

Evaluation of ICSU's Rio+20 programme

October 18th 2012



Contents

- **Introduction and executive summary**
- **The landscape**
- **Perceptions of ICSU's Rio+20 programme : impact**
- **Perceptions of ICSU's Rio+20 programme : delivery**
- **Looking to the future – stakeholders' recommendations**

Introduction



Introduction

Aims of the evaluation

- As the Major Group for the scientific and technological community, ICSU delivered a programme of activities in the run up to and during the Rio +20 Sustainable Development Conference
- Following the Rio Conference, ICSU commissioned Firetail to evaluate this work and its impact. Specifically, the evaluation explores the following themes:

Context

- Reflections on Rio+20 overall
- How this should inform future work

Impact

- What ICSU set out to achieve and what it actually achieved
- How stakeholders measure ICSU's success
- To what extent the programme justified investment in it

Delivery

- Stakeholders' experiences of the programme and how these measured against their expectations
- Reflections on planning, audiences, competencies and logistics

Looking forward

- Lessons learnt
- How the work could have had greater impact
- Setting priorities for the future



Introduction

Our approach

- Between 19th July and 29th September 2012 Firetail conducted 33 interviews with representatives of ICSU's core stakeholder groups (target no. of interviews = 30)
- Stakeholders were drawn from a sample put together by ICSU
- Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1hr and followed a semi-structured discussion guide

Sample by stakeholder group:

Internal	Stakeholders with policy focus	Scientists	Other (delivery/Major Groups)
8 interviews (5 x Paris, 3 x outside)	12 interviews	8 interviews	5 interviews

- The profile of those interviewed by Firetail represented a good mix of stakeholders in terms of country of residence, level of seniority, length/nature of involvement with ICSU, events attended
 - Those approached all engaged physically rather than virtually with ICSU's work programmes. As such, we are not able to report on the experiences of those who only participated on-line
- Our approach to reporting:
 - We draw out key themes identifying consensus and differences voiced by stakeholders
 - Differentiating between views held by a majority, significant number or those raised by just one or two participants
 - In a process of this kind it is important to assure participants that their anonymity will be respected. We have not attributed quotes to individuals in reporting on the interviews

Introduction

Context of the interviews: ICSU's terms of reference

- ICSU outlined a series of objectives for its Rio+20 programme:
 - To ensure that the best available science, including social science, is integrated into policy recommendations resulting from Rio+20
 - To ensure that relevant policies resulting from Rio+20 take account of the needs of international and national science, as strengthening science, technology and innovation will be essential for accelerating implementation of sustainable development
 - To incorporate specific regional concerns and priorities into the global agenda of Rio+20
 - To use our involvement in Rio+20 to strengthen our role and activities in the strategic activity area: science for policy and policy for science.
 - To provide a platform for science and technology at Rio+20
- However discussions with ICSU and external stakeholders suggest that the objectives of ICSU's Rio+20 work were implicit and shifted over the period of setting up, delivering and evaluating the work
 - The terms of reference for this evaluation were written after the Rio+20 work programme had been completed
 - Stakeholders had their own understanding of what the objectives should have been
- The lack of clear agreement and communication about ICSU's objectives for this programme of work is central to this evaluation, as there is no clear baseline against which activities can be assessed. Whilst this is not entirely uncommon in evaluations of this kind, it is notable in this case because stakeholders judge ICSU's performance against their views of what ICSU should have done, rather than what they may actually have set out to do.

“The ICSU head office did not have a specific portfolio or set of objectives for Rio.” Science



Introduction

Executive summary of key findings

Background and landscape

- It is important to consider ICSU's activity in the broader context of attitudes towards the Rio+20 process as a whole
- Many report that multilateral intergovernmental processes seem increasingly ineffective. There is particular disappointment with the outcome document from Rio+20 which was considered weak and lacking urgency.
- Interviewees' assessments of ICSU's Rio+20 work is often conflated with their attitudes to these broader structures and processes. To the extent that it can be judged, morale among those charged with advocating for science in these fora is low
- A number of stakeholders suggest that the multilateral intergovernmental landscape is changing. They note that Rio style events are increasingly adopting a multi-stakeholder approach in which much of the capacity to influence sits outside the negotiation rooms . Interviewees identify opportunities and challenges for ICSU in this context, as well as a changing definition of success
- Despite considerable frustration with the Rio+20 approach, stakeholders consider it important for ICSU to continue this work. Many feel that the scale and urgency of the issues to be tackled dictate that ICSU should pursue every possible avenue, noting a lack of alternative channels/processes through which to achieve change at scale

