools at Mount Kenya University and Daystar University.

With over 100 publications and international presentations, he currently teaches Constitutional Law, Cyberspace Law, and Intellectual Property Law at Daystar University.



Professor Rebecca Hanlin

Rebecca Hanlin is a science, technology, and innovation policy expert with an emphasis on promoting innovation and business development opportunities for small and medium sized businesses in Africa at the DSI/NRF Trilateral Research Chair in Transformative Innovation, the 4IR & Sustainable Development in the College of Business and Economics. She has a strong background in managerial positions overseeing personnel and budgets in the private sector in Africa prior to returning to academia. Rebecca has also managed a number of research related responsibilities at the Open University and is providing innovation and development advice to the AfricaLics network of innovation scholars in Africa.



Dr. Geoff Banda

Geoff Banda is currently the Head of Subject Area and Senior Lecture in the Science Technology and Innovation Studies Group at the University of Edinburgh. He was the Deputy Director of the Innogen Institute. He is a multidisciplinary researcher on life sciences innovation and African pharmaceutical and biologics production and financing of innovation. With early training in molecular genetics and microbiology and biotechnology and research in rapid diagnostics of Salmonella using a DNA probe, he made a mid-career switch to banking. His banking experience spans commercial lending, credit risk management,



relationship management, structured trade finance, structured export finance and transactional banking. He later switched to Social Sciences and studied finance, innovation and industrial development focusing on local African pharmaceutical production.



Dorine Odongo

Dorine is a development strategist with 15 years of experience working in the nexus of science, development and policy. Dorine holds a Competency Certificate in Public Policy Analysis from the London School of Economics, an Executive Certificate in Social Impact Strategy from the University of Pennsylvania, a master's degree in Agricultural Information and Communication Management and a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Nairobi.



About the Scinnovent Academy

The **Scinnovent Academy** is the training arm of the Scinnovent Centre with a mandate to support researchers, policymakers and entrepreneurs in fostering partnerships; facilitating technology transfer, licensing commercialization and influencing policy change.

More information
about our work can be found at:
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