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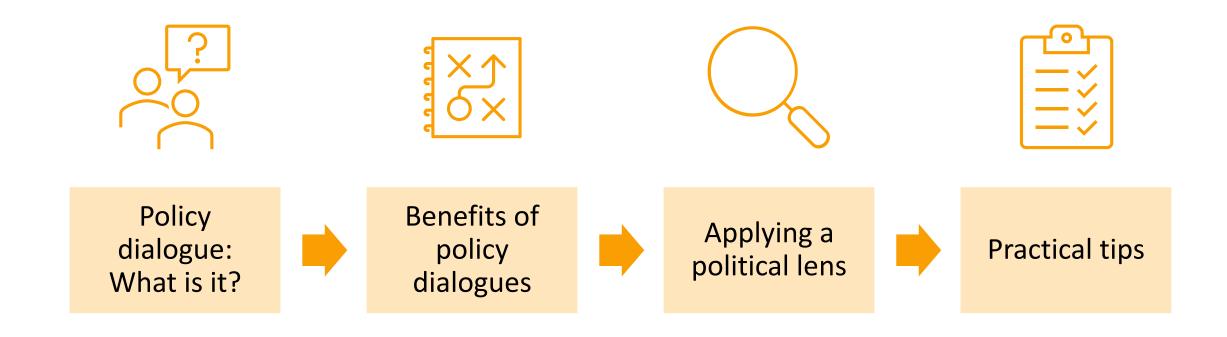




# Creating an impactful policy dialogue

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Policy dialogue: What is it?



Benefits of policy dialogues



Applying a political lens



Practical tips



## Policy dialogues are a critical strategy for scale up research

#### Organisation of a policy dialogue

- Evidence-based discussions, workshops, and consultations
- Intended to contribute to informing, developing or implementing a policy change
- Can be conducted at any level of the health system

Rajan et al. (2015)

#### Use of a roadmap (a strategy)

Evidence

 $\downarrow$ 

Roadmap (strategic action plan)

个

Stakeholder engagement

Used in the SCUBY Project; see <a href="https://www.scuby.eu/">https://www.scuby.eu/</a>



## Concepts related to policy dialogues

Collaborative governance

Co-creation of knowledge

#### [Shared?]

#### **Decision making**

 Spaces of power: closed, claimed, invited

Evidence use; Knowledge uptake; transfer; translation; mobilisation

Getting research into policy and practice ("GRIPP")

#### **Participation**

- Stakeholder engagement
- Inclusion
- Representation



**Knowledge translation** (research perspective)

Collaborative governance (policy perspective)

Robert et al. (2022) use Emerson's frame to 'theorise' about the policy dialogue context and process

## Drivers of collaborative governance systems:

Uncertainty
Interdependence
Incentives

A leader who initiates and spans boundaries











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## Benefits from policy dialogues



#### **Building partnerships**

Synergistic; shared interest



Co-producing knowledge & evidence

• Epistemic justice



Co-creating action plan

Roadmap for action/policy change/scale-up

**Relationship building** – e.g., via group agreements, team and trust building

Joint purpose and/or interest, win-win Engage and participate

**Collective intelligence:** Knowledge production to generate meaning in an open, trustful and inclusive dialogue, with reciprocity and mutual benefit.

**Process of knowledge sharing:** Co-learning towards innovation.

**Recognising pluralism:** Embracing diversity; respecting and valuing the knowledge of all; i.e. different views, perspectives, epistemologies.

**Shared decision-making:** Thus, joint ownership in a process of power sharing and democratic participation











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## Example of realist evaluation study

(Martens et al. 2023)

 Lack of research and focus on macrolevel strategies for improving integrated care

(Briggs et al., 2018; Ashton, 2015; Chaudoir et al., 2013)

 Little emphasis on the political determinants of NCDs

(Stucker, et al., 2011; Mackenbach, 2014)

 The area of co-creation in health policy is theoretically underdeveloped

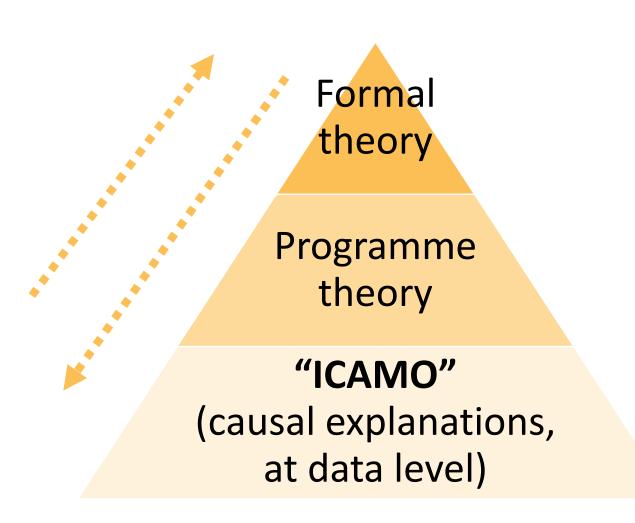
(Gilson & Raphaely, 2008; Gore & Parker, 2019; Redman et al., 2021)