Impact

- Views on the quality of delivery and influence of ICSU's work vary significantly across the sample. The most satisfied stakeholders are those with the most prior experience of multilateral intergovernmental processes. With this experience comes more limited expectations of the change they are able to achieve
- For many stakeholders, ICSU's involvement in Rio+20 was reactive rather than proactive and was developed and delivered without a clear set of goals. Stakeholders judge the success of the programme's impact against their personal expectations and assumed goals. They have diverse levels of understanding and expectations of where and how ICSU could achieve influence through its Rio+20 programme
- The majority view is that as a series of events which convened a mix of stakeholders and sparked debate the programme was largely successful. As a mechanism for influencing policy however, its impact was limited
- Stakeholders identify some positive outcomes of ICSU's work: it has increased awareness of ICSU at UN level and with (some) national governments, strengthened the profile of science at Rio+20 and provided a platform from which to launch FE
- There is less consensus around ICSU's achievements in relation to informing the outcome document. Some very close to the process appeared surprised that at best their work could only indirectly influence the final draft
- Many say that it is too early to judge whether the programme will lead to an on-going mechanism for involving science in policy making at the UN level
- Several interviewees also criticise ICSU for failing to represent its members effectively in the process
- There is significant frustration that Major Groups did not work more effectively together in the Rio+20 process. In rating the performance of different Major Groups, Business emerges as the most successful, beyond this there is no clear shared view on which groups performed best

Introduction

Executive summary of key findings

Delivery

- Stakeholders point to various successful elements of the programme's delivery:
 - creating a space for debate and networking,
 - engaging with an important range of stakeholders,
 - securing high quality speakers and
 - issuing quality policy briefs
- For many, a perceived lack of effective planning limited the success of other aspects of ICSU's delivery and its potential to influence. Stakeholders criticise the timing and location of the Forum and scheduling of specific events, ineffective targeting of and engagement with some key stakeholder groups (including senior policy makers, the business community and social sciences), and limited media coverage
- Interviewees with different expectations of the programme's outcomes also contest the focus and relevance of the content of some ICSU sessions in Rio

Looking to the future

- Stakeholders express goodwill towards ICSU and are clear on the lessons they feel it should learn from its involvement in Rio+20
- Interviewees advise that future ICSU work should be guided by strategic and project plans which work towards focussed and achievable goals
- Interviewees want ICSU to prioritise its focus on 'behind the scenes' activities which they regard as necessary to increasing the impact it can have in future Rio style processes. There is a particular desire to see ICSU increase its efforts to influence national and regional structures and continue to strengthen relationships within the UN
- For many, ICSU should also focus on work to inform the broader public about key sustainability issues so they can apply pressure on policy makers

Landscape



Perceptions of ICSU's involvement in the Rio+20 conference must be considered in the context of stakeholders' views of the Rio+20 process as a whole

- Many express the view that multilateral, intergovernmental processes are less and less capable of achieving significant political change
- There is much agreement about the challenges associated with this approach to policy making:
 - Outcomes are largely dependent on the political will of those involved – achieving consensus is challenging and often not possible
 - In the search for consensus, statements become watered down and generic
 - Sustainability is not at the top of global political agenda for key policy makers in the current economic climate
 - Some reported a disconnect between the time horizons required to address sustainability issues and the shorter-term (electoral and economic) priorities of nation-states
 - There is a perceived disconnect between negotiators and Major Groups (for ICSU this is exacerbated because they do not have an ongoing relationship as those involved in regular climate negotiations etc. have)
 - Range of organisations/issues competing for time, awareness and influence
 - Inevitable logistical challenges of events on this scale (limited time to input, confusion about what they are attending and who convenes events, delegates have limited time/energy to engage)
 - Stakeholders working within the UN or who have extensive experience of such processes are less likely to articulate these concerns .To some extent they appear resigned to these 'inevitable' difficulties
- There is broad disappointment with the Rio+20 outcome document in particular
 - A number say it achieved less impact and generated less excitement than communiqués from the previous Rio and Johannesburg summits
 - The outcome document is considered weak; statements relating to science are said to be generic and the document does not reflect the scale or urgency of the crisis it was established to address
 - Just a small number of stakeholders feel that the different references to science in the document constitute a successful outcome for the scientific community. It is UN insiders who are most likely to hold this view (it is also possible that they have scrutinised the document in most detail)

