

# Introduction to... Research to Policy Frameworks

August 2013

There are many frameworks around getting research into policy, some of which are broad while others take more thematic perspectives. Linear knowledge transfer models have been replaced by models that recognise the complexity of policy processes. Here is a sample of frameworks that may be of use to Think Tanks:

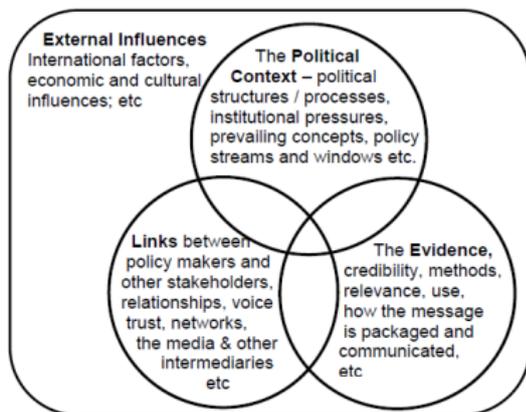
## 1) The RAPID framework (ODI 2004)

[www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/198.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/198.pdf)

RAPID has developed a framework for understanding research-policy links. The framework clusters the framework around four broad areas (see the figure below):

- Context: Politics and Institutions
- Evidence: Approach and Credibility
- Links: Influence and Legitimacy
- External Influences

**Figure 1 The RAPID Framework: Context, Evidence and Links**



A breakdown of 28 questions under each area can be found in the link below:

[www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/2797.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/2797.pdf)

Further tools for Policy Impact can be found in this ODI paper:

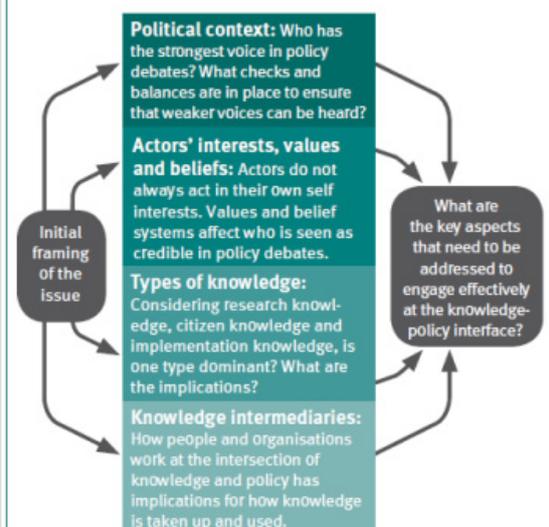
[www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/194.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/194.pdf)

## 2) Knowledge, Policy and Practice (KPP) framework (Jones et al, 2013)

Understanding how to improve this flow of knowledge is the aim of a guide published by ODI with Policy Press on Knowledge, Policy and Power in International Development. This background note illustrates the four-fold framework presented in the book, for analysing the interface between knowledge, policy and practice (KPP). It is designed to enable all those who play a role in shaping the content of policies - policy-makers, researchers, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and donors - to better understand and address the complex interaction between knowledge and policy.

The figure below shows the four over-arching sets of questions the framework aims to analyse in relation to: the political context; the values, beliefs, interests and credibility of the different actors in the policy-making system; the types of knowledge used in policy debates; and the effects of actors working specifically as intermediaries at the knowledge-policy interface. Each of these is then analysed in more detail in the background note [www.odi.org.uk/publications/7214-knowledge-policy-power-international-development-practical-framework-improving-policy](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7214-knowledge-policy-power-international-development-practical-framework-improving-policy)