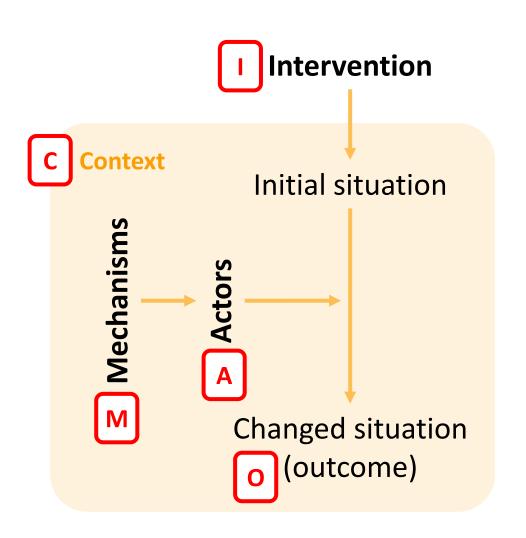
Hence, the main research question of this study:

'How, why, and under which context conditions does a scale-up roadmap co-created in policy dialogues lead to adoption, implementation, and scale-up?'



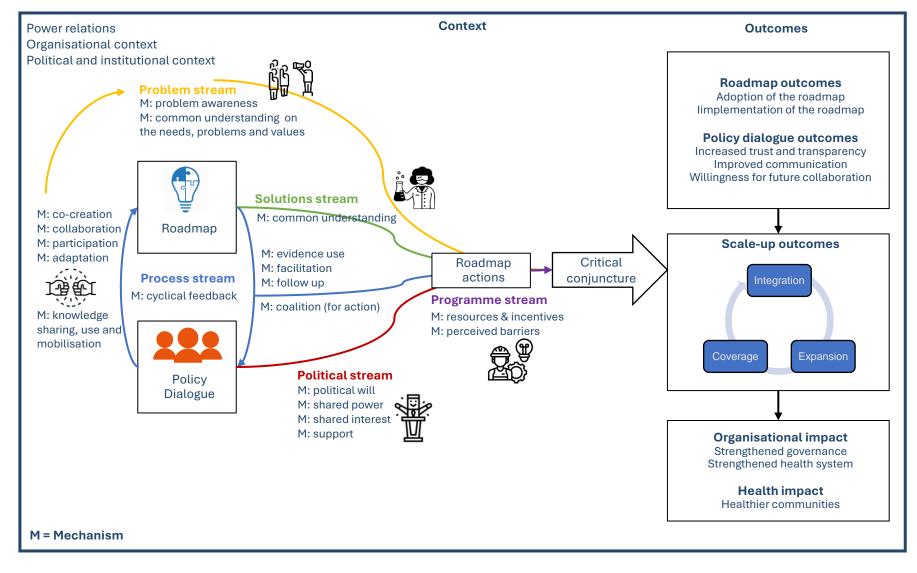
## Methods: realist evaluation







(Martens et al. 2023)





#### Theory gleaning: Multiple streams model

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CHRONIC DISEASES
AN ALLIANCE OF HEALTH RESEARCH FUNDERS

(Martens et al. 2023)

