

## 1 **Indicators for Measuring the Contributions of Individual Knowledge Brokers**

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10

### 11 **Abstract**

12 An increasing number of knowledge brokers work at the interface between research, policy  
13 and practice. Their function is to facilitate processes to foster mutual learning among research,  
14 policy and practice. For some knowledge brokers, practical methodologies to assess the  
15 quality of their work is an important concern. While frameworks exist for assessing research  
16 impact at the level of a project or program, few are available for assessing contributions of  
17 individual knowledge brokers. In response to this, we have compiled a set of indicators to  
18 measure the quantity and quality of the contributions of individual knowledge brokers to  
19 projects, programs or platforms at the interface between research, policy and practice. The set  
20 is based on a review of the literature and the experience of a group of knowledge brokers  
21 active in water research and management in Switzerland, including the co-authors of this  
22 article. The set can be used by knowledge brokers to identify ways to improve the  
23 effectiveness of their practices and to demonstrate the benefit of their work to their employers  
24 and other stakeholders. Our approach is flexible enough that it can be applied where there are  
25 limited resources available for assessment.

26

27 **Keywords:** knowledge brokering, evaluation, contribution analysis, process indicators,  
28 attributable results indicators

29 *1. Introduction*

30 Environmental research often aims at broader impact on society and the environment.  
31 However, the actual impact of such research on policy and practice tends to lag behind  
32 aspirations (Campbell et al., 2015; Cornell et al., 2013; Cortner, 2000; Mauser et al., 2013;  
33 Roux et al., 2006; Watson, 2017). This is partially due to the fact that knowledge derived  
34 from research is just one factor among many that guides decisions of policy makers and  
35 practitioners. Pressure from economic markets and civil society, personal and professional  
36 values and beliefs, financial and human resource constraints, or cognitive and psychological  
37 factors often influence decision-making processes more than research knowledge, thus  
38 limiting the influence that research can have on policy and practice (Cairney et al., 2016;  
39 Owens, 2005). However, the benefit that research could potentially provide for society and  
40 the environment is also constrained by lack of productive exchange across the science-  
41 policy/practice interface (SPI). Researchers are sometimes not sufficiently informed about the  
42 concerns of decision makers and hence produce knowledge that is barely relevant for decision  
43 makers or is poorly timed. On the other hand, decision makers are not always sufficiently  
44 aware of available research knowledge or its implications (Porter and Dessai, 2017).

45 Given these limitations, it has been widely argued that more productive processes and  
46 institutional arrangements at the SPI are necessary (Cash et al., 2003; Cvitanovic et al.,  
47 2015b; Hering, 2016; Holmes and Clark, 2008; Jäger et al., 2013; López-Rodríguez et al.,  
48 2015; McNie, 2007; Reed et al., 2014; van Enst et al., 2014). One suggested approach is to  
49 invest in knowledge brokers (KBs), that is, individuals (or groups of individuals) in charge of  
50 facilitating interactions at the SPI (Cvitanovic et al., 2015a; Cvitanovic et al., 2015b; Hering,  
51 2016; Meyer, 2010; Michaels, 2009). In fact, knowledge brokers are active around the world,  
52 not only in environmental research, policy and practice (Michaels, 2009), but also in fields  
53 such as public health (Bornbaum et al., 2015; Dobbins et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2009a), or  
54 education (Kitagawa and Lightowler, 2013; Whitchurch, 2009). However, empirical evidence  
55 on the effectiveness of the many and varied processes facilitated by knowledge brokers  
56 remains incomplete. This poses a major obstacle to the future development of knowledge  
57 brokering, as only with reliable data it is possible to identify the most effective practices and  
58 further refine them. KB evaluation therefore has been identified as one of the top priorities on  
59 which future SPI research should focus (Cvitanovic et al., 2017; Klein, 2008; Ward et al.,  
60 2009a).

61 In this paper, we respond to this call by presenting a set of indicators to measure the  
62 contributions of individual knowledge brokers to projects, programs or platforms at the SPI;  
63 in the following, we will refer to projects, programs and platforms simply as ‘programs’,  
64 acknowledging that they differ with regard to team size, time frame, level of complexity and  
65 degree of institutionalization. The special feature of our set of indicators is its focus on the  
66 assessment of single individuals. Measuring the contributions of individual KBs is a complex  
67 task given that their contributions are difficult to disentangle from those of other team  
68 members and are subject to various external factors. The challenge is to find indicators that  
69 are responsive to the actions of the individual KB and which have low sensitivity to external  
70 factors. The focus of this paper is therefore on indicators pertaining to the processes involved  
71 in knowledge brokering (‘process indicators’), and indicators that reflect process results on  
72 which KBs are likely to have a decisive influence (‘attributable results indicators’). For both  
73 types of indicators, we provide metrics relating to quantity and quality of the contributions.  
74 To the best of our knowledge, this paper offers the most focused set of indicators in the sense  
75 that it concentrates exclusively on attributable indicators. At the same time, it is broad in  
76 terms of breadth of KB processes covered.

77 Our set of indicators is primarily intended to help knowledge brokers who seek a practicable  
78 method for self-assessment. First, it can help them to identify ways to improve the  
79 effectiveness of their daily work. Second, the indicators may be useful for knowledge brokers  
80 who want to demonstrate the benefit of their work at the SPI to their employers and other  
81 stakeholders. Third, it can inspire thinking about alternative processes of knowledge  
82 brokering and the desirable characteristics of the results. The inventory of KB processes we  
83 provide, together with the indicators, may be particularly helpful in this regard. Finally, our  
84 list of processes and indicators can be used by knowledge brokers to sharpen their  
85 professional profiles and to clarify their roles vis-à-vis their peers, employers, and other  
86 stakeholders.

