



The provision and influence of evidence-based policy advice in the science and higher education sectors in South Africa:



Case studies of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and the Council on Higher Education

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Evidence-based policy and advice

- Rationales underpinning ‘evidence-based policy-making’
 - Help policy-makers make ‘better’ policy that ‘works’
 - Make the policy process more ‘rational’, efficient and effective
- Expert policy advisors and advisory bodies have come to play a central role
 - Providing evidence required for policy-making
 - Mediating/making sense of the complex market-place of political ideas, and the uncertainty and controversy which can characterise research and scientific endeavour (knowledge brokering)

Research aim and key questions

- To gain a deeper understanding of the provision and influence of the evidence-based policy advice provided by NACI and the CHE to their respective parent ministries
 - How do these advisory bodies formulate evidence-based policy advice?
 - How (if at all) is the advice used in the decision- and policy-making of their respective parent ministries?
 - What factors influence the use or non-use of the policy advice?

Conceptual framework

Types of advice use or influence

- Instrumental
 - Policy advice is used directly to solve specific policy problems or make decisions
- ‘Strategic’ or political
 - Use of advice to justify or legitimise policy decisions that have already been made
- Conceptual
 - Policy advice shifts or shapes the political discourse and cognitive paradigms of policy-makers

Conceptual framework

Factors that impact on policy advice use

- Political and policy-making contexts and characteristics
- Nature of the policy problem
- Characteristics of the policy advice
- Characteristics of the policy advisory body

Research design and methods

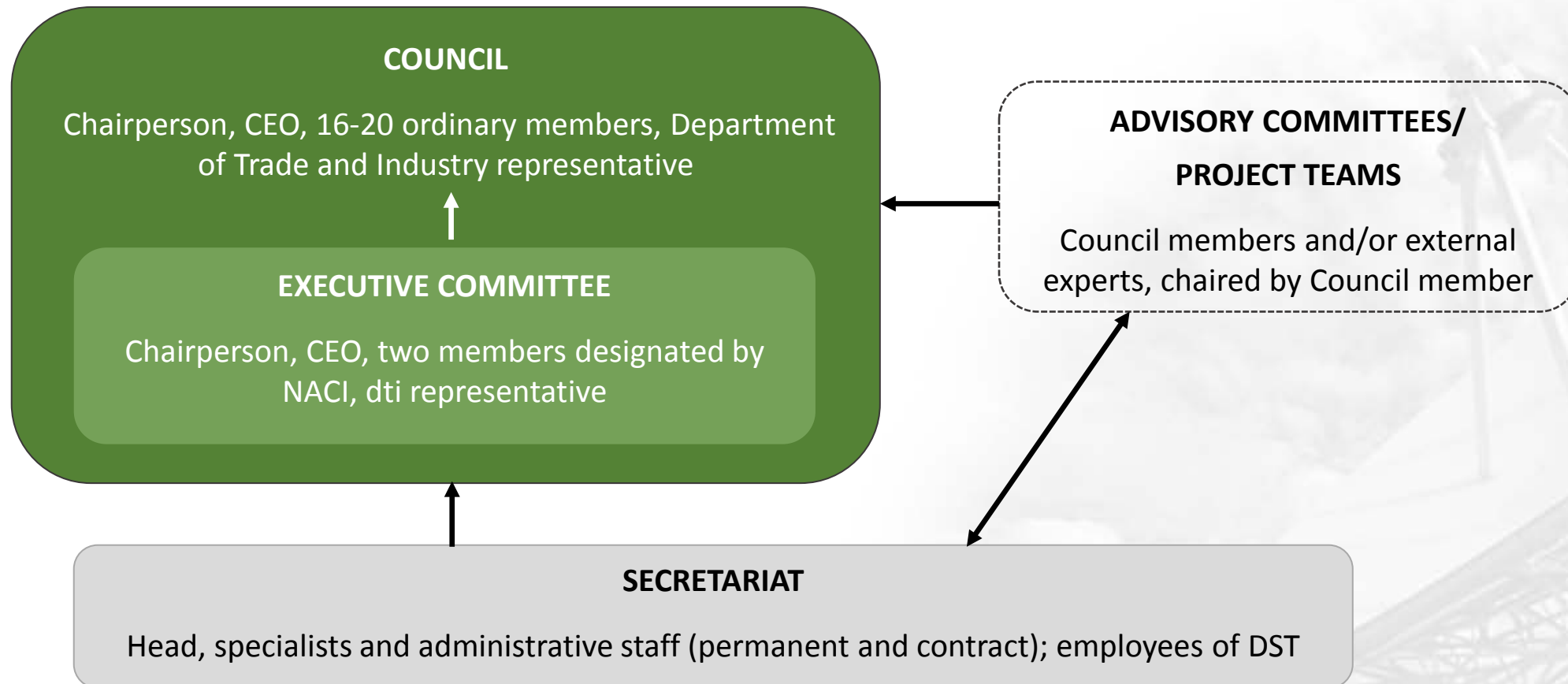
- In-depth case studies of NACI and the CHE, as well as mini case studies of specific instances of policy advice formulation
 - Desk research and documentary analysis
 - In-depth interviews with key informants

