Policy Framework

A workshop for members of Civil Society Organisations participating in *Dialogues for Vision*

Berovo, September 2015

Workbook

Windmill Consulting Ltd, 2015

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Introduction

1. This workbook was designed to support the *Policy Framework* workshop held in Berovo, Macedonia, in September 2015. Each section of it relates to a part of the programme.

2. The overall aim of the workshop was to increase the capacity of members of civil society organisations participating in, or interested in participating in *Dialogues for Vision,* to understand and to influence processes of policy- and decision-making in Macedonia.

3. The desired learning outcomes of the workshop were that, on completion, delegates should:

    - be familiar with a framework for influencing policy making cycle and able to see how they can use it
    - be aware of different ways in which they can influence policy- and decision-making and have more confidence in their ability to do so effectively
    - have increased their capacity for understanding, monitoring and evaluating policies through effective evidence-based research and analysis

3. The workbook offers straightforward concepts, approaches and techniques that can be applied in day-to-day work. During the course participants had opportunities to try out a number of these though there was not enough time to go into depth on all of them.

4. A little of the material that was in the workbook actually used on the course has been removed to protect intellectual property rights.

5. We hope that the learning from the workshop will be helpful to those who attended and that this workbook, in its slightly reduced form, will be helpful to other people who see it.

Zoe McNeill-Ritchie and Graham Davey, Windmill Consulting Ltd
Workshop facilitators

POLICY AND POLICY-MAKING:

Terms and Concepts

Policy and Strategy

1. These terms are often used interchangeably. There is no need to be concerned about this. The main thing is to be aware that there are common elements and systematic approaches that can help you to manage the work in which you are involved, whatever label – "policy" or "strategy" is attached to it.

2. In general terms:

   - **A strategy** refers to the big picture. It should contain a clearly defined set of long term objectives and a high level plan of how to get to the desired future. Governments not only plan for the future, they also have the power and the responsibility to shape the future. In government a strategic vision is what the Government wants the world around us to look like and how it plans to get there.

   - **A policy** is a deliberately chosen pattern of activity or course of action designed to keep moving towards the outcomes we want (and away from those we want to avoid). **Policy-making or policy-development** is a process through which governments translate their political (strategic) vision into programmes and actions to deliver 'outcomes' – desired changes in the real world.

3. Thus, policy-making is often concerned with addressing a single strand or element of a bigger strategic picture. This is further discussed in the section on **Vision**

Decision-Making

4. Senior decision-makers in government - often elected politicians – should be able to take rational decisions on the basis of a clear presentation of all of the relevant facts and objective analysis.

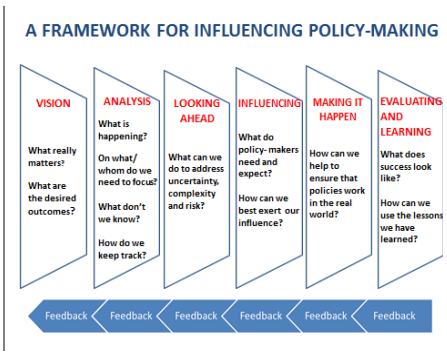
5. In reality, decisions will often be made quickly and decision-makers and their judgment and decisions will be influenced by factors such as political or representational issues, timescales (particularly electoral or fiscal cycles), campaigning and lobbying, personal experience or prejudice, views of other senior colleagues, media interest, pressure from international counterparts, and so on. It is important for anyone wanting to influence the decision-making process - whether they are government officials or representatives of civil society - to make their case in a way that works for political decision-makers and