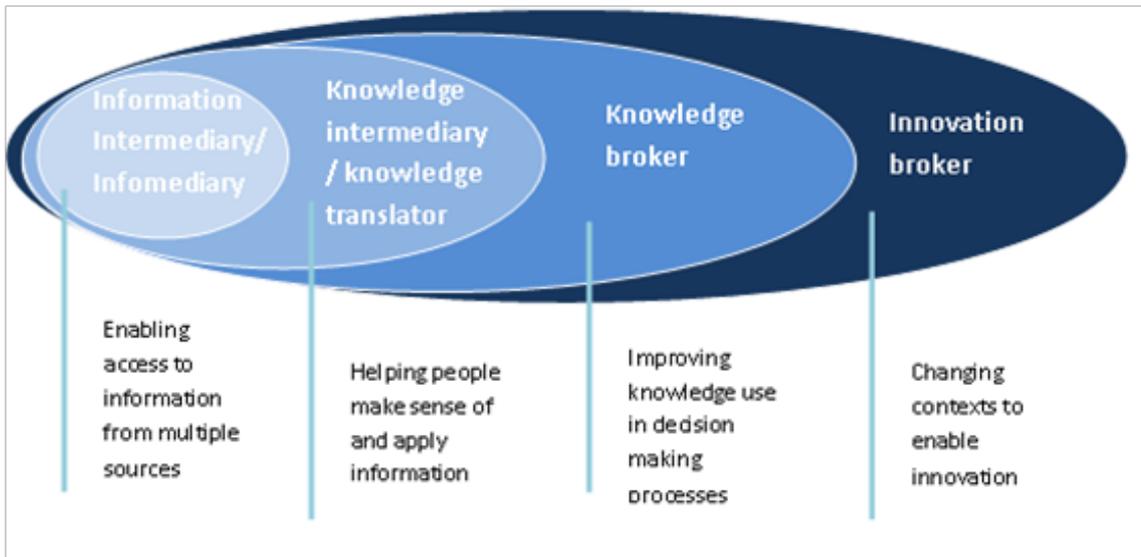
**Figure 1: A framework to analyse interactions between knowledge, policy and power in international development**



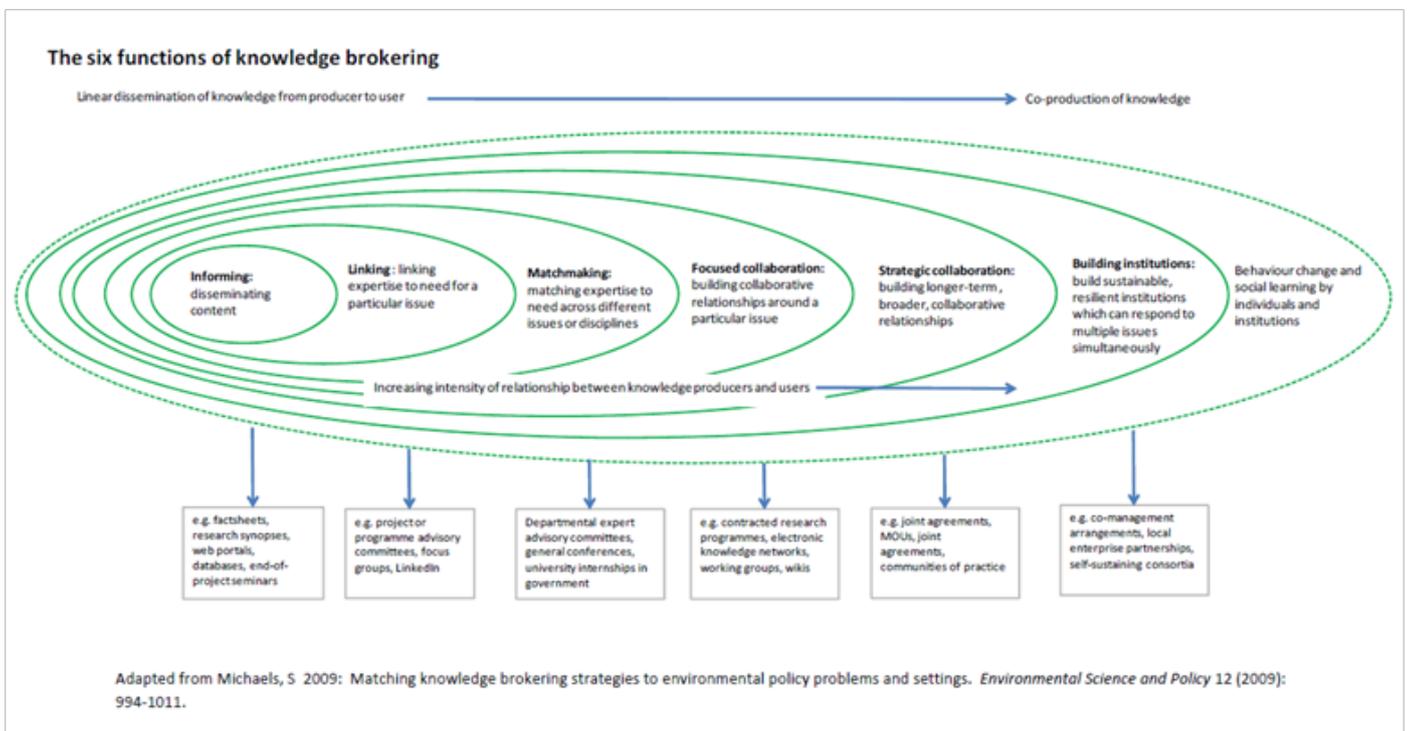
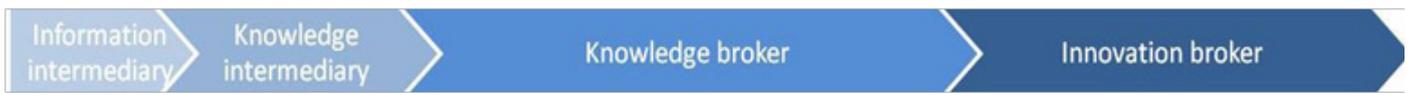
### 3) Knowledge brokering frameworks