87 This article begins by discussing the various roles of knowledge brokers and the contexts in  
88 which they operate. It then explains ‘contribution analysis’ (Mayne, 2008; Morton, 2015) as  
89 the broader evaluation approach on which we rely and discusses the challenge of identifying  
90 attributable indicators. The subsequent section describes the materials and methods we used to  
91 compile the lists of KB processes and indicators. After we have presented the lists, we explain  
92 how they can be applied based on a stylized example from our experience. The article closes

93 with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the approach and an outlook on further  
94 research.

95

## 96 *2. What are knowledge brokers?*

97 In the light of pressures on research to produce ‘useful’ knowledge to solve today’s  
98 environmental problems (McNie, 2007), knowledge brokers seem to be ‘on the rise’ (Holgate,  
99 2012; Knight and Lightowler, 2010; Meyer, 2010; Whitchurch, 2009, 2013). However, their  
100 profession is not yet fully established (Bielak et al., 2008; Kislov et al., 2017; Knight and  
101 Lightowler, 2010; Lomas, 2007; Meyer, 2010; Turnhout et al., 2013). Their functions and  
102 roles are often poorly specified (Ward et al., 2009a), and some lack recognition, institutional  
103 support and training (Cvitanovic et al., 2015a). Therefore, knowledge brokers are sometimes  
104 described as ‘invisible’ (Meyer, 2010) or ‘between worlds’ (Bielak et al., 2008; Lomas,  
105 2007).

106 Given these ambiguities, it comes as no surprise that the literature lacks an agreed definition  
107 of what knowledge brokers are. Definitions differ in particular regarding the specific roles and  
108 functions that are ascribed to them (Cvitanovic et al., 2015b). For the purpose of this article,  
109 we define knowledge brokers as persons who facilitate processes to foster mutual learning  
110 among research, policy and practice. The ultimate goal of such processes is to catalyze  
111 positive change in society and the environment. This definition is more restrictive than some  
112 of the existing definitions in the sense that we consider facilitation a necessary element of KB  
113 roles. This implies that, according to our definition, not every person participating in a process  
114 at the SPI is a knowledge broker. Only if the person takes an active role as facilitator, he or  
115 she is considered a knowledge broker. For instance, a person from a research institute sitting  
116 on an advisory board of a government regulatory agency is taking part in a SPI activity and  
117 might contribute to a better understanding between researchers and regulators, however, we  
118 do not consider the person a knowledge broker unless he or she acts as a facilitator of the  
119 advisory board’s activities. The same holds if this person gives a presentation during a  
120 congress organized by government partners, or teaches at a university or a public school. We  
121 are aware that teaching and consulting are sometimes considered part of knowledge broker  
122 roles (Meyer, 2010), and we also understand that many individuals we target with this article  
123 combine facilitation roles with teaching and consulting. However, for the purpose of this

124 paper, we opt for the more narrow definition in order to focus on the core KB roles and to  
125 distinguish them from other SPI activities.

126 Knowledge brokers facilitate a broad spectrum of processes (Bornbaum et al., 2015;  
127 Michaels, 2009; Ward et al., 2009a). Typical examples of such processes include identifying  
128 knowledge needs and gaps, integrating relevant knowledge from various sources and from  
129 different knowledge holders, creating common ground and enabling mutual learning among  
130 the actors involved, facilitating the development of knowledge products and their  
131 dissemination, organizing various types of events, or supporting evidence-based policy and  
132 practice. Knowledge brokers combine these and other processes in various ways, thus  
133 resulting in unique roles for every KB.

134 Knowledge brokering roles also vary according to KB's institutional affiliations (Lomas,  
135 2007). KBs may be affiliated to institutions on either side of the science-policy/practice  
136 interface, or to a 'boundary organization'. Boundary organizations are organizations  
137 specifically designed for the management of the SPI. In the ideal case, they are equally  
138 accountable to actors on both sides of the interface and hence can act as legitimate arbitrators  
139 (Cash et al., 2003; Guston, 2001; Parker and Crona, 2012; Sarkki et al., 2015). Depending on  
140 their organizational affiliation, KBs might face insecure career prospects due to their  
141 unconventional placement between established career paths. In the academic context, rules  
142 and norms for graduation, promotion and tenure do not always fully recognize knowledge  
143 brokering as part of research excellence (Campbell et al., 2015; Falk-Krzesinski et al., 2011;  
144 Hering, 2016; Klein and Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; Ward et al., 2009a). For the latter, the current  
145 article might be of special interest because it points to ways of demonstrating the value of  
146 their work for research, policy and practice.

147

### 148 *3. Contribution analysis and attributable indicators*

149 Knowledge brokers are usually appointed with the ultimate goal of facilitating broader impact  
150 on society or the environment. However, it is usually very difficult to establish how  
151 knowledge brokers actually contribute to this goal, as their contributions conflate with other  
152 influences (Bell et al., 2011; Morton, 2015; Reed et al., 2014). To address the complexity of  
153 conflated influences, evaluation approaches such as 'realist evaluation' (Salter and Kothari,  
154 2014) and 'contribution analysis' (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2013; Mayne, 2008; Morton,  
155 2015) have been developed. According to these approaches, evaluations should be based on

156 ‘program theories’ (Chen, 2005; Molas-Gallart et al., 2016; Rogers, 2008). Program theories  
157 are sets of assumptions about the ways a particular program is assumed to achieve its final  
158 goals (Morton, 2015; Rogers, 2008). They are sometimes also referred to as ‘theories of  
159 change’ (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007; Janzen et al., 2016; Mayne, 2008) or ‘impact  
160 pathways’ (Douthwaite et al., 2003).