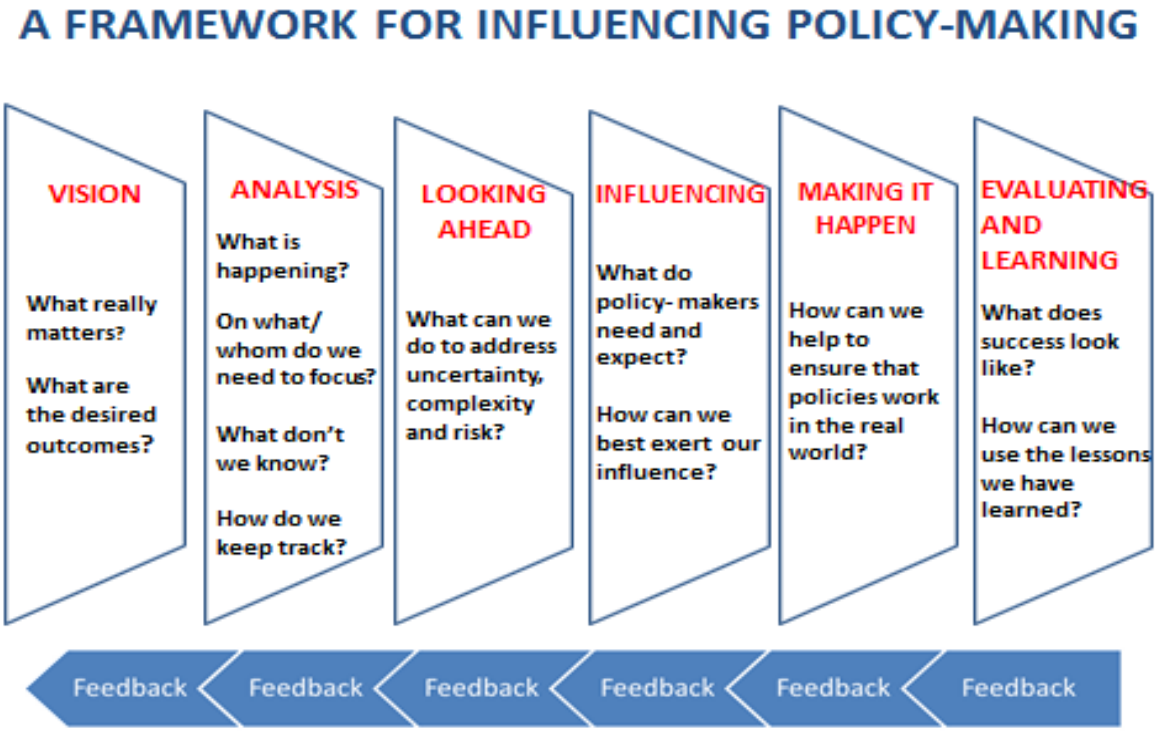
supports effective government while not losing any of the force of reality. Failure to do this often means political decision-makers just won't listen.

6. Effective communication is at the heart of effective policy-making and decision-making. Decisions are taken on the basis of information communicated to the decision-maker who will not have personally undertaken detailed analysis of the problem or of options to deal with it. Effective communication - in outlining the decision to be taken, possible options and the risks associated with the recommended course of action - is vital.

7. It is also vital that the process by which the decision is to be made is understood by those involved and or affected in order for information to be presented and decisions to be taken at the right time and in the right way. Transparency is a cornerstone of good governance: it is vital in gaining legitimacy for decisions and actions, and this in turn depends on good communication.

A FRAMEWORK FOR INFLUENCING POLICY-MAKING:





1. This Framework has been designed to help you to influence the policies and decisions of the Macedonian government. It should enable you to:

   - be systematic and proactive in tailoring what you do to the processes of policy- and decision-making in government;
   - check that you have covered everything that is relevant and applicable;
   - move from one stage of the framework to the next in a structured and conscious way
   - better identify, monitor and evaluate both what you are doing well and less well and what government is doing well - and less well;
   - explain to stakeholders, including the people whose views you represent, the wider public, the media and others what you are doing, how and why.

2. It is unlikely that any policy will run smoothly from one step to the next, as in real life policy is almost always iterative and dynamic and strongly affected by political

factors. However, we hope that having the framework as a tool will help you break down complexity and be more aware of strategic considerations and the bigger picture.

Strategic Awareness

3. Strategic awareness is the ability to stand back and think about the broader perspective in order to visualise the way forward. Among other things it encompasses:

   - Recognising what really matters: directing thought, effort and resources to identifying and addressing top priorities and to achieving key outcomes. This corresponds to Step 1 of the Framework: **Vision;**

   - Understanding what has happened, is happening and might happen and using analysis and evidence to focus on the most relevant and important issues. This is part of what is involved in the second Step: **Analysis**

   - Identifying key stakeholders, recognising their interests and influence, seeing the world from their points of view and building relationships with them. This is also part of **Analysis**;

   - Seeing ways forward in complex, uncertain and changing circumstances; being open to creative and innovative approaches to problem-solving: **Looking Ahead**;

   - Knowing how to persuade and advise decision-makers by offering reliable and usable advice and proposing alternative ways of achieving good outcomes with full analysis of pros, cons and risks: **Influencing**;

   - Contributing to the processes of implementation by bringing to them your awareness of the real world: **Making it Happen**;

   - Knowing what success – and failure – looks like: evaluating the effects of policies and actions; using what you learn to inform future contributions: **Evaluating and Learning**

VISION: IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES

1. Before a vision can be set we need to be very clear about whether and why an issue is one about which we need to be concerned. Is it a matter that is related to or could impact the achievement of the values, priorities and objectives of our organisation and the interests of Macedonia as a whole? If it does, set a vision.