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Some preliminary findings

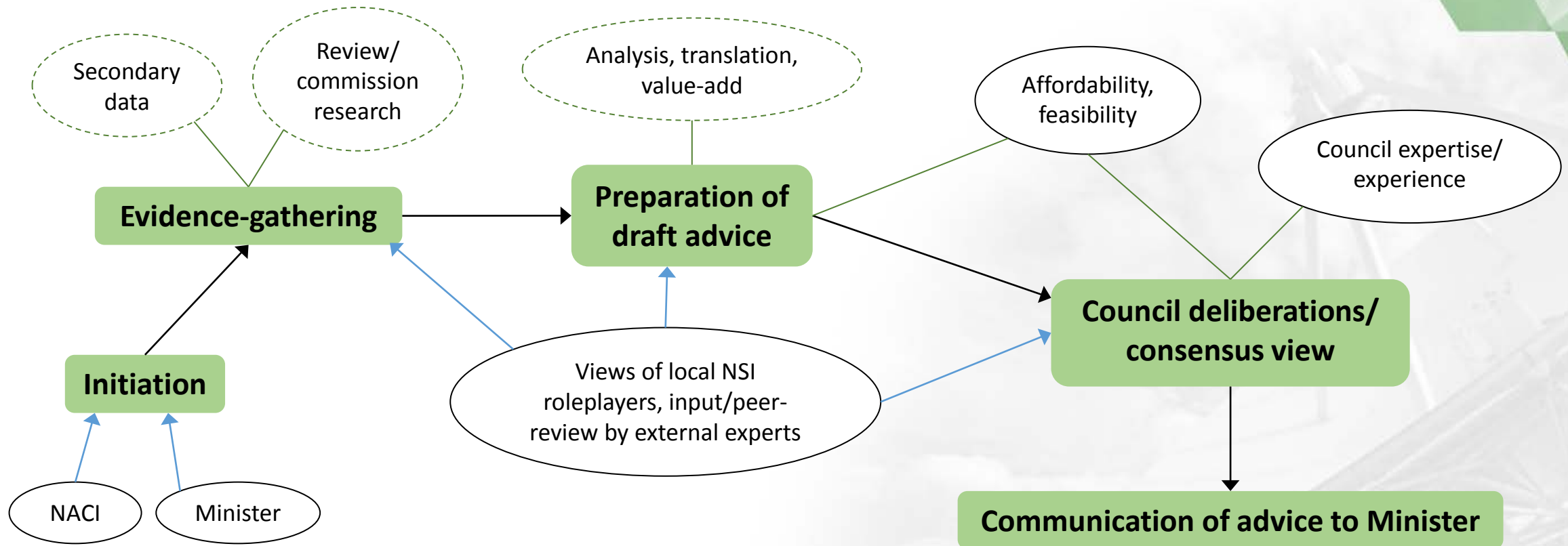
Structure and functions



Advisory mandate

- Very long list of aspects of the national system of innovation on which NACI must provide advice
- Provide both reactive and proactive advice
- May only provide advice to the Minister of S&T
- NACI Act does not require that the Minister must seek advice from NACI, nor that it need provide any explanation for why the advice was not utilised
- NACI Act does not specifically state that NACI's advice must be evidence-based or independent

Advice formulation process and principles



Types of advice

Types of advice	Typical issue	Time frame	Methodology
Quick response	Unexpected events	Immediate to very short term	Expertise of Council members/NACI networks, desk research etc.
Researched	Issues in S&T system and structure	+/- 4-8 months	Commissioned research
Beyond-the-horizon	Anticipation of future developments	One year	Think-tanks, futures studies etc.
Annual	Annual overview of state of S&T in South Africa	As programmed	Combination
Briefings	Salient issues in NSI	Two per year	Evidence-based advice to portfolio committees and other forums
Mixed forms	Variable	+/- One month	Information sources

Utilisation of advice

NACI advice being utilised	Contribution to policy or strategy
Good practice guidelines to enhance the participation of women in SET	Utilised in the development of the Human Capital Development Strategy
Tracking the benefits of public R&D expenditure: Inputs, outputs and impact indicators	Utilised in the assessment of the National Research Foundation
Appropriate human resources for a productive NSI	Utilised in the development of the Human Capital Development Strategy
Required physical infrastructure to attain the vision of the NSI: Secondary school education components	Youth into Science and infrastructure sub-unit
The required physical infrastructure to attain the vision of the NSI	Input into the structure of the DST/Medium-Term Expenditure Framework budget bid to National Treasury
Tax incentives for R&D	Referenced in the Technology Innovation Agency business case development process
Intellectual property rights from publicly-funded research	Used extensively in the Intellectual Property Rights for Publicly Funded Research (PFR) work

Challenges of advice formulation and uptake

- Capacity
- Perceptions of NACI
 - Independence
 - Visibility and credibility
- Role confusion and mission drift

THANK YOU

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