161 When developing program theories, special attention should be paid to specifying the  
162 contextual factors that might influence the effectiveness and efficiency of KB processes. By  
163 doing so, program theories can potentially protect knowledge brokers against unjustified  
164 accusations of poor performance. Existing KB frameworks can help specifying those parts of  
165 program theories that refer to knowledge brokering. For example, Ward (2017) reviewed 47  
166 knowledge brokering models and proposed a composite framework based on her findings.  
167 Greenhalgh et al. (2016) discuss the strengths and weaknesses of six established frameworks.  
168 Further models can be found in Phipps et al. (2016), Cvitanovic et al. (2015b), Michaels  
169 (2009), Pennell et al. (2013) or Van Eerd et al. (2016). Finally, Mayne (2008) explains in six  
170 steps how program theories can be combined with empirical evidence to yield a ‘contribution  
171 story’. The indicators we present in this paper can be used to substantiate such contribution  
172 stories (Mayne, 2008).

173 One of the major challenges is to find indicators that are ‘attributable’ in the sense that  
174 variation in their score can be attributed to variation in the performance of individual KBs. To  
175 the best of our knowledge, this issue has not yet been addressed in the literature on knowledge  
176 brokering. However, similar problems are discussed for example in the literature on  
177 performance-based contracting (Nullmeier et al., 2016; Selviaridis and Norrman, 2014).  
178 Attributable indicators are difficult to find because there are almost always external factors  
179 beyond the control of the KB that influence the score of an indicator (Bell et al., 2011;  
180 Douthwaite et al., 2003; Mayne, 2008; Morton, 2015). The indicators that are most clearly  
181 attributable are those pertaining to characteristics of knowledge brokering processes  
182 themselves (‘process indicators’), such as inclusiveness of the process, or clarity in  
183 communication (Raitzer and Ryan, 2008; Spaapen and van Drooge, 2011). However, an  
184 exclusive focus on KB process indicators is not sufficient as it is also important to know  
185 whether these processes yield the assumed results. Therefore, we also consider indicators  
186 relating to certain results of the facilitated processes if it can be argued that the KB has a  
187 decisive influence on them. We call these indicators ‘attributable results indicators’. These  
188 include indicators relating to intangible results such as team cohesion, group learning or

189 common ground. But also indicators that measure characteristics of more tangible results such  
190 as knowledge products (e.g. fact sheets) or workshops can be considered attributable results  
191 indicators if KBs are centrally involved in their production. By contrast, the overall outcome  
192 and the impact of a program on society and the environment is usually not reasonably  
193 attributable to an individual KB as many other actors and external factors are at play. For this  
194 reason, we exclude indicators related to program level outcomes and impacts. Where there is  
195 uncertainty about whether a particular indicator reflects program or KB level performance, we  
196 decided to include the indicator in order to be as complete as possible.

197

#### 198 *4. Materials and methods*

199 The lists of KB processes and indicators presented in this article are based on two sources:  
200 existing literature and the practical experience of KBs working in the Swiss water sector. The  
201 insights gained from these two sources were synthesized and refined using the iterative  
202 process described below.

203 To identify relevant literature, we relied on three strategies: searching electronic publication  
204 databases, investigating the reference lists of publications identified through our database  
205 searches, and following leads from the professional networks of the co-authors.

206 Searching the electronic databases involved querying the Core Collection of Web of Science  
207 (WoS) and Scopus. We considered not only publications from the field of environmental  
208 research and management, but also from public health. Knowledge brokers in these different  
209 fields have much in common as explained in a recent study by Phipps et al. (2017). These  
210 commonalities are also evident during knowledge brokering conferences which span the  
211 different fields, such as the K\* conference held in 2012 in Hamilton (Canada) (Shaxson and  
212 Bielak, 2012) or the annual Canadian Knowledge Broker Mobilization Forum  
213 (<http://www.knowledgemobilization.net/forum/>). The WoS and Scopus queries targeted  
214 publications where titles, abstracts, or keywords included a core KB term (“knowledge  
215 broker” or “knowledge mobilization”), as well as terms related either to knowledge brokering  
216 processes (“roles”) or indicators (“indicator” or “evaluation”). The search was limited to  
217 articles, books, or book chapters published between 2000 and 2017 in English language. The  
218 exact search strings are reported in the Supplementary Material. The queries returned 142  
219 results (WoS and Scopus results merged). From these publications, we manually selected  
220 those where KB processes or indicators were displayed in a structured way, for example in a

221 table or figure, as a bullet-point list, or under sub-headings. This step reduced the number of  
222 publication to 38.

223 Equally important as the electronic database queries was the analysis of the reference lists of  
224 the publications already identified. This strategy allowed us to benefit from seven systematic  
225 literature reviews already published on similar topics (Bornbaum et al., 2015; Carr et al.,  
226 2012; Fazey et al., 2014; Van Eerd et al., 2016; Ward, 2017; Ward et al., 2009b; Wolf et al.,  
227 2013). It also uncovered publications that were not identified by the search terms used in our  
228 database searches. As a third strategy to complete our list of publications, we followed leads  
229 from our professional networks on relevant literature. The latter two strategies identified 29  
230 additional publications. The full list of publications ( $n = 38 + 29 = 67$ ) from which we  
231 extracted KB processes and indicators is shown in the Supplementary Material. Most of these  
232 publications are peer reviewed, but among them are also project and working group reports  
233 (Defila and Di Giulio, 1999; Molas-Gallart et al., 2002).