2. A ***vision*** describes the changes that are desired in the future – the ultimate goal we are trying to achieve, which is unlikely to change in the long term – it sets out what the organisation wants to achieve at a very high level.

3. We then need to establish **objectives**. An objective is a specific, often long term, goal that you want to achieve to help make the vision a reality**.** It should always be possible to see the "line of sight" between an objective and the overall vision. An objective should clearly set out what an intervention is intended to achieve. It should be expressed in terms of ***outcomes*** rather than specific activities so that a range of options to meet it can be considered.

4. An ***outcome*** is an actual change in the real world, over which we may or may not have some control

5. Your organisation may already have a vision and objectives. So too does the government of Macedonia. Some of the outcomes the government want to achieve may be directly relevant to your organisation's interests, though the government's view of the world may well differ from yours. You need, however, to know what the government's priorities are and to demonstrate awareness of them in seeking to influence their decisions and policies.

The strategic objectives of the Work Programme of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia include:

1. Increased economic growth and employment, as a precondition for increased citizens' standard of living and improved quality of life;
2. Integration of the Republic of Macedonia into EU and NATO;
3. Uncompromising fight against corruption and crime and efficient law implementation by undertaking deep reforms in the judiciary and public administration;
4. Maintenance of good inter–ethnic relations based on the principles of mutual tolerance and respect and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement; and

6. **Delivery** makes the policy happen. If successful it will mean the desired outcomes are achieved. An important role of Government is to provide a framework to enable delivery. But it can only do this if it is able to draw on effective and reliable contributions from representatives of civil society.

7. The word delivery is used to cover both

    - policy **implementation** – that is the means by which the change is to be made e.g through communicating, influencing or negotiating etc

    - the **actual delivery** on the ground, whether that is directly by Government or through a third party.

8. The delivery of policy usually involves a complex network of governmental organisation, civil society organisations and individuals. In an ideal world, the actions of all of these players will contribute towards creating mutually beneficial desired outcomes.

ANALYSIS AND USE OF EVIDENCE:

Analysis[1]

1. Analysis should enrich our understanding of the current situation and the wider context. We should work to establish **what is happening**, using all available sources of information, knowledge and expertise, and try to identify causes and reasons.

2. We also need to identify who are the **key decision-makers and players**, where they stand, how influential they are and who influences them.

3. There is no right or wrong way of going about analysing an issue. This is something that needs to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. The main points to remember are that we need to be both systematic and objective in our analysis. Systematic , so that we don't miss any aspects of the situation. And objective – even if this is awkward politically or organisationally – because it's very unlikely that our advice and decisions made on the basis of our advice can be sound if they are not based on a full and unbiased assessment of what is going on.

Evidence

4. Evidence can help identify what the problem or issue is and whether an intervention would be desirable. The complexity and pace of policy- and decision-making make the use of evidence challenging. In deciding whether, when or how to make an intervention you need to be aware of the particular inputs that can serve as evidence on which to base advice for decision-makers, and judge which are appropriate to the task. It is your job to make a judgement on the evidence to help decide whether and what type of action is needed.

Detail

5. Identifying and analysing evidence is one of the first steps in the policy process. You need to be able to answer the following questions:

    - Do we need to undertake analysis at all and, if so, how much effort should we put into it? Why is it important that we do so?
    - What's happened/is already happening within Macedonia?
    - What's happening elsewhere?
    - How does what is happening now "fit" with what has happened before?
    - Who has got an interest? Why and how will they be affected? (See chapter on stakeholders)

- What would be an honest appraisal of our efforts to date?
- What has been tried in the past - both here and in other places?
- What do we not know or is deeply uncertain?

6. If you do not know, or are unsure of, the answers to any of these points you need to know where to look for relevant evidence. Sources of evidence can include:

    - Your own subject knowledge and In-house expertise
    - Government publications
    - Daily reporting from the media.
    - Think tank and academic literature.
    - People who have previously worked on the issue, or experience of similar issues elsewhere.
    - External expertise and stakeholders.
    - 'Lessons learned' and evaluation of previous policies.
    - Statistical information.
    - 'Best practice' guidance.
    - Horizon-scanning and scenarios.

7. Good evidence is:

    Reliable – objective and robust; it can withstand attack and criticism: quality data from reliable sources.

    Relevant – specific to the question you have asked, is up to date and suitable for the area to which you will apply it.

    Clear – unambiguous and comprehensible.