Landscape

Despite this considerable frustration with the Rio+20 approach, stakeholders consider it important for ICSU to continue to engage with it

- Despite this clear and widespread frustration with the Rio+20 processes, few suggest that ICSU withdraw from its role as a Major Group
 - For many, the scale and urgency of the issues to be tackled dictate that ICSU (and others) should pursue every possible avenue
 - There is a perceived lack of alternative processes and structures through which to influence policy and practice related to sustainability issues
 - Interviewees generally feel that ICSU has a responsibility to communicate science to policymakers and should continue to do this. A couple add that if ICSU stepped back, another body would have to take its place to continue this work
 - For UN insiders there is a sense that these processes will invariably continue and they assume that ICSU will and should play an on-going role
 - One member, disappointed with ICSU's delivery and impact at Rio+20, does say ICSU should consider whether it is able to take on this responsibility, suggesting IAP may be better placed

Landscape

The landscape of multilateral, intergovernmental events is said to be changing: this brings opportunities and challenges for ICSU

- Several stakeholders perceive a shift in focus in multilateral intergovernmental processes
 - Many refer to an increased emphasis on a multi-stakeholder approach in which civil society plays a more prominent role
 - Much of the capacity to influence is now perceived to sit outside the negotiation rooms and shifted to the networking and debate which takes place in side events, in the corridors of the summits and in the UN itself
 - The informal processes seem to many to be more important than the formal ones, especially when the formal outcomes are so weak
- Stakeholders feel that ICSU has an opportunity to capitalise on this change
 - Drawing on the scale of its membership and network
 - Convening and leading across groups
 - Linking multilateral, regional and national issues
- A number also point out that this shift presents a specific challenge for ICSU: while some civil society groups have a sustained presence within the UN, ICSU's profile is less consistently visible
 - In turn making it harder to achieve impact when presented with opportunities to do so

Landscape

Perceptions of ICSU as an actor in this process are largely positive though understanding of its role is limited

- Perceptions of ICSU as an organisation are broadly positive across those interviewed
 - The organisation is regarded as credible
 - Respect for individual members of the team
 - Many praise ICSU's commitment and the effort it invests
- However discussions also indicate that stakeholders have varying levels of understanding of ICSU's actual role and remit within the multilateral process
 - Awareness of ICSU as the Major Group for science and technology varies. A couple of interviewees did not recognise this aspect of ICSU's role and others explain that encounters with other delegates suggest low awareness among a wider constituency of delegates
 - There are stakeholders who regard its main focus is as an interlocutor at UN level
 - For others, ICSU's focus is representing its membership
 - Some who have mainly engaged with ICSU through Rio+20 primarily associate it with the Future Earth programme
- Expectations of where the organisation's future focus should be is inevitably influenced by where stakeholders position the organisation at present

“There are many challenges. The global financial meltdown means policy makers are prioritising other things.” Science

“It may be a mistake to call them Major Groups, because in practice they are minor groups. We need to express our voice, but we can’t influence the political process.” Internal

“No one else would have stood up [had ICSU not gone to Rio] because no-one else has the legitimacy to say it’s a global perspective.”

“The scientific communities felt that they had things to say. There was an urgency and an opportunity to push this agenda. So there is a responsibility to go and say these things.”

“ICSU has no choice but to be there. If they stop being the Major Group someone else will take their place. ICSU would loose out if it didn't do this. The intrinsic value of this is that people can raise profile of science...it is a valuable platform through with to engage with businesses and NGOs.”
Science

Perceptions of ICSU's Rio+20 programme: impact



Impact

We heard a full range of views on the impact of ICSU's involvement in Rio+20. Those closest to UN structures, with previous experience of this kind of process tend to rate ICSU's Rio+20 work most highly

UN stakeholders (policy, coordinators, those previously employed by UN) & those from other orgs with UN focused roles

Organisers / delivery partners (including some internal representatives, speakers at events etc.)