See KB & Intermediary concepts briefing paper for more information on KB frameworks, the two key ones are shown below:

(i) Four nested roles (Fisher 2010)

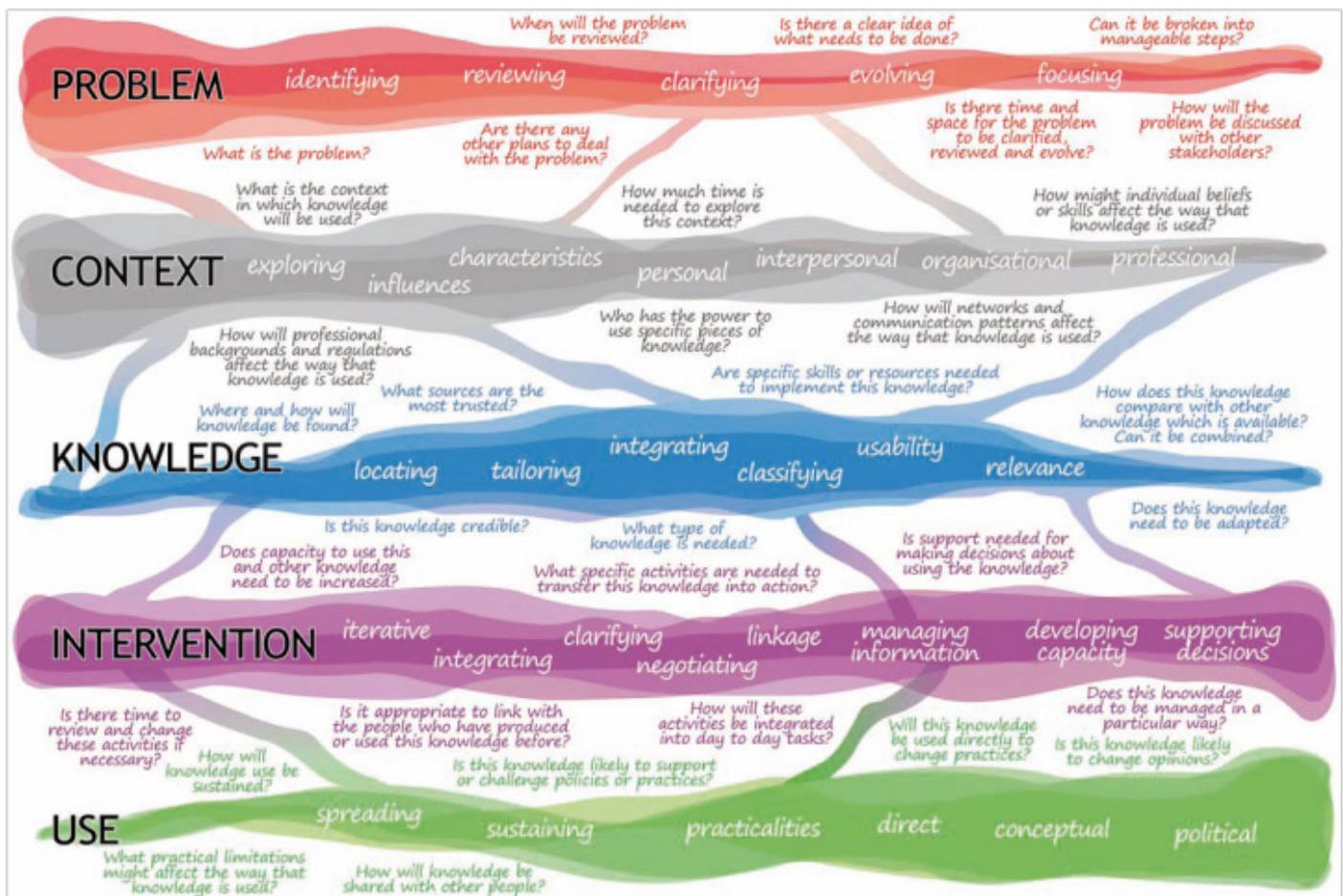


(ii) Michaels (2009) six functions framework



See [www.knowledgebrokersforum.org/blogs/item/knowledge-brokering-and-intermediary-concepts-e-discussion-analysis](http://www.knowledgebrokersforum.org/blogs/item/knowledge-brokering-and-intermediary-concepts-e-discussion-analysis) for more information.

#### 4) Model of knowledge transfer process (Ward et. al, 2010)



This model by Ward et al. (2010) from Leeds University U.K recognises that knowledge transfer, rather than involving a simple linear process, is complex, dynamic and iterative. From an analysis of 28 different knowledge transfer models, they identified five individual elements which appear to be crucial to the knowledge transfer process. They are:

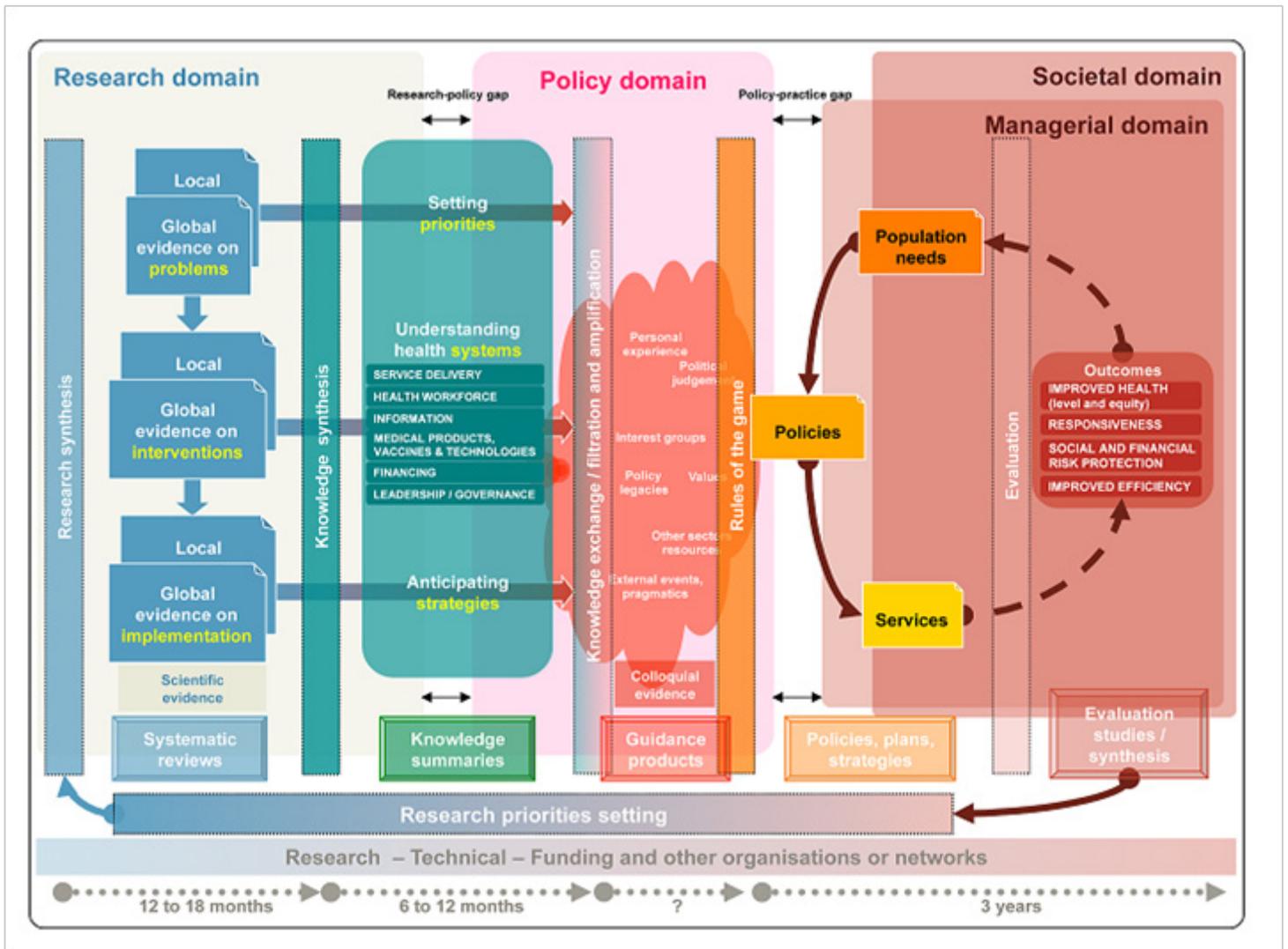
- Identifying and communicating about the problem which the knowledge needs to address
- Analysing the context which surrounds the producers and users of knowledge
- Developing and selecting the knowledge to be transferred
- Selecting specific knowledge transfer activities or interventions
- Considering how the knowledge will be used in practice

This model can be used to help research producers/communicators, brokers and users plan and evaluate knowledge transfer activities. Using these frameworks as project planning tools could also support integration

of knowledge transfer into their everyday tasks. See full research paper for more details: [http://medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/99/knowledge\\_brokering\\_final\\_report](http://medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/99/knowledge_brokering_final_report)