234 The second source on which our list of processes and indicators is based, is the practical  
235 experience of a group of 14 experienced knowledge brokers organized as a Community of  
236 Practice (CoP), hosted by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology  
237 (Eawag). The authors of this article are also active in this group. The CoP meets three to four  
238 times per year in order to exchange experience in knowledge brokering (Hering et al., 2017;  
239 Hoffmann et al., 2017). While all members of the CoP work in the Swiss water sector in a  
240 broad sense, their specific knowledge brokering roles differ regarding the kinds of processes  
241 they facilitate and their institutional affiliations. In terms of processes, some CoP members  
242 focus more on the initiation, coordination and publication of transdisciplinary research, while  
243 others concentrate on processes aimed at evidence-based policy and practice. In terms of  
244 institutional affiliations, some CoP members work within academic institutions as leaders of  
245 applied or transdisciplinary programs, others within boundary organizations, e.g. as executive  
246 secretaries of stakeholder platforms, which are organized as associations and co-financed by  
247 actors from both sides of the SPI. The current article draws on the diversity of roles and  
248 practical experiences of this group of knowledge brokers.

249 The evidence gained from the literature search and the experience of the CoP members was  
250 integrated in an iterative synthesis procedure. In a first step, the co-authors compiled a  
251 relatively short and simple list of processes and indicators based on an initial review of the  
252 existing literature. This list was then extended and validated in two CoP workshops and five  
253 individual interviews with CoP members. Both, workshops and interviews, focused on the



254 questions: ‘What type of knowledge brokering processes do you facilitate at the interface  
255 between research, policy and practice?’ and ‘What indicators would allow you to measure  
256 your contributions?’ Between the workshops and interviews, the co-authors updated,  
257 rearranged and streamlined the lists of processes and indicators. With this procedure,  
258 knowledge from the existing literature was complemented by practical experience.

259 Our review of the literature and the experience of the CoP members integrates a broad  
260 spectrum of KB processes and indicators. However, one domain that is not covered, even  
261 though it could be considered part of knowledge brokering according to our definition, is  
262 commercialization support. By commercialization support, we mean advice on patents and  
263 licenses, or support of start-ups and spin-offs. We exclude this domain because these services  
264 are often provided by individuals working within university technology transfer offices who  
265 specialize exclusively on the issues involved in this process (Meyer, 2010; Vogel and Kaghan,  
266 2001).

267

## 268 *5 Compilation of KB indicators*

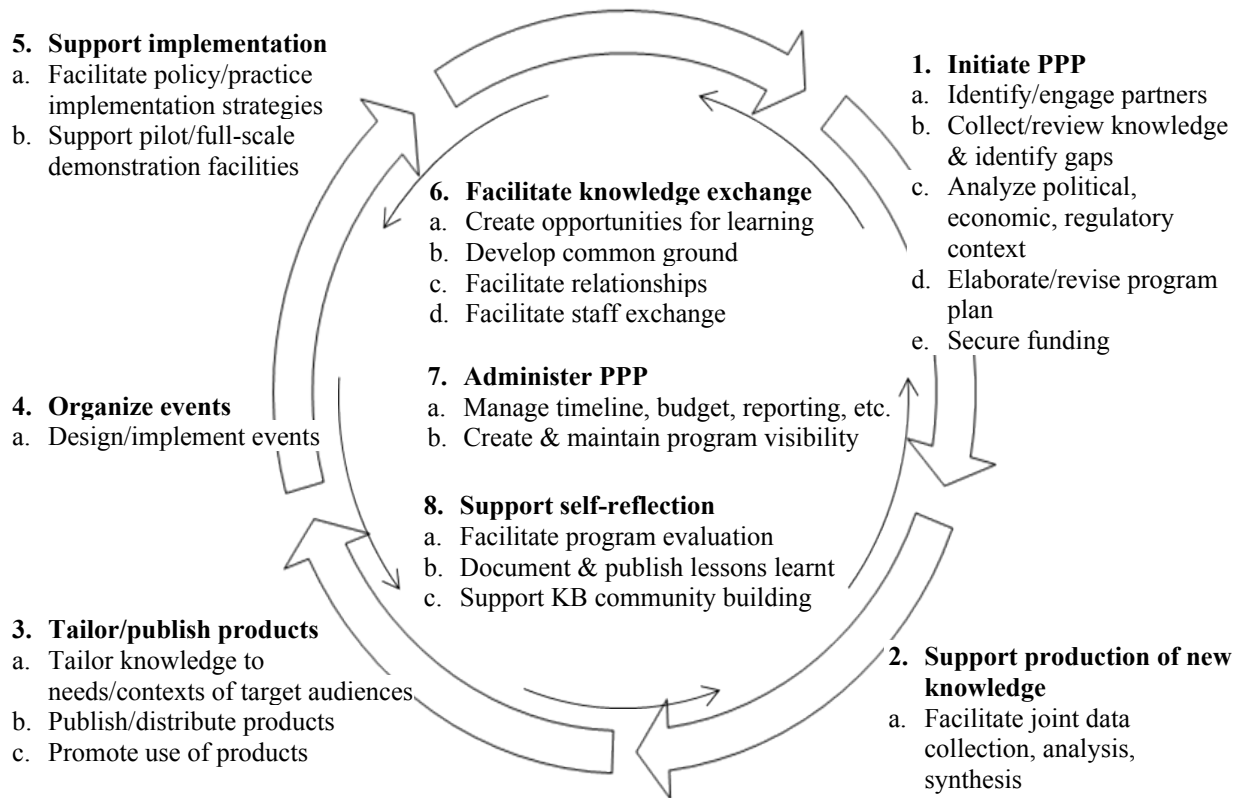
269 In this section, we present our set of indicators for measuring the contribution of individual  
270 knowledge brokers. We start with process indicators and then continue with attributable  
271 results indicators.