Other delegates (including some members)

Proximity to UN structures / Rio +20

Expectations of achievable change/influence

Satisfaction with ICSU's performance and impact

Other factors influence perceptions but these do not translate into consistent attitudinal patterns:

- Awareness of the full portfolio of ICSU's Rio+20 work
- Events attended
- Level to which engaged with the outcome document
- Personal/organisational agenda brought to Rio+20
- Specific personal experiences

Impact

Those interviewed have varying levels of understanding and expectations of where and how ICSU could achieve influence through its Rio+20 work

- Some of those interviewed articulate a good understanding of the Rio+20 process and are aware of the mechanisms for seeking to influence the final communique
- Others have less understanding of this process. They had engaged with elements of the programme assuming that there would be important and direct opportunities to shape outputs in the meetings at Rio
 - Not understanding until late in the process that the timetable for influencing outcomes had largely passed
 - Some, including senior internal stakeholders close to ICSU, expressed surprise at the limited time Major Groups have to present their thinking in the summit
- In the absence of a shared understanding of the programme's aims and focus stakeholders judge the success of the programme's impact against their personal expectations and assumed goals which vary across the sample

“We sponsored Planet Under Pressure to feed into the Rio Forum to feed into the final meeting...I was somewhat disappointed to see all of that work reduced to three minutes in the final meeting. There was lots of activity from the [Major] Groups, but their influence was rather small.” Internal



EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

- **Raising ICSU's profile within UN and at (some) national government's level**
 - Broadly perceived to have improved (Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Czech Republic are mentioned specifically. Those closest to UN say it has also raised its profile there)
 - Engaged with some new stakeholders in the process
 - For some, this strengthens the platform from which ICSU can influence UN and national governments in the future
- **Encouraging networking and debate**
 - The convening role has its own value, impact (delegates returning to communities, partners, colleagues)
 - Encouraging new partnerships
 - Increasing knowledge on key issues
 - Generating momentum
- **Increasing the profile of science more generally**
 - Again, majority say yes
 - But not to degree many had hoped for
 - And there is some debate about the focus of the profile raised
- **As a launch for Future Earth**
 - Largely successful in launching, raising awareness
 - Impact will be contingent on effective follow up

LIMITED SUCCESS

- **Influencing policy outcomes**
 - Perceptions vary from 'significant achievement' and 'exceeded expectations' through to 'this failed'
 - All stakeholders wanted stronger outcomes
 - Some pleased with progress, 'Gisbertisms', references to science
 - Much disappointment with detail of content (does not communicate urgency, statements too generic)
- **Creating a long term mechanism/platform for science**
 - Awaits to be seen. Some commitment made but depends on how this is implemented
 - Calls for next steps to be monitored over coming months
- **Representing the membership**
 - Several stakeholders feel that ICSU did not perform well in this function and say that ICSU's priority focus was 'self promotion'

Most stakeholders sit between these polarised views. They feel that the inclusion of science in the document is a positive step forward but the emphasis is not as strong as they hoped for



