

LCS-RNet Rome Meeting - 1-2/10/2014

Panel discussion: What the climate decision makers need from the research sector?

Panelists: Hironori Hamanaka (J, IGES, Chair), Raimondo Orsini (I, Green Economy), Lucy Hayes (UK, DECC), Richard Lavergne (F, MEDDE), Stefan Lechtenbohrer (D, WI), Naoya Tsukamoto (J, IGES)

Richard Lavergne

1. A distinction should be made between climate decision makers: firstly central governments and local authorities, but indirectly also lobbies, media, groups of citizens and other stakeholders that may impact strongly upon decision.
2. Three categories of needs from the research community can be observed from these decision makers:
 - To convince them that there is really an issue and that procrastination is not an option, even during their mandate
 - To explain - in their "language" - that acceptable solutions exist and that policies and measures can be implemented to solve the issue or to mitigate its effects
 - To assess the impact of these policies and measures and to make benchmarks with other countries
3. Transition towards a low carbon economy needs a portfolio of research activities: socio-economic research (eg behaviour, economics and financing: costs vs investments, taxation greening, benefits,...), climate research (cf. IPCC reports), technology research (cf. cooperation through the SET-Plan for the EU or the Implementing Agreements for IEA/OECD,...), energy scenarios, international law,..., with cross-fertilization and dialogue between all these fields of science
4. This manifold approach is reflected in the draft law for energy transition towards green growth that is currently under discussion at the French Parliament. This draft law deals with energy efficiency, low carbon technologies, circular economy, well-functioning of energy markets and other related markets (eg capacity mechanisms, white certificates), nuclear safety, energy access, adaptation of current tools and of new tools to reach ambitious short-term and long-term quantitative targets,...
5. At international level, climate decision makers or climate negotiators need expertise from the research community to facilitate the political agenda and the "Agenda of solutions" for the COP21 (the "Road to Paris"):
 - How to encourage an up-dated and fair differentiation?
 - What should be the more appropriate way to set a legal form of the future agreement and the legal nature of the commitments?
 - Which type of actions would be appropriate to strengthen adaptation and resilience?
 - What are the means of implementation for a post-2020 regime (finance, technology)?
 - How to catalyze real world actions and cooperation?
 - How to design a "ratchet-up" (profile-raising) mechanism?

6. In this context, the research sector could be helpful for governments and other decision makers to determine the most relevant policies and technology priorities to support. This could be made at several levels:
 - a) Energy policies perspectives: understanding trajectories and implementation issues
 - Managing the technology baskets, anticipating problems or barriers that could occur (social acceptance, rebound effect,...)
 - Long term and short term coupling
 - Coherence at country level of public policies (budget, competitiveness, social preoccupations,...)
 - Elaborating national decarbonisation pathways in a coordinated way (cf. DDPP) and low carbon technologies benefits in a worldwide approach
 - b) Innovation process
 - Key role in the development and fast deployment of low-carbon technologies
 - Involvement of all stakeholders enhance efficiency
 - c) Supporting the fossil economy stakeholders engagement in the transition, as they have a central role to play, and dealing with the difficult questions of economic impacts, losers and winners, etc.
7. Taxonomy of financing tools, as there are so many proposals (green funds, climate bonds, monetary plan, quantitative easing, green bucket,...)
8. To conclude, it could be pointed out that dialogue between scientists, governmental people and groups of citizen or media is a major concern in the climate decision making process and that it deserves some research activity by itself.