### 272 *5.1 Process indicators*

273 KB processes can be roughly grouped into eight categories as shown in Figure 1. The figure is  
274 based on the flow diagram of Kim et al. (2018). In our figure, the outer ring of arrows  
275 represents the cyclical nature of the programs where knowledge brokering takes place. Of  
276 course, this is a highly stylized representation. In reality, the different stages of the program  
277 cycle are performed iteratively with loops and ‘jumps’ (Lang et al., 2012; Phipps et al., 2016).  
278 This non-linear aspect is highlighted by the inner circle where the arrows point in the opposite  
279 direction. In the middle of the circle are three types of KB processes that take place  
280 throughout the entire cycle of a program.

281

282 *Figure 1: KB processes, arranged along the stages of a stylized program cycle.*



283

284 The processes represented in Figure 1 can be assessed using process indicators. Essentially,  
285 the same indicators can be used for all processes. To quantify the amount of resources spent  
286 on the various processes, the following indicators can be applied:

- 287 • Amount of time spent on the respective process
- 288 • Number and type of internal team meetings/workshops associated with the respective  
289 process
- 290 • Number and duration of phone calls, face-to-face conversations and visits associated  
291 with the respective process
- 292 • Number and length of e-mails written in the context of the respective process
- 293 • Number of research papers/books, official documents, regulations, webpages, etc.  
294 studied in the context of the respective process

295 Beyond quantifying efforts, the quality of the processes can be assessed using the following  
296 indicators:

- 297 • Demonstrated use of existing knowledge of KB processes, tools and frameworks, e.g.  
298 drawing from experience from similar programs and reviews of the current program,  
299 or use of information from scientific and grey literature (on knowledge brokering,  
300 transdisciplinarity, team science, system science, science communication, evaluation,  
301 etc.)

- 302 • Perceived quality of facilitation [survey/interviews, testimonials], e.g. perceived  
303 contribution of the KB to efficient work flows (thoughtful planning, adequate timing,  
304 flexibility, efficient facilitation of meetings, etc.); perceived contribution of the KB to  
305 a transparent, inclusive, respectful process; perceived clarity and efficiency of internal  
306 communication (frequency, timing, means of communication, etc.)
- 307 • Perceptions of personal skills/qualities of the KB [survey/interviews, testimonials],  
308 e.g. motivational skills, negotiation/mediation skills, creativity and flexibility,  
309 openness and reactivity to feedback

310 We suggest that surveys or interviews can be appropriate methods to evaluate indicators that  
311 refer to subjective perceptions. Surveys are structured tools for gathering information on  
312 individual perceptions and are useful to target a large number of respondents. By contrast,  
313 interviews might be appropriate if there is a relatively small number of interviewees.  
314 Respondents can be interviewed individually or in groups. We also consider an informal  
315 question to a single key person about his or her perception of some aspect of the program as a  
316 form of interview. Questions for surveys or interviews should be formulated in the context of  
317 the specific program and the aspects of the work to be assessed. Confidentiality and/or ethics  
318 should also be considered when conducting surveys or interviews with external stakeholders  
319 for reporting purposes. More information on designing surveys and interviews, as well as on  
320 ethics considerations, are available in de Leeuw et al. (2008) and Gideon (2012).

321 Given the considerable resources required to conduct surveys or interviews, large institutions  
322 may consider appointing a staff member or external evaluation office to undertake the task on  
323 behalf of all knowledge brokers. In smaller institutions, knowledge brokers will need to  
324 consider the trade-off between the resources required to conduct such interviews and the  
325 benefits that such assessment may bring. Under strong time constraints, assessments based on  
326 self-reflection may be the only option.

327

## 328 *5.2 Attributable results indicators*

329 Attributable results indicators are presented in Table 1. The left column of the table lists the  
330 processes (graphically represented in Figure 1), while the right column includes the  
331 corresponding results indicators. The numbering corresponds across the two columns. In the  
332 right column, we use letters (1a, 1b, 1c, [...]) for different indicators of quantity and Roman  
333 numerals (i, ii, iii, [...]) for corresponding indicators of quality.