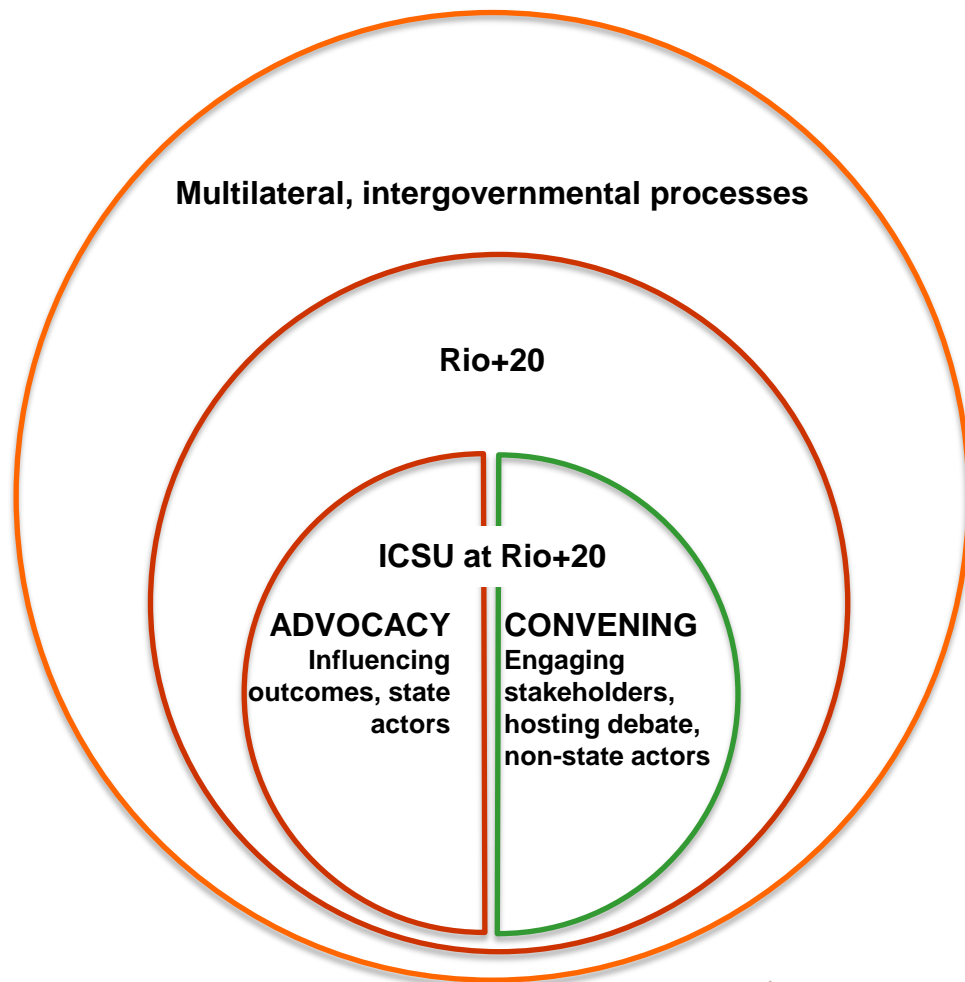
The majority view of the impact of ICSU's Rio+20 work

The majority view was:

- As a series of events which convened stakeholders the programme was largely successful
- As a mechanism for influencing policy outcomes, it had limited impact

“The quality of the scientific meeting was absolutely good but the penetration of the voices to the political meeting wasn’t heard.”
Policy

“In terms of the general outcome from a science point of view it was less than one would have hoped for but more than one, or I at least, would have expected.”
Science



Impact

In some areas stakeholders felt ICSU worked well to generate impact. Other areas were less successful

- ✓ Those aware of efforts to lobby other areas of UN (e.g. members of the High Level Panel) think this was successful
- ✓ Some, albeit limited connections, made with influential level delegates (e.g. Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology)
- ✓ Extensive preparatory work built networks and involved a wide community of stakeholders, raising awareness of issues and ICSU in the process
- ✓ Efforts to get media coverage paid off locally
- ✓ Worked well with some Major Groups

- x Timing of ICSU's programme was out of sync with the Rio+20 calendar which limited influence
- x Limited success in attracting delegates with influence (NGOs, high level policy people) – example of key stakeholders having low/no awareness of ICSU's work in Rio
- x Major Groups did not consistently capitalise on opportunities to work together (some cross over with development but could have worked closely and effectively with business group)
- x Issues of profile: ICSU does not command widespread recognition as the Major Group for the scientific and technological community
- x Lack of international media coverage (recognised as difficult to achieve, especially for ICSU and scientific community)

"I think it was quite well organised and thought out...Before these two years with ICSU I hadn't seen scientists be as immediately involved with intergovernmental processes. Perhaps they were there but I hadn't seen them."
Policy



“The outcome document was very weak on the role of science and research. If the science community had engaged earlier through ICSU, there may have been a better result.” Policy

“You measure progress in very small ways, you measure it in where commas are placed... The Major Groups are aware of this.” Major Group

“There will not be much long term impact of ICSU's work. Their mandate was too broad. They should have focused on three outcomes and been happy to achieve one...GDP was taken out of the document at the last minute. No group was pushing for it - if a group had been pushing for it, it may have been kept. The same goes for green economy.” Science

“I think there are several references in the Rio Outcome Document and I think there will be follow ups. The Secretary General has already asked the DG of UNESCO to establish a scientific advisory board for the UN...and to appoint a chief scientific advisor ...also they announced this programme Future Earth ... so I think there is a lot but we should not relax.” Policy

