



## 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA)

Join INGSA in Kigali Rwanda for INGSA2024, taking place under the heading of:

### The Transformation Imperative:

Expanded evidence for inclusive policies in diverse contexts

**Event Dates:** 1 and 2 May 2024, with satellite sessions planned for 30 April and 3 May.

**Event Location:** Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

### Expected Attendance:

- 500 conference delegates from across Africa and around the world.

### Format for the conference:

- We are focusing on in-person interactions for this conference
- All Plenaries and Parallel Sessions to be recorded, edited, and made available on the INGSA YouTube platform within 24-48 hours, but no hybrid sessions are planned
- It will be possible for some panel speakers to participate in their sessions remotely

### Conceptual Topics and Key Dimensions to structure the agenda

INGSA 2024 will be governed by an overarching theme of diversity and inclusion within the iterative and dynamic process of science advice. From problem framing, knowledge production, evidence selection, and application to formulating policy and other response options. We want to reflect the complexity of the evidence/policy/society interfaces and the challenges that these interfaces need to address.

Thus, rather than having strict streams for the parallel sessions, each session should address one or more questions under our **Conceptual Topics**. To help ensure that these topics are explored through a range of useful lenses, each session should consider some **Key Dimensions** – Structures, Skills, or Solutions – that are described below.

The combination of questions relating to conceptual topics and the key dimensions through which to explore them, will create a framework to shape the program without restricting it to a rigid format. It will enable us to address a diversity of topics and to encourage more transdisciplinary discussion.

## Conceptual Topics for sessions to consider

The conference title - ***The Transformation Imperative: Expanded evidence for inclusive policies in diverse contexts*** – provides the starting point for our Conceptual Topics, which are described below, together with some catalysing questions. Those wishing to propose a conference session should seek to address one or more of the catalysing questions. Alternatively, proposals can address new questions, provided these stick closely to the Conceptual Topics. Sessions that combine Conceptual Topics *meaningfully* (e.g. exploring their interactions) are welcome!

**Transformation**: There is no doubt that global communities are now compelled to address large-scale transformations in our socio-ecological and socio-technical systems if we are to curb the worst effects of climate change and inequalities. Thus, as the framing of issues and the remit of science advising moves beyond just technical diagnoses and solutions to discrete policy problems, and towards broader and more complex transformative approaches, how will this shift change the principles and practices of science advice?

Some examples questions that could be addressed include:

- Can science advice help us to reset our socio-ecological relationships and to guide us in our new and emerging socio-technical ones? How?
- Can it support the development of shared priorities and approaches, and at what scale?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of science advice for the equitable, ethical, and just transformations that are needed?
- Other questions...

**Expanded evidence**: Science advice for transformation of socio-ecological and socio-technical systems must assist decision-makers to parse and manage the interconnected, multi-level, transboundary and often deeply polarising problems that societies face. To do so means transcending conventional definitions and boundaries to expand and apply broader evidence from across cultures, languages, demographics, geographies, ideologies, epistemic traditions, and geopolitical alliances, to name a few.

Some example questions that could be addressed include:

- What are the risks and opportunities in expanding the scope of evidence, and the advice that draws on it, beyond conventional definitions and boundaries?
- Can the practice of science advice itself be the key to boundary-spanning work required to reimagine our approaches to seemingly intractable policy issues? If so, are there risks to consider?
- What is the relationship between universities, funders and others in Research, Science, and Innovation systems, and government science advisory mechanisms? Does this need to be reimaged? What are the risks and opportunities?

- How can science advice provide information on the major short-term issues, while at the same time be able to anticipate and explain why undirected research may be more important than ever?
- What is the relationship between science advice and science diplomacy in this work?
- Other questions...

**Inclusion:** The world is experiencing a crisis of trust. Trust in the institutions of governance, the institutions of knowledge, and in the relationship between these has eroded in recent years for all sorts of reasons. Observers and experts have identified numerous drivers and conditions, but it is generally now agreed that diverse audiences must be included in the processes that affect them for their trust in institutions - and the social cohesion this brings - to be (re)built and maintained. In turn, the shared values and civic reason generated can underpin and perpetuate trust in institutions.

Some example questions that could be addressed include:

- How can more inclusive practices and more diverse evidential inputs (from framing questions, to seeking and synthesising evidence) support inclusion and trust in governmental science advice?
- How can the practice and content of science advice be a driver of inclusion and support broader societal and institutional trust?
- What role and responsibility do science advisors and science advisory mechanisms play in facilitating trusting relationships?
- Is the practice of science advice changing in this regard? Should it? How?
- Other questions...

### Key Dimensions for sessions to consider

If the conceptual topics and their related questions structure the conference overall, then the key dimensions can be thought of as the lenses that help structure responses. As well as helping to focus the conceptual topics, key dimensions (lenses) will assist us to program the sessions to ensure good cross-pollination of ideas.

The proposed Key Dimensions (lenses) are:

**Structures:** responding to a conceptual topic (or combination) by attending to the structures, structural contexts, rules, and pathways that underpin effective and resilient knowledge-to-policy dynamics.

**Skills:** responding to a conceptual topic (or combination) through the lens of the skills, training programs, and support that people need for navigating pluralistic and transformative science advice (e.g., transcending conventional framings and spanning across linguistic, cultural, disciplinary, and sectoral boundaries).

**Science advice in action:** responding to a conceptual topic (or combination) through concrete examples and case studies that are exemplary of science advice for transformative action. For instance, how is actionable knowledge helping to advance societal transformation on specific case issues?

## Session Design Principles

As we develop the program, we will follow some design principles:

1. Each panel will aim to have African representation (as the host region) as well as from the INGSA Chapters/Divisions.
2. INGSA will be reserving some sessions to curate so that we can ensure good coverage of certain topics that our network has been working on (e.g., Linguistic and Cultural Diversity through the INCLUSIVE project; Mentorship innovations, Epistemic pluralism, including AI and science advice etc.)
3. Other sessions will be invited based on our **Open Call for Sessions**. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their proposed session responds to one or more conceptual topics and which key dimensions they will highlight. Applicants must take responsibility of identifying and securing the participation of their speakers. In some cases, INGSA may proposed some speakers and co-curate the session with applicants.

## Draft Agenda

### **30 April 2024**

- Internal INGSA meetings (e.g., INGSA Chapters meeting, Board meeting etc)
- Satellite workshops and meetings (Sponsors and INGSA partners can propose to have their own meetings or delegate workshops. INGSA will provide in-kind support to identify appropriate venues and local suppliers if necessary.)
- Evening Welcome Event: A Welcome Event at the Convention Centre (TBC) along with Conference Registration. Format of the Welcome Event is yet to be decided but will follow local hospitality protocols and principles.

### **1 and 2 May 2024**

- Opening ceremony
- Morning Plenary (Keynote) followed by short break
- Morning parallel sessions (x4)
- Lunch Break
- Afternoon parallel sessions (x4) followed by short break
- Closing Plenary
- Closing cocktail on 2<sup>nd</sup> May

### **3 May**

- Science Advice Leadership Roundtable (Invitational meeting)
- Satellite workshops and meetings sponsored by partners at various external venues