334 *Table 1: Knowledge brokering processes (left column) and corresponding attributable results indicators (right column).*

Knowledge brokering processes	Attributable results indicators
1. Initiate the program	
<p>1a. Identify and engage research/policy/practice partners</p> <p>1b. Collect/review existing data/knowledge and identify gaps</p> <p>1c. Analyze political, economic, regulatory context of the program</p> <p>1d. Elaborate/revise program plan based on needs, expectations, perspectives of program partners and the wider target audience</p> <p>1e. Secure funding for the program (including funding for KB processes)</p>	<p>1a. Teams/networks created/maintained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Size and composition of the team/network as compared to an ‘ideal’ team/network</li> <li>ii. Level and type of contributions to the program by research/policy/practice partners</li> <li>iii. Persistence/stability of the team/network</li> </ul> <p>1b. Number and type of reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Perceived diversity/representativeness/completeness of data/knowledge considered [survey/interviews]</li> <li>ii. Perceived clarity of conclusions [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>1c. Number and type of context analyses<sup>(1)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. See (1b)</li> </ul> <p>1d. Program plan elaborated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Diversity of perspectives/expectations/needs considered</li> <li>ii. Perceived clarity of common objectives, deliverables, responsibilities, roles, time plan, budget, evaluation approach, etc. [survey/interviews]</li> <li>iii. Breadth and strength of support for the program plan from research/policy/practice partners [official commitments, survey/interviews]</li> <li>iv. Feasibility and flexibility of the program plan [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>1e. Amount and type of co-/in-kind funding granted to the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Diversity of funding sources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Continuing/follow-up program funding</li> <li>iii. Amount and type of funding granted for KB processes</li> </ul>
<b>2. Support production of new knowledge</b>	
2a. Facilitate joint data collection, data analysis, synthesis	<p>2a. Number and type of data collections<sup>(4)</sup>, analyses<sup>(5)</sup>, syntheses facilitated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and diversity of research/policy/practice partners contributing to and/or validating data collection, data analysis, synthesis and extent/type of contributions</li> <li>ii. Perceived usefulness of data/analyses/syntheses for science/policy/practice [survey/interviews]</li> </ul>
<b>3. Tailor and publish products</b>	
<p>3a. Tailor knowledge to needs/contexts of target audiences &amp; transform it into preferred format (print, online, audio, visual)</p> <p>3b. Publish/distribute products</p> <p>3c. Promote/monitor use of products</p>	<p>3a. Number and type of products developed for research<sup>(6)</sup>, policy/practice<sup>(7)</sup>, and public<sup>(8)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number, diversity of research/policy/practice partners contributing to products, and extent/type of contribution</li> <li>ii. Perceived usefulness of products for science/policy/practice [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>3b. Number and type of products published/distributed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Circulation of print products, or number of times audio-visual media were broadcast by radio/TV</li> <li>ii. Quality/reputation of the publisher/outlet (rankings, impact factor, etc.), size and composition of its readership/audience (disciplinary/geographical/language reach)</li> </ul> <p>3c. Number and type of uses (intends of use) of products by target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number of listeners/viewers (radio/TV), downloads/visitors, click rate/depth, dwell time (web-based products)</li> <li>ii. Number of citations in print/broadcast/web publications and social media, quality/reputation of the citing publication/social media platform</li> </ul>

	iii. Number of citations in policy documents (laws, regulations, etc.) and implementation documents (guidelines, planning documents, etc.)
4. Organize events for external target groups	
4a. Design and implement events (define goals/agenda, mobilize speakers, facilitate, administrate event, etc.)	<p>4a. Number and type of events designed/implemented for research/policy/practice<sup>(9)</sup> and for public<sup>(10)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and type of co-organizers/partners</li> <li>ii. Quality of speakers (reputation, influence, etc.)</li> <li>iii. Size/composition of audience, representation of key actors from research/policy/practice</li> <li>iv. Level and type of involvement of the audience (e.g. in Q&amp;A, group discussions)</li> <li>v. Perceived event outcomes (learning, networking, etc.) [survey/interviews]</li> <li>vi. Number of reports on event in news, journals, web portals, etc.</li> <li>vii. Expenses born by participants (event fees, travelling, accommodation, etc.)</li> </ul>
5. Support implementation	
<p>5a. Facilitate policy/practice implementation plans/strategies</p> <p>5b. Support pilot/full-scale test/demonstration facilities</p>	<p>5a. Number of implementation plans/strategies facilitated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and type of research/policy/practice partners participating in the development of plans/strategies</li> <li>ii. Breadth and strength of support for plans/strategies from research/policy/practice partners (e.g. letters of agreement, public statements)</li> <li>iii. Degree of compliance with plans/strategies</li> </ul> <p>5b. Number and type of pilot/full-scale test/demonstration facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Amount and type of co-/in-kind funding granted</li> <li>ii. Continuing/follow-up funding</li> </ul>