#### 5) Knowledge translation framework (Bosch-Capblanch, X et al., 2010)

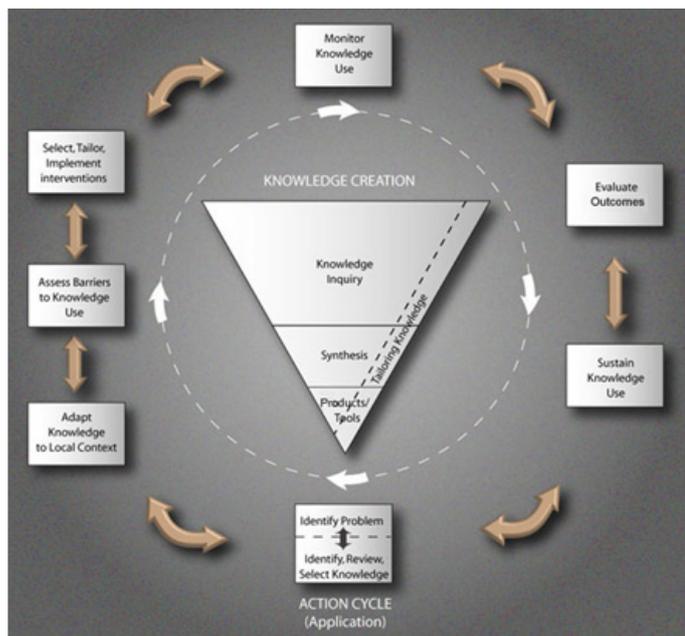
This framework comes from the following paper: Bosch-Capblanch, X et al. (2010) Guidance for Evidence-Informed Policies about Health Systems: Rationale for and Challenges of Guidance Development. Many processes, frequently involving iterations from research evidence into policy formulation and from policy evaluation into research prioritisation, are needed to bridge the gaps between research, policy, and practice. The complexity of these processes demands a dynamic framework [27] that is comprehensive and incorporates current thinking about evidence, policy formulation, and health systems such as the one shown in the figure below. This generic knowledge translation framework looks across research, policy, managerial, and societal domains.



