

S4D4C Using science for/in diplomacy for addressing global challenges

Ewert Aukes, Sanaz Honarmand, Gonzalo Ordóñez-Matamoros, Stefan Kuhlmann
 Science, Technology & Policy Studies, University of Twente

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

The complexity and geopolitical scale of grand challenges necessitates concerted international efforts turning them into challenges of foreign policy and science alike. Diplomatic skills as well as scientific expertise are needed to tackle these challenges. Unfortunately, the interface between both does not always function optimally as communication between the scientific and diplomatic communities can be complicated. There is a great potential for better harnessing global science and science cooperation for European science diplomacy and foreign policy goals, both at EU and MS level. Not only can scientific advice mechanisms in EU foreign policy benefit from advances in research, but innovations in carrying out research may hold opportunities for foreign policy impact.

Running from 2018-2020 and as a collaboration uniting scholars of innovation, science, higher education and governance, the S4D4C project aims to support current and future European science diplomacy for the benefit of European capacities, EU foreign policy goals and especially the development of solutions for global challenges.

METHODS

The project applies a mixed-methods approach. In the start-up phase a survey eliciting needs of science diplomats across the globe and a stock-taking of the science diplomacy literature was undertaken. Nine exploratory case studies followed along three lines:

1. Foreign policy challenges as driver of science diplomacy
2. European science (cooperation) as opportunity for science diplomacy
3. EU instruments as options for coordination and science diplomacy

In the remainder of the project, participatory methods such as co-creation workshops and focus groups are employed. Dissemination and engagement with practice is reached through global and European networking meetings and trainings.

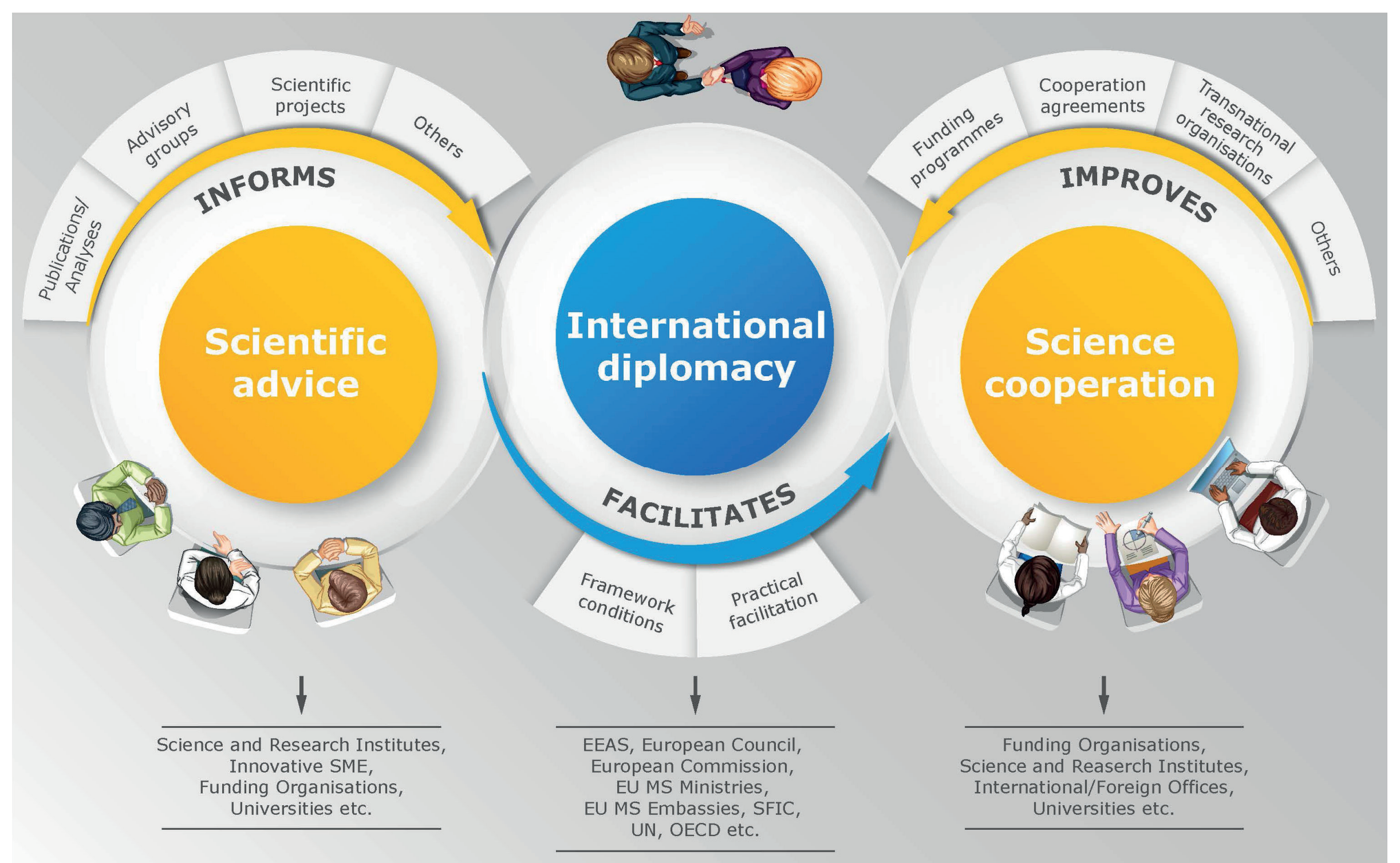


Figure: Infographic showing the traditional view on science diplomacy.

