International Geneva Study Trip 2024:
Environmental Governance

Overview

Background & objectives

As environmental crises become increasingly complex and intertwined, the need for active engagement between researchers and policy professionals has never been more urgent.

International Geneva is host to a unique and dynamic ecosystem where diverse actors converge to formulate policy relevant to global environmental governance and climate change. For researchers, navigating this landscape poses critical questions: How to cultivate the relationships necessary for effective engagement with policymakers? How to identify the relevant processes and stakeholders? Where to find the resources to support these activities?

Building on a successful pilot in November 2023, this three day programme offers a group of 20-25 researchers the chance to immerse themselves in the heart of international Geneva. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about this diverse ecosystem, engage with a range of stakeholders operating at the science-policy interface in the field of global environmental governance, and reflect on their personal policy engagement priorities, alongside peers drawn from a range of disciplines and institutions. A series of preliminary sessions, held online prior to the visit, will help participants make the most of the opportunity.

Expected learning outcomes

- **Understanding of Decision-Making Processes:** Researchers will gain insights into relevant policy-making processes and the role of science in relation to these, enabling them to better align research activities with global policy agendas and to contribute to science-informed policymaking.
- **Expanded Networks:** The programme will provide opportunities for networking with researchers and experts from diverse backgrounds, fostering opportunities for knowledge exchange and seeding potential future research partnerships.
- **Interdisciplinary Exposure:** Participants will engage with peers from various disciplines, broadening their perspectives and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to addressing global challenges.
- **Confidence in Policy Engagement :** By reflecting critically on the policy engagement process, exchanging with peers and engaging directly with policy stakeholders, participants will develop the skills and confidence necessary to support their personal policy engagement objectives
- **New Follow-Up Opportunities** for participating Universities' central support services (public policy depts, science-policy units, global affairs depts, etc.)

Dates:

8-10 October 2024 (3 days)

Target audience

Early and mid-career researchers from partner institutions (4EU+, UNIGE, UCL, UZH). Researchers need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Are a full-time employee of a participating university and consider themselves an early or mid-career researcher (holding positions such as of postdoctoral researcher, lecturer, assistant professor or similar)
- Have ongoing research activities linked to environmental governance (climate, biodiversity, pollution)
- Ideally, have some experience of policy engagement at national or international level – or a demonstrable interest in developing future policy engagement activities and clear idea of key stakeholders relevant to their work
- Must commit to attending the programme for the full duration (the three days) and completing the required preliminary assignments.

Key dates (internal management)

- Finalise core programme, partnerships and budget: January-February 2024
- Application period: April-May 2024
- Selection of participants: June 2024
- 2x online pre-sessions: August-September 2024
- Workshop in Geneva: 8-10 October 2024

I.   Preliminary agenda

The programme includes a mix of short interactive lectures, peer exchanges and group sessions, experience sharing, hearing from and exchanging with policy experts, and site visits.

Pre-event online workshops

Online workshop n°1: Introductions (60-90 minutes)
  a. Presentation of the aim of the programme
  b. Presentation of the GSPI and programme partners
  c. Introduction of participants and their work
  d. Presentation of the programme and of required work before the trip (policy engagement plan, to be specified)

Online workshop n° 2: Science-policy boundary spanning as a field of practice (90 minutes)
  a. Framing session on the science-policy interface (GSPI)
  b. Exchanges between participants on their initial   science-policy engagement plans, key anticipated challenges   and the contribution of the trip to address these

Main programme

Day 0: Arrival by the afternoon

Informal dinner for participants from all Universities at a selected venue.

Day 1: Multilateral policymaking and the mobilisation of science

Objective: Understand multilateral policymaking in Geneva and existing processes related to the mobilisation of science by international organisations.
Venue: United Nations Geneva, Palais des Nations (tbc)

Proposed activities:
1. Framing session:
   - Short refresher on the science-policy interface (by GSPI)
   - A panel on global environmental governance and the UN

2. Presentation by 8 participants (in two sub-groups) on their engagement pathways for their research with feedback from experts and participants

3. Discussion with UN representatives on ways they engage with science and existing mechanisms (e.g. tbc: WMO, UNECE, UNRISD; WTO)

4. UN Tour (optional)

5. Informal dinner/potential reception with the EU mission (tbc).

Day 2: Science-policy engagement through intermediaries

Objective: Explore the work and role of specialised interface organisations and existing science-policy mechanisms
Venue: International Environment House (tbc)

Proposed activities:
1. Framing session:
   - Key takeaways from Day 1
   - Introduction on the role of intermediaries (by GSPI)
   - Presentation of the Geneva ecosystem by Diana Rizzolio (Geneva Environment Network-UNEP)
2. World café on science-policy mechanisms and actors
   - Three short presentations by representatives of boundary organisations/ programmes / UN system organisations (tbc)
   - Three tables for exchanges between each expert and the participants (e.g. tbc: UNEP-GRID, IISD, Geneva Water Hub)

3. Keynote on global science-policy panels and the role of researchers

4. Presentation by 8 participants (in two sub-groups) on their engagement pathways for their research with feedback from experts and participants

Day 3: Exchanges with academics on practices of science-policy engagement

Objective: Exchanges between the group and with experienced researchers on science-policy engagement strategies from an academic perspective.
Venue: UNIGE venue (tbc)

Proposed activities:
1. Plenary: Key takeaways from Day 2

2. Experience sharing by two UNIGE researchers engaged at the SP interface through projects

3. Presentation by 6 participants (in two sub-groups) on their engagement pathways for their research with feedback from experts and participants

4. Reflexive session with GSPI discussing individual paths and resources for engagement with the international Geneva ecosystem

5. Closing

Follow-up activities & alumni networks

The GSPI will send a survey to participants to assess their appreciation of the programme and of specific sessions. Survey results will be shared with all Programme partners. Programme partners are free to conduct separate surveys for their researchers after the main survey has been completed.

The GSPI will organise a 6 months (exact timing tbd with partners) follow-up Zoom meeting with all participants to check-in on how participants' science-policy engagement plans have evolved. Each partner institution might organise its own follow-up activities with researchers from their institutions and networks.

Participants will be invited to join GSPI's LinkedIn Alumni group, which regroups participants and speakers from various past capacity building programmes. Programme partners are free to also invite participants from their institutions to join their own community groups.