A generic knowledge translation framework across the research, policy, managerial, and societal domains. In the above figure, vertical rectangles contain the methods or approaches to bridging each phase, the frames at the bottom indicate the products for each phase, and the concepts in between the vertical rectangles represent the different forms of knowledge. Systematic reviews are summarised into a unified body of knowledge that links priority problems with the effects of interventions and implementation strategies. Knowledge summaries support the deliberative process in which stakeholders develop guidance products that, in turn, result in policies for services and programmes arrangements. The outcomes of programmes and services are evaluated to ascertain the extent to which the needs of the population have been met. Evaluation should inform further research, in an iterative process.

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## 6) The Knowledge to Action Process



This Knowledge to Action Process conceptualizes the relationship between knowledge creation and action, with each concept comprised of ideal phases or categories. A knowledge creation “funnel” conveys the idea that knowledge needs to be increasingly distilled before it is ready for application. The action part of the process can be thought of as a cycle leading to implementation or application of knowledge. In contrast to the knowledge funnel, the action cycle represents the activities that may be needed for knowledge application.

For more information, see:

- Knowledge Translation at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: A Primer
- Lost in Knowledge Translation: Time for a Map
- The Knowledge to Action Process long description

## 7) Frameworks to define your outcomes and assess research impact

Finally there are multiple frameworks to help define outcomes of your research communications and policy engagement work:

Seven Standards of Utilisation by Knott & Wildavsky (1980)

1. Reception: Receiving information/information is within reach
2. Cognition: Read, digest, and understand information
3. Discussion: Altering frames of reference to the new information
4. Reference: Information influences action/adoption of information
5. Adoption: Influences outcomes and results/effort to favour information
6. Implementation: Adopted information becomes practice
7. Impact: Tangible benefits of information

## Types of policy change

Jones (2011) relies on a different typology when explaining how to assess the impact of research on policy

- Discursive changes: changes in language usage
- Procedural changes: changing how something is done
- Content changes: the actual letter of the law
- Attitudinal changes: changes in the perceptions of key stakeholders
- Behavioural changes: changes in the way something is achieved or approached.

Weiss' typology of research utilization (six models)

- Knowledge-Driven model – where research feeds directly into the policy process in a linear fashion
- Problem-solving model – where research fills a gap in knowledge relating to a particular problem and thus leads to a decision being arrived at
- Interactive model – where social scientists are on actor amongst many in a large dialogue, and together with the inputs of others help policymakers arrive at a policy decision;
- Political model – where policymakers appeal to research to justify a pre-determined position (Hope & Walters, 2008);
- Tactical model – where the sponsoring of research is used tactically to justify decisions and delay decisions;
- Enlightenment/conceptual model – the most innovative model proposed, involving the indirect influence of research findings upon general ideas, assumptions, and beliefs.

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## How are research to policy frameworks relevant for Think Tanks?

The key to using frameworks is to use them as guidance, adapt them if necessary to Think Tanks own context or develop your own. Some functional based frameworks such as the Michaels KB 6 functions framework allude to implementing a range of activities across a spectrum. However Think Tanks should not feel the need to perform all functions themselves, especially if they do not have the resources - remember they can link with others who perhaps work on the

right hand of the spectrum. The final examples of frameworks/models of knowledge/research use and policy change can be used to help define your outcomes and goals as well as assess the impact of your research.

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