FINDINGS

- Science diplomacy as a concept is **not of unequivocal analytical use**. In some contexts it is also used as a purely symbolic, political signifier. (D2.2 State-of-the-art report)
- The survey assessing science diplomats needs finds that there is a **strong demand for information, channels for communication and interaction, and training** in all facets of the necessary skillset. This includes “negotiations, communication and networking as well as regarding the understanding of the various intersections of science and foreign affairs”. In addition, (science) diplomatic work cannot be completely relocated into virtual reality; **personal, facework contact is still of considerable importance**. (D2.3 Baseline analysis and needs assessment)
- The variability of science diplomacy activities, mechanisms, capacities and resources means that practitioners and scholars need to **think jointly in terms of variable governance frameworks**, if grand challenges are to be tackled effectively. (D2.4 Policy Brief #1)
- Science diplomacy is an **amalgamation of many different practices**. (D3.3 Case study briefs)
- Realizing innovative and mutually acceptable science diplomacy arrangements requires **constructive and anticipatory engagement between stakeholders across policy levels**. Such engagement can be achieved by implementing modes for identifying topics and arrangements, modes for scoping/developing knowledge and modes for reflection. (D4.1/4.4 Meta-governance framework)

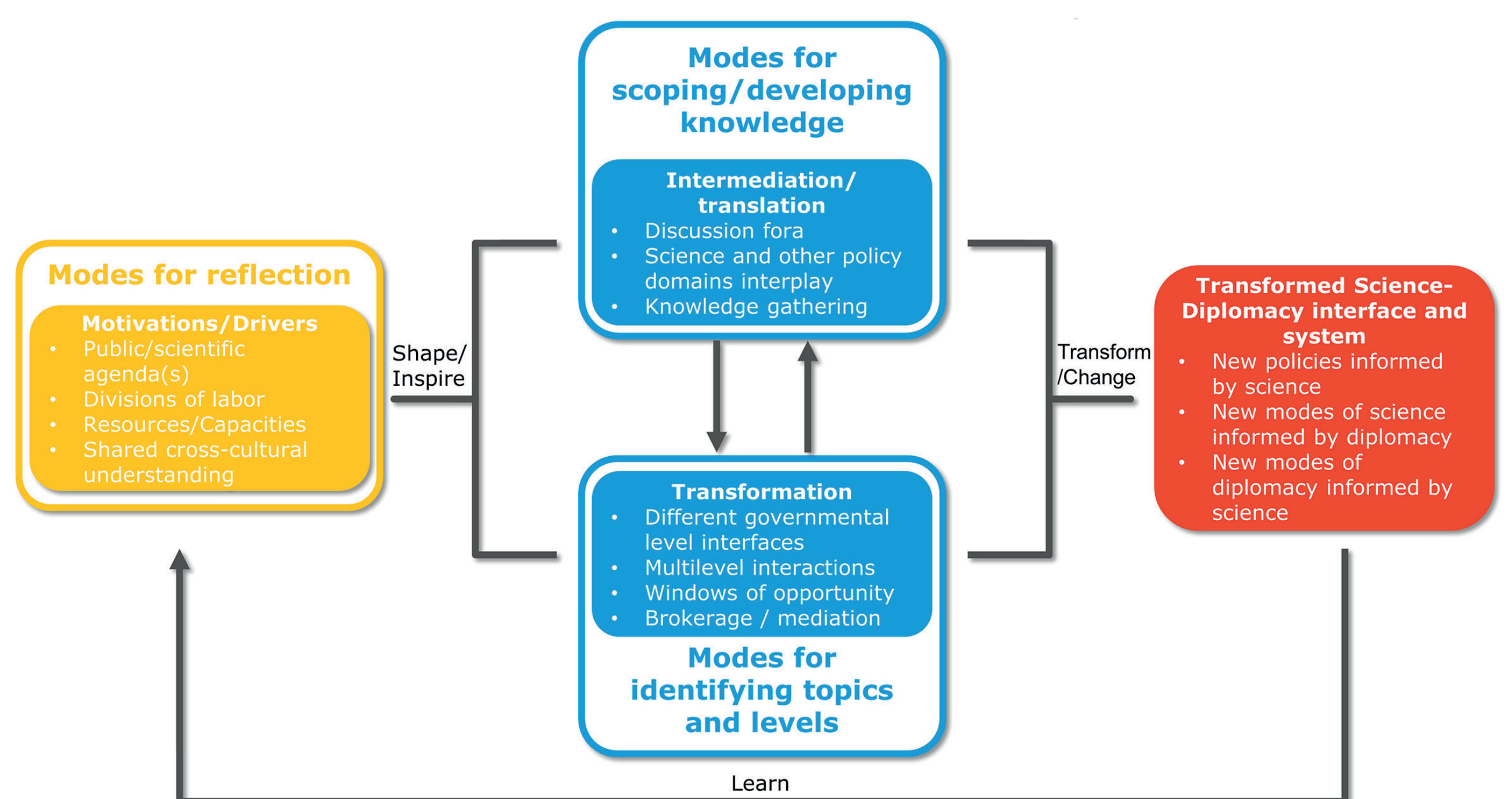


Figure: Preliminary conceptualisation of a governance framework for science diplomacy.

CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATION POLICY RESEARCH

Science diplomacy as a new instrument for achieving societal transformation in the international governance arena | Science diplomacy as an instrument to mediate rights and responsibilities across borders | New governance arrangements for science diplomacy to tackle grand challenges | Translation of national interests into integrated, “Frame 3” thinking