“The role of the science policy interface is highlighted in the Rio outcome doc. ICSU should look at how this will materialise. The door is still open for a 'platform of platforms'.” Policy

“We really did put ourselves on the map and in the long run I think that is possibly more useful than really going at the governments and trying to influence the final document.” Internal

“It did [achieve impact] in terms of Future Earth. Now a lot more people know about it. The Brazilian Government will take it [FE] more seriously. I think the development community is now more aware of it too.” Science



ICSU's impact in relation to other Major Groups

- A number of stakeholders rate the business group as the best performing at Rio+20
 - Some noted that with their level of available resources available this is somewhat inevitable
- Beyond this there is no consistent pattern in rating other groups' delivery and influence in Rio+20
 - A couple say science and technology were one of the more prominent and successful groups represented
 - A number of others rated ICSU poorly in this respect and say ICSU's involvement was reactive rather than proactive
- Participants across the board call for ICSU to work more closely with other Major Groups
 - With business in particular where some feel important opportunities were missed

"I would say that if there were winners at the Rio Conference it was our three groups (science & technology, local authorities and business) in terms of how things were articulated in the outcomes document. The scientific community is recognised throughout." Other

"ICSU works differently to other groups represented at Rio. Others tend to behave more like lobby groups and focus on specific issues. It's much easier for them to identify successes." Science

"We [Major Groups] should have done much more preliminary work talking to each other so that we could have come, to some extent, to the meeting sharing common views." Scientist [referencing the preparatory meeting in Seoul]

"The science community was the best organised stakeholder group. They organised material early enough. The paperwork was very well put together...ICSU was very effective in getting messages in front of negotiators." Policy

ICSU and its members

- There is some discussion in the interviews about how ICSU engaged with and represented its members in the Rio+20 programme
- A couple of the members interviewed are vocal about their disappointment with ICSU for its perceived failure to represent its members effectively
 - They comment that ICSU's focus seemed to be on raising awareness of the ICSU brand rather than of its members
- They, and some other stakeholders (internal and external) feel that a more engaged and mobilised membership would have resulted in the production of stronger messages, in turn, generating greater impact
 - Several talk about the perceived benefits of encouraging members to produce and share signed declarations on key issues. They explain this approach carries significant weight and can attract media interest
 - However, a number of these voices also discuss the challenges associated with identifying and communicating consensus among a diverse groups of scientists
 - A couple of interviewees call for more active and sustained engagement from ICSU members in lobbying their respective governments on key sustainability issues
- However, we would caution an assumption that a more engaged membership would alone have increased the effectiveness of ICSU's advocacy in Rio+20
 - It would not counter other challenges identified by stakeholders such as the broader limitations of intergovernmental processes of this kind, or the logistical and delivery issues which stakeholders feel ICSU experienced

Impact

Stakeholders also raise some of the challenges of attributing ICSU's impact

- In the various discussions a number of stakeholders refer to the difficulty of attributing impact to ICSU's Rio+20 work, several of which are common to other programmes/campaigns designed to influence policy
 - On a broad level participants say that whether ICSU can claim any long term influence will depend on how the outcome document is interpreted and implemented
 - Several feel that it is too early to gauge influence with regard to creating an on-going mechanism for greater involvement of science and technology in policy making, which many assume to be one of ICSU's objectives. A number refer to current changes in the UN which are still taking place (e.g. the appointment of a special advisor, the High Level Panel)
 - That ICSU is seeking influence at different levels means only a limited number of stakeholders are aware of the full breadth of its work and so are not able to reflect on all potential areas of influence
 - A number of stakeholders explain that the number of organisations 'pushing in the same direction' presents a challenge for ICSU in terms of attributing influence to ICSU specifically
 - That a number of those involved in delivering ICSU's Rio+20 work are also linked to other organisations also limits the way influence can be attributed to ICSU

Perceptions of ICSU's Rio+20 programme : delivery



Interviewees provide some consistent feedback on where ICSU was successful in delivering this work

ICSU's preparatory events / work

- ✓ Lobbying work with the UN
- ✓ Convening an important range of stakeholders in a series of events
- ✓ Engaging and mobilising different regions
- ✓ Planet Under Pressure receives particular praise
- ✓ Issuing policy briefs – high quality and fast turn around
- ✓ Working with external partners in setting up events

