OEWG on Uptake and Impact
CANADA Initial input

General points

Note: The observations below are offered in a constructive spirit. In some cases, these are already being considered by the Secretariat, who we recognize consistently seek to deliver on a broad and comprehensive mandate within constrained resources.

1. **Full spectrum of experience**: It can be helpful to analyse/share both positive and negative use cases as guides for what has and hasn't worked over the years. Focusing only on successful examples may narrow our view.
2. **Use**: We expect the use of a product is a function of three variables: users, usefulness and usability. All three variables need to be explicitly considered (e.g. if it is useful (strong content) but not very usable (e.g. dense, hard to understand text), it will not get used. If it has high usability (e.g. good interface, etc.) but low technical quality, it is unlikely to be used, etc.).
    - *Users*: We need to try to understand 1) who the users will be (bureaucrats, parliamentarians, etc.) 2) what they might need to know 3) how they can best "absorb" the information
    - *Usefulness*: We need to sustain a high level of technical quality – at times the negotiation process dilutes the technical validity of the content. We also need to try to have the content speak to concrete problems/challenges faced by users so that it helps them relatively directly without too much additional "digestion" or interpretation by the constituency of the user. We also need to recognize that different stakeholders are at different stages of policy development/application, so to broaden usefulness, explicitly covering a range of policy options across a spectrum from nascent to "fully formed" could help a text "speak" to its audience
    - *Usability*: We should try to make the content as accessible as possible, with different platforms/formats/interfaces. This can be factsheets, video blurbs, toolkits, etc, that take fuller advantage of digital tools at our disposal, and that move beyond a 40-page printed document.
3. **Phases**: The development of a policy product covers three phases – as it is being framed, as it is being developed/negotiated, and as it is being rolled out/implemented. There are opportunities to strengthen the likelihood of impact/uptake across all three phases.
    - *Before*: In the conceptualization period, ensuring the perspectives of practitioners/targeted end users are captured in terms of what they actually need help with or are struggling to develop will help establish a useful scope for the products. Setting the right questions at the beginning greatly influences the eventual outcome.
    - *During*: The actual product development requires sufficient time and technical input to have useful and relevant content. This may mean structuring the process differently, to allow for periodic "inflows" of content/expert insight, time for deliberation (rather than negotiation), and quality assurance efforts.
    - *After*: As many interventions say when policy products are being adopted in Plenary, that moment is not the end but rather the beginning of the life of the product. This merits explicit consideration in what can/should be the essential steps for encouraging

use, for example periodic reviews, timeline for updates, direct engagement with RBAs/IFIs/others to promote their use/distribution to country offices, etc. Some of this is covered in other pillars of CFS, but the diffusion/distribution stage should be considered from the outset.

4. **Aspects**: The development of a policy product includes notionally three aspects – the process used, the content included, and how it is presented. There are opportunities to strengthen the likelihood of impact/uptake across all three aspects.
   - *Process*: How we go about developing a product conditions the outcome. Too little time, too limited participation, and too narrow use of tools can all reduce the effectiveness of the outcome. Leveraging more digital tools can help address some of these, as can aiming to provide more (strategic/structured) time for the process.
   - *Content*: There are many sources of insight that can inform the content. While the HLPE remains principal among these, other sources should be considered to the extent possible, too, exploiting diverse mechanisms to draw in this information (e.g. not requiring physical presence in a meeting), including leveraging the assets of stakeholders like the RBAs and CGIAR (e.g. country offices, other planned meetings, etc)
   - *Presentation*: How information is conveyed can have a large influence on the level of uptake, with diverse users having different learning/use preferences. This could be field tested with materials being presented in different formats and tracking their use (downloads/hits/etc), and then using this data to inform future processes (for example, HLPE could present each of their upcoming reports in 2-3 different ways and then have some metrics on how they're used – perhaps imperfect, but could still generate some insights)
5. **Scope of the mandate**: We note the importance of respecting the role of CFS and its mandate, which does not stray into implementation or direct country level engagement, relying rather on the role of its members, participants and stakeholders to fulfill those functions. Ultimately, the end point of CFS responsibility is developing/delivering products that have the greatest chance of being used/adopted by others
6. **Considerations**: Certain areas of expertise have seen growing attention in recent years, which could usefully be applied to CFS products. This includes "design thinking", which has a strong focus on the end user/target audience, and behavioural science, that explores how people change their approaches, which is not always an obvious or traditional path. Notably, FAO has behavioural scientists on staff who may be able to share insights on how to adapt CFS processes and products to achieve greater influence/impact.

Note: A sample table that brings together items 2, 3, and 4, is at the end of this document.

Secretariat questions

1. Could you share your expectations in terms of desired outcomes and areas of work of this CFS workstream?

We hope to see a broadly applicable document that can guide current and future workstreams with practical approaches/guidance for members/participants and the secretariat to adjust, as necessary and as feasible within resource limitations, the way we go about policy convergence processes.

2. Could you indicate the main elements that would be important to include in the Action Plan?

See points above regarding “use”, “phases”, and “aspects”, which could all be considered in the Action Plan.

3. Could you present concrete examples of uptake activities carried out by your constituency, including indications on their impact, challenges encountered as well as areas for improvement?

We will aim to share concrete examples of positive (and negative) uptake experiences during the OEWG sessions relevant to different dimensions of the process.

Sample framework of uptake considerations – indicative examples only

Considerations for Policy Processes		Phases		
		Before	**During**	**After**
Aspects	**Process**	Surveys of stakeholders on needs, key questions	Enough time to allow for substantive discussion Perhaps OEWG discussions in between negotiation sessions to help clarification of topics	Specific follow-up moments defined
	Content	Diverse practitioners should input into how to frame the question to make it useful	Diverse (technical) sources to feed into discussions to ensure common understanding of topic Option to “test drive” draft recommendation with focus group/expert panel to see if it is useable/useful	Set a process for updating the content over time – e.g. a formal content review every x years
	Presentation	Easy to use surveys or other tools to make input as easy/painless as possible	Interim open presentation of findings (including to experts) to help bring people along	Show explicitly a spectrum of options – basic, medium, advanced/ambitious - could be through a dropdown on a website Present the essentials in alternate formats (video, webinar, infographic, etc)