Agenda setting

Policy formulation

Decision making

Policy implementation

Policy evaluation

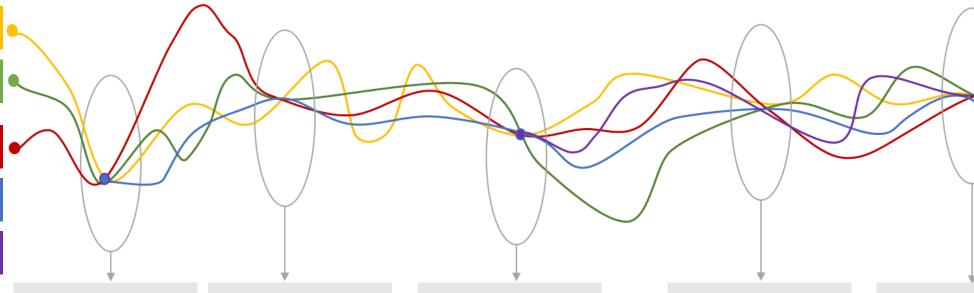
Problem

Solution

**Politics** 

**Process** 

Programme



#### Policy window 1

Critical juncture from agenda setting to formulation

#### Policy window 2

Critical juncture from formulation to decision making

#### Policy window 3

Critical juncture from decision making to implementation

#### Policy window 4

Critical juncture from implementation to evaluation

#### Policy window 5

Critical juncture from evaluation return to agenda setting



## Theoretical implications

- Co-creation = convergence of agency
- Success occurs when streams (agency within different domains) converge:



Reflexivity on own positionality and mandate: what is **feasible** × **relevant** to scale-up











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**Practical tips** 

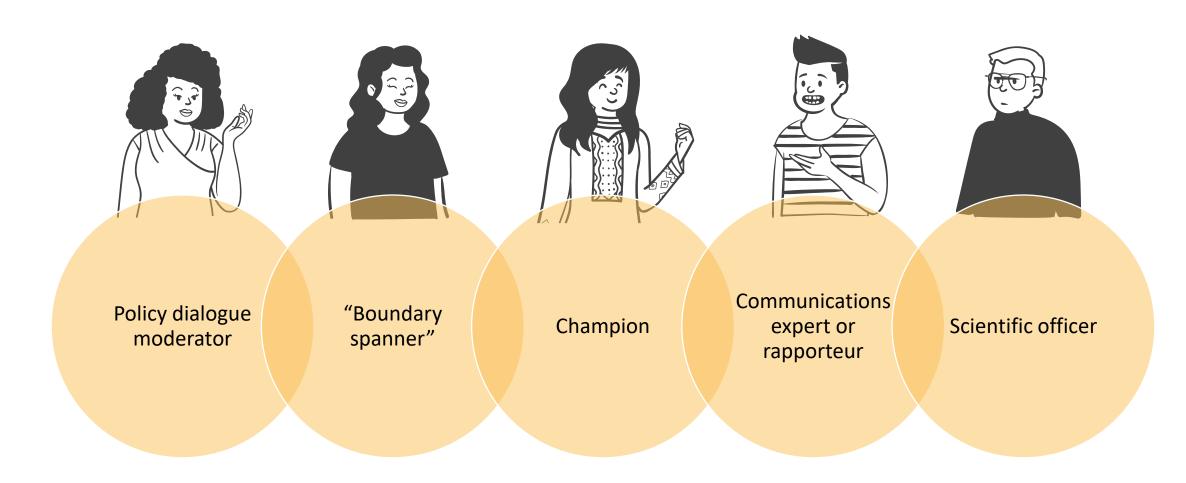


## Practical tips for policy dialogues

- ✓ Get to know your stakeholders before organising a policy dialogue.
  - Build synergies across (research) projects and/or organisations
  - Join committees or boards as a way to get to know stakeholders and organisations within (or outside of) your discipline
  - Build boundary spanning skills!
- ✓ Formulate clear objectives and targets of the policy dialogue
- ✓ Monitor the process and progress



## Setting up a policy dialogue team





## Relationships matter!

Review of 24 studies that asked over 2,000 policymakers what facilitated or prevented their use of research evidence

#### #1 facilitator of research use

Personal contact between researchers and between researchers and policymakers

#### #1 barrier to research use

Absence of personal contact between researchers and policymakers

Innvaer et al. (2002)

"The building of trust,
respect, and rapport can
be more potent than logic
and more compelling than
evidence"

S Bowen and PJ Martens (2005)



## Lessons from the SCUBY Project

- Tailor the dialogue to the context: Adapt your approach to the specific political landscape and available resources.
- Build a strong change team: Ensure the team has the necessary expertise and capacity to drive change.
- Leverage collaboration: Foster strong partnerships and networks to increase impact and sustainability.
- Embrace flexibility: Allow for adjustments to your plans as you learn and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Prioritise institutionalisation: Focus on integrating your intervention into existing systems to achieve long-term impact.







## Key messages

1

Importance of context and the role of stakeholders in defining and influencing scale-up (policies)

2

Instigate and invite or be invited, use (policy) windows of opportunity!

3

Need for multi-stakeholder collaboration and theoretical framing of this process - from problem to solution - in implementation science

4

NCDs constitute a wicked problem and require multisectoral collaboration, stakeholders included in policy dialogues can therefore be multiple, building a growing coalition, but should go beyond the health sector!

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