6. Facilitate continuous knowledge exchange among research/policy/practice partners

<p>6a. Create opportunities for exchange/learning across research disciplines, policy and practice</p> <p>6b. Develop common ground for discussion (common language, mutual understanding, etc.)</p> <p>6c. Facilitate relationship building/maintenance among program partners</p> <p>6d. Facilitate staff exchange between research and policy/practice</p>	<p>6a. Number and type of opportunities created for exchange/learning<sup>(2)</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and types of research/policy/practice partners participating in individual exchange/learning opportunities</li> <li>ii. Perceptions of the appropriateness of available opportunities [survey/interviews]</li> <li>iii. Increased understanding of each other's needs/expectations/perspectives, organizational constraints and opportunities, work flows and communication channels [survey/interviews]</li> <li>iv. Influence of new perspectives/knowledge on research/policy/practice [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>6b. Common ground developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and type of boundary objects developed<sup>(3)</sup></li> <li>ii. Use of boundary objects within and beyond the program (e.g. in presentations/publications)</li> <li>iii. Perceptions of the extent to which common ground has evolved [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>6c. Relationships built/maintained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and type of opportunities where partners consider each other in projects/commissions/networks outside the program</li> <li>ii. Perceptions of relationships established, refreshed, maintained [survey/interviews]</li> <li>iii. Perceptions of team culture (trust, cohesion, respectfulness, openness, etc.) [survey/interviews]</li> </ul> <p>6d. Number and type of staff exchanges facilitated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number of researchers moving to jobs in policy/practice or vice versa</li> <li>ii. Number of temporary staff exchanges</li> <li>iii. Perceived learning effects of staff exchanges [survey/interviews, testimonials]</li> </ul>
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7. Administer the program	
7a. Manage timeline, budget, reporting, etc. 7b. Create and maintain internal and external visibility of the program	7a. Number and type of program management tasks completed i. Degree of compliance with timeline, budget ii. Degree of accomplishment of deliverables 7b. Level of visibility of the program i. Number of visitors on webpage, click rate/depth, dwell time ii. Reports on the program in news, journals, networks, web-pages, etc. iii. Number of invitations to participate in events organized by target groups
8. Support self-reflection and meta learning	
8a. Facilitate evaluation of the program 8b. Document/publish lessons learnt on knowledge brokering 8c. Support networking, community building, and capacity building among KBs	8a. Number of evaluation reports/workshops facilitated i. Number and type of research/policy/practice partners co-designing and/or participating in evaluation ii. Coverage of key aspects [survey/interviews] iii. Perceived clarity of conclusions/recommendations [survey/interviews] 8b. Number and type of internal documents/publications on lessons learnt (e.g. regarding outcomes/impacts of and drivers/barriers to knowledge brokering) i. If published, see (3b) 8c. Number and type of networks/communities of KBs created and maintained i. Size/composition of the networks/communities of KBs ii. Level and type of activity of network/communities (e.g. meetings, workshops, courses, conferences, newsletters, etc.) iii. Perceived learning outcomes from networks/communities [survey/interviews]



- 335 (1) e.g. review documents of legislation/regulation/guidance, stakeholder analyses/maps, analysis of public opinion surveys, etc.
- 336 (2) e.g. informal exchange, presentations, facilitated workshops, etc.
- 337 (3) e.g. conceptual maps/diagrams/models, objectives hierarchies, progress charts, workshop proceedings, shared language, stories/symbols, etc.
- 338 (4) e.g. fieldwork, experiments, interviews/surveys, text/web scraping, etc.
- 339 (5) e.g. modelling, risk assessment, qualitative research, etc.
- 340 (6) e.g. working papers, (peer-reviewed) papers/books/book sections, etc.
- 341 (7) e.g. trade journal publications, systematic literature reviews, 'rapid response' summaries, synthesis documents, fact sheets, handbooks,
- 342 guidelines, knowledge platforms/webpages, newsletters, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), indicator/evaluation systems, decision support
- 343 tools, educational/didactic products, etc.
- 344 (8) e.g. newspaper articles, interviews, blogs, websites, artistic representations of research, animations, etc.
- 345 (9) e.g. conferences/congresses, workshops, continuing education courses, etc.
- 346 (10) e.g. open door days, field days, science fairs, exhibitions, artistic performances, etc.
- 347

348 *6. An illustrative example of how to use the indicators*

349 In order to clarify the use of the sets of processes and indicators presented in sections 5.1 and  
350 5.2, we now describe possible applications based on our practical experience. For example,  
351 many KBs are involved in the identification and mobilization of relevant actors to collaborate  
352 in a program (process 1a in Table 1). To evaluate the process, the KB can select from the lists  
353 presented in section 5.1 the indicators that seem most appropriate and for which evidence can  
354 be efficiently collected. This could be, for example, the number of e-mails exchanged with  
355 persons considered for the program in a given period of time. To assess the quality of the  
356 process of mobilizing partners, the KB could, for example, explain how he or she has used  
357 existing knowledge or experience in the process of engaging potential partners.

358 However, these indicators are process-related and do not reflect whether the KB's effort was  
359 effective. To assess effectiveness, the KB can select from the indicators listed under 1a in the  
360 right column of Table 1. Indicator 1a.i for example suggests comparing the actual  
361 composition of the team or network to an 'ideal' team. The ideal team could be identified by  
362 asking the current team members who else should be part of the team, or by using more  
363 advanced methodologies such as stakeholder analysis/mapping (Leventon et al., 2016; Reed et  
364 al., 2009). Other possible indicators of the quality of the network created include the level and  
365 type of contributions (time, engagement in discussions, etc.) by the team members (indicator  
366 1a.ii) or the persistence and stability of the team or network (indicator 1a.iii). The selection of  
367 indicators should be based on the stakeholders' view of which indicators are most relevant to  
368 the context and on the availability of resources to collect the necessary information.

369 This example also illustrates attribution problems attached to results indicators and why  
370 process indicators and program theories are important in such situations. For example, the  
371 results indicators might show that team composition is far from ideal (indicator 1a.i) or that  
372 certain team members do not contribute as expected (indicator 1a.ii). However, this does  
373 necessarily have to be due to a poor performance by the knowledge broker. It could also be  
374 the result of unpredictable budget cuts in one of the participating institutions that forced  
375 certain team members to withdraw from the program. In such situations, it is crucial that the  
376 knowledge broker can rely on a solid program theory that outlines the factors that are beyond  
377 his or her control. In addition, the knowledge broker can use process indicators (section 5.1  
378 above) to demonstrate that he or has facilitated the process well and hence, the poor result is  
379 not his or her fault.