- x Timing of the preparatory work limited impact – too late to inform UN process
- x Policy briefs 'disappeared' – should have been used to better effect throughout the programme

ICSU's work in Rio

- ✓ Creating and delivering a full and diverse series of events
- ✓ Covering an important range of pertinent themes
- ✓ Convening high quality speakers and an impressive number and range of delegates - including some high level delegates (and there is particular praise for mobilising many younger stakeholders)
- ✓ Creating a space for debate and networking
- ✓ Efforts made to make the process interactive (e.g. posting synopses online after presentations)
- ✓ Lobbying work 'in the corridors' (though only visible to a minority)
- ✓ Worked well with partners in setting up events

- x Some key groups underrepresented in audience profile (high level policy makers, NGOs, business)
- x Multidisciplinary focus still too limited
- x Issues with venue (Forum away from heart of Rio+20, temperature, refreshments)
- x Timing issues (Forum ran before many key people arrived, but once they did arrive did not have capacity to attend. Too many speakers. No/insufficient breaks between sessions)
- x Last minute approach to securing speakers
- x HR issues: ICSU staff had limited time/energy to make important 1:1 connections in Rio. Only a couple of senior level ICSU staff could speak with authority for ICSU. One notes that ICSU is heavily reliant on speakers working in a voluntary capacity in contrast to salaried ICSU staff

Many empathise with the challenges of delivering events at multilateral conferences and note that some of the difficulties were beyond ICSU's control

In the absence of a clear unifying objective, stakeholders articulate different and sometimes conflicting requirements of the content presented in ICSU's events

- Stakeholders expectations of the content they want to see presented varies. This manifests itself in a number of areas:
 - **Funding:** Some feel the emphasis on requesting new funding was too great and wanted more of a focus on demonstrating how existing knowledge can be translated into policy and practice. Others, expressed disappointment that ICSU did not communicate more compelling requests for funding
 - **Communicating latest research:** Some felt that ICSU failed to communicate new insights. Others were less critical of this focusing more on the importance of promoting the science/policy interface
 - **Specific issues:** a number of individuals highlight the focus on green economy and planetary boundaries as a success. Other individuals contest this viewpoint
- Across the sample many call for:
 - Clearer, more focused statements
 - Even greater emphasis on trans-disciplinary work (especially involving social scientists)
 - Regular production of headline grabbing content signed off by ICSU membership. There is frustration at 'watered down outcomes'

"It was very much focused on how to generate more research...I would have wished sometimes it would consider what has already been achieved and how to transform that knowledge into applicable know-how... But it seemed primarily to be an opportunity for ICSU to position itself as an institution...It should have been playing a stronger role in representing institutions globally." Policy

"It could have been a festival of science. It was a festival of rhetoric instead." Science

"I know that they were taking advantage of every opportunity to advocate with members on a 1:1 basis to get the message across. They know what to do and they did it." Other

"I think some of our efforts were really successful and other things we planned really well but didn't publicise enough. You can have the best science speakers in the world but you have to have people listening." Internal

"ICSU had a low profile at Rio. The Forum took place outside the main conference, and they were unlikely to get passing trade - it was only people they know. They didn't do any marketing of their events. Other Major Groups were much better. The NGO and women's groups had been co-ordinating and sharing intelligence before the conference, but ICSU didn't do any of that." Policy

"They should have announced the webcasting to a lot more people ...featuring stuff about outstanding speakers who were speaking...I think NGOs would have been pretty interested in the science Forum but I met a lot of people who didn't know it was going on." Science

"The Planet Under Pressure event was professional. Hollywood style almost. I really enjoyed that one and I thought they took it to another scale...I wish it had happened a bit earlier....By that point a lot of the Rio Outcomes had already been worked out." Policy

"I think there was some brilliant science presented, the latest results and a great networking opportunity for people who were there. I think it meant that science made an effort even if the negotiators weren't listening. And there was some reasonably good media coverage." Science

"Sometimes it felt that the fact that we put so much time and effort into setting those meetings up meant that we didn't have the time to push the results of those meetings out...We are small and undertook a huge project." Internal



Looking to the future: stakeholders' recommendations



Looking to the future

Stakeholders are supportive of ICSU and keen to support it in the future. Their key message is that future work should be guided by clearer strategic objectives

- There is much goodwill towards ICSU across the stakeholder groups who engaged with the programme
 - Visible not least in participants' willingness to participate in the evaluation
- At an organisational level, interviewees advise ICSU that it should consider and define its strategic objectives for advocacy work:
 - Set clear, focused and achievable objectives
 - Conduct a power analysis which takes into account the constraints and opportunities of different advocacy approaches and use this analysis to guide investment priorities
 - A number of interviewees urge ICSU to consult with its membership as part of this process
 - Several mention the importance of monitoring and evaluating ICSU's work and praise the team for efforts made to learn lessons from Rio+20 through this evaluation

Looking to the future

(cont.)

