


Getting your voice heard in government

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A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

Why does government want to hear what you have to say?

- ◆ Policy is supposed to be evidence based
 - ◆ We have a largely generalist civil service
 - ◆ Reliable, good quality information is hard to come by
 - ◆ Many information sources are partial
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- A decorative graphic at the bottom right of the slide, consisting of a silhouette of a mountain range in a teal color, matching the background.

Who wants to hear you?

- ◆ Will not generally be ministers
- ◆ If a minister does want to use your research, be careful
- ◆ It will not generally be senior civil servants who want to hear you
- ◆ Middle rank civil servants may be the ones dealing with the problem

Not just Whitehall

- ◆ We live in a system of multi-level government and governance
- ◆ Horizontal and vertical dispersal of power
- ◆ Don't forget the devolved administrations
- ◆ Or the importance of executive agencies, e.g., Environment Agency

There is also a EU dimension

- ◆ The EU is a key actor in the area of agricultural and environmental policy (although not land use planning)
- ◆ The Commission is under staffed and relies heavily on consultants
- ◆ A vertical bureaucracy, inter service links hard to achieve
- ◆ Think of which DGs are interested in your work

Civil service language

- ◆ Still an insider culture which has its own language code
- ◆ It is a language of understatement, often used elliptically
- ◆ That does not mean that you should not write clearly, but be careful about being too robust
- ◆ Be solutions oriented, offer options

Code of practice on consultation

- ◆ Launched in November 2000, revised 2004. The responsibility of the Cabinet Office (Better Regulation Executive)
- ◆ Objective to improve quality and quantity of consultation
- ◆ www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/code.htm


Consultation period

- ◆ Consultation should start early in the policy development process
- ◆ Informal discussion should start with key stakeholders
- ◆ Written consultation period is 12 weeks
- ◆ You need to get involved as early as possible to maximise influence

Formal responses

- ◆ Government departments are asked to provide focused questions for on line responses
- ◆ This means that government sets the agenda and may not address the topics that you think are important
- ◆ A priority is given to business associations, trade unions and other representative organisations

How do I know what is going on?

- ◆ From your own interviews and contacts with stakeholders
 - ◆ Departmental and agency web sites
 - ◆ Specialist newsletters or trade journals
 - ◆ Non-academic conferences and workshops
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A practical example

- ◆ The response of the Warwick team to the Pesticide Safety Directorate's Draft National Strategy
- ◆ Available at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/biopesticides/>
- ◆ Pleased to discuss experiences of consultation:
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