380 Thus far, the example has focused on a single knowledge brokering process (process 1a in  
381 Table 1). This is one possible use of our set of processes and indicators. However, causal links  
382 to other knowledge brokering processes and corresponding results are not captured with such  
383 an approach. For example, knowledge brokering processes related to synthesis work (process  
384 3a in Table 1) might have feedback effects on the composition of the team or network  
385 (indicators 1a in Table 1). These links should be theorized in the program theory and, if  
386 feasible, backed with evidence from appropriate indicators.

387 The results of the exercise just described can be used for learning about knowledge brokering,  
388 or for reporting to employers and other stakeholders. The sets of processes and indicators can  
389 also serve as a resource from which KBs can gain additional ideas about possible processes or  
390 quality objectives. KBs can further use the lists of KB processes to sharpen their professional  
391 profiles and to explain their roles to people that are not familiar with the daily work of KBs.

392 Thinking about possible processes and indicators should ideally take place at the beginning of  
393 the program. This creates awareness of quality objectives. Furthermore, if evaluation is  
394 planned ahead, data collection could be possible with little additional effort as a byproduct of  
395 the daily business (Wolf et al., 2014).

396

## 397 *7. Discussion and conclusion*

398 The centerpiece of this article is a set of indicators to measure the quantity and quality of  
399 contributions of individual knowledge brokers to project, programs or platforms, in this article  
400 referred to as ‘programs’, at the interface between research, policy and practice. The  
401 indicators can help knowledge brokers to learn about their own practices and to demonstrate  
402 the value of their work to employers and other stakeholders. At the same time, the lists of  
403 processes and indicators can be used by knowledge brokers as a source of new ideas about  
404 alternative knowledge brokering processes and desirable characteristics of the results. It can  
405 also be used for sharpening KB’s professional profiles. The focus in this paper was on  
406 indicators of processes and attributable results since these types of indicators are responsive to  
407 the actions of the KB, with limited influence of external factors. We emphasized that these  
408 indicators have most leverage if used in combination with a program theory outlining the  
409 assumed effects of knowledge brokering processes and the intervening factors.

410 Our article reacts to repeated calls for better methodologies for the evaluation of knowledge  
411 brokering (Cvitanovic et al., 2017; Klein, 2008; Ward et al., 2009a). It does so in at least two  
412 ways. First, to our knowledge, it is the first paper that focuses explicitly on measuring the  
413 contributions of individual knowledge brokers. Most existing evaluation frameworks focus on  
414 results at the level of a project or program. These are often not attributable to individual  
415 knowledge brokers. Second, while many of these frameworks focus on a particular subset  
416 of knowledge brokering processes or indicators, our article encompasses a broad spectrum of  
417 processes and indicators. This is crucial in order to capture the contributions of knowledge  
418 brokers as completely as possible.

419 It was a deliberate decision to focus this paper on indicators. However, it is important to  
420 recognize that an excessive focus on indicators can create incentives for behavior that is  
421 narrowly aimed at maximizing scores on quickly achievable, uncontroversial indicators  
422 (Greenhalgh et al., 2016). Such ‘gaming of indicators’ can crowd out more complex and  
423 diffuse objectives that are hard to measure, thus potentially undermining the overall objectives  
424 of a program (Rijcke et al., 2015). As much as possible, indicators must therefore be  
425 inseparable from the objectives of a program, i.e. the indicators should represent conditions or  
426 behaviors that are likely to progress the program towards its objectives.

427 Another challenge might stem from potential disagreement about the appropriate indicators  
428 among the relevant stakeholders (Bautista et al., 2017). In such situations, making evaluation  
429 a participatory process can increase the legitimacy and credibility of its conclusions. The  
430 timing of the evaluation is also an important consideration that can have a major influence on  
431 the findings (Bell et al., 2011). Measuring indicators soon after the completion of a program  
432 could miss impacts and/or contributions of a knowledge broker that take time to emerge. On  
433 the other hand, waiting until the full impact on policy and practice have been realized can  
434 make it difficult to attribute the impact to a particular program or particular outcome. For  
435 example, subsequent programs may build on conceptual foundations, making it difficult for  
436 key informants to recall the specific contribution of the original program. Measuring different  
437 indicators at different times during and after the completion of the program may help to  
438 circumvent this issue.

439 This article is based on the practical experience of KBs working in the Swiss water sector.  
440 Their work is not fully representative of knowledge brokering in general. However, their  
441 experience covers a broad spectrum of roles and institutional affiliations. We further  
442 considered literature on knowledge brokering in other contexts. Nevertheless, a next step

443 should be exploring the use of our indicators by KBs in a more systematic way. Subsequent  
444 surveys and interviews with KBs would allow further validation and refinement of the KB  
445 processes and indicators.

446 Another topic that requires more attention is prioritization of the indicators. That is, the  
447 selection of indicators that are most ‘useful’ (Bautista et al., 2017) in a given context. This is  
448 important for several reasons. First, in a situation where data collection on indicators is time-  
449 consuming and resources available for assessment are scarce, prioritization can help with  
450 selecting those indicators that provide the best cost-benefit ratio in a given context. Second,  
451 prioritization is important because a large number of indicators can distract from the fact that  
452 some aspects might be more relevant than others. Finally, comparison of KB evaluations  
453 across different programs is easier if there is an agreed set of core indicators. One possible  
454 way to prioritize is to encourage experienced KBs apply the indicators to their situation, and  
455 let them assess which of the indicators are most valid (actually measuring what they intend to  
456 measure), reliable (consistent over repeated measures and over individuals performing the  
457 assessment), feasible (achievable with the available resources), and attributable (under  
458 reasonable control of the KB). Our list of indicators presents a basis from which such  
459 prioritization can start.

460

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474

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