- The majority of stakeholders advise ICSU to continue with its work in Rio+20 style processes but generate a series of specific recommendations for how ICSU should capitalise on what could be a flagship event for the organisation:
 - Set clear, focused objectives for each project
 - Invest to a level which is more aligned with the work's potential outcomes
 - Advance planning that builds ICSU's work around established external structures and timetables
 - Earlier identifying and targeting of relevant stakeholders and using the influence of respected ICSU staff and members to encourage engagement with ICSU's messages
 - Earlier and closer work with other Major Groups
 - Maximise opportunities to make events interactive, particularly in terms of encouraging online engagement
 - More effective planning of event logistics
 - Anticipate resource/capacity requirements throughout programmes considering the specific skills required at different stages of a project

“This is all an expensive businesses, organising all these events and everything. ICSU should be setting its targets before hand if it isn't already doing so and say for x amount of investment we want to get x, y and z. I'm not sure whether that has been done.” Delivery

“Don't try to do too much. Target. Think about who you want to influence and messages they will be receptive to.” Policy



Stakeholders also feel ICSU should increase its focus on 'behind the scenes' activities which will increase the impact it can have in future Rio style processes

- Develop a greater balance between involvement with 'mega events' and on- going advocacy and awareness raising work which will ultimately improve influence in intergovernmental processes
 - **Increase its work to influence policy makers at a national/regional government level both through direct lobbying from ICSU and by encouraging members to engage with their respective governments**
 - **Continue to develop and sustain relationships and raise its profile within relevant UN structures (High Level Panel, SDGs, ECOSOC etc.)**
 - **Work to inform the broader public about key sustainability issues so they in turn can apply pressure on policy makers**
 - **Work more closely with other Major Groups**
 - More proactive representation of members (e.g. getting x100 to sign and publish a statement on related issues)
 - Regularly produce 'headline grabbing' scientific outputs,
 - Map ICSU's work against what is happening in the policy arena
- There is broad agreement that Future Earth is an important programme for ICSU
 - There is a view that it can link together different areas of work to become a strong platform for advocacy
 - Several calls for this to be implemented with focus and energy
 - Although several are unclear on the programme's exact shape and objectives

Mentioned frequently, and across stakeholder groups

“The difficult and important thing is to do more preliminary work trying to put the issue across to individual governments and make sure they are hearing it. In some regions they did that very well, in others it wasn’t done at all. This is key to impacting in intergovernmental meetings like this. It has to come from the front up” Science

“The important advice for ICSU is to turn up their activity in New York... The Stakeholder Forum moved to New York in 2009, and it paid huge dividends.” Policy

“I would urge them [ICSU] to vigorously pursue the Future Earth programme.” Science

“[There needs to be] mapping of what's happening in the policy arena vs. the work happening in ICSU's programmes. SDGs in 2015 is something they can have a strong impact on.” Science

“ICSU should look at the issue of education and science literacy. Lots of people don’t have a basic understanding of climate change. Poor public education is an impediment to getting science on the agenda.” Science

“It is really important for ICSU to work more closely with other Major Groups. There were wasted opportunities with business at Rio.” Science

“ICSU can ‘take a line’ if it brings its members with it...We need to work more with members. This is slower, but really important. The prize is the combined view.” Internal

“They need to continue the relationship with those that remain from us [UN] and also build relationships with the new people coming in (names mentioned: Sharon Leanson, Jan Eliasson, Amina Mohammed)... for the UN high level political forum...first meeting September 2013, by that time they should make sure that science has an ear around this high level table. They should transition from a Major Group in CSD to this other new body ..and ensure that they are not left out in the process...” Policy

Evaluation of ICSU's Rio+20 programme