ANALYSIS: PLANNING FOR EVALUATION AND MONITORING:

Overview

1. Evaluation is covered in more detail in the handout relating to Step 6 of the Framework. It is, however, important at an early stage to gather the information and evidence that will help us to answer such questions as: :

    - *What is the current position (base case)?*
    - *How will we know whether and when desired outcomes have been achieved?*
    - *What do we need to see to know that progress is being made?*
    - *What will get in the way of progress and success?*
    - *How will we know whether the cost of achievement outweighs its value?*
    - *What will happen if nothing is done?*

ANALYSIS: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Issue

1. How to identify who you need to work with, influence and communicate with to inform your thinking and enhance your interactions with policy- and decision-makers.

Overview

2. Civil Society Organisations need to influence government and work with a wide range of people to achieve results. You need to find a way to work and communicate with those who can help you develop and refine your thinking so that the interventions you make and the advice you offer is soundly based.

3. **Stakeholders** is the generic term often used to describe the varied and often complex set of people and organisations you will need to consider and, possibly, actively engage and involve. To be effective you need to understand:

    - Who the stakeholders are
    - What interests they represent
    - The size and importance of this interest
    - How you can influence them or get them on board with you
    - How you can communicate effectively with them
    - How to manage their expectations
    - How to engage and motivate those whose help you need, or whose behaviour a policy is aiming to change.

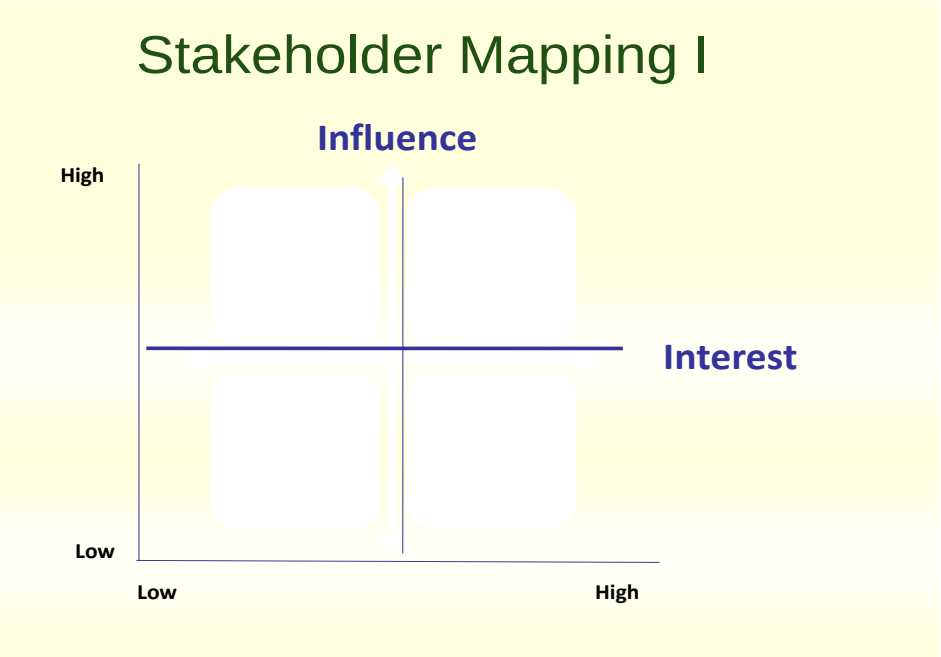
Tools

4. The first step is to identify, understand, map and plan how to work and communicate with stakeholders.

Identifying and mapping stakeholders

5. Stakeholders' influence and interests change. Some have considerable power and/or influence. Others do not, but will or may be directly affected by any policy that is put in place. Some will have strong feelings about particular policies and issues - for and against. Others will not and may be more open to persuasion.

6. A simple two-axis diagram can help you prioritise key stakeholders and how you plan to work with them. Use the model below to plot all stakeholders, placing them on the chart by assessing how much influence and interest they have in the issue. The axes show "influence" and "interest" respectively.



Tips to make this work for you:

- Do this with as big a group as possible – starting with a blank matrix on a wall, whiteboard or flip chart.

- If you have a lot of people split them into different groups eg:
  - Internal to the government of Macedonia: Ministers and Ministries, agencies and public sector organisations
  - Non-governmental organisations in Macedonia, including civil society organisations; private sector, media;
  - Beyond Macedonia: international bodies, foreign governments, etc.

- Get everyone to think about all possible stakeholders. Don't forget those the policy is aimed at and hard to reach groups. Plot each one on the grid based on your assessment of their influence and interest. Post-It notes are good for this.

- Try to drill down and think of individuals and organisations rather than broad interest groups. For example don't just put "United Nations".

Think about the different players within the UN as they are likely to be in different places on your map.

- Discuss points of disagreement to reach consensus – be open to challenge.

- Invite others to help/challenge your map. These could be experts on the issue, communications professionals, delivery agents etc.

ANALYSIS: P.E.S.T.L.E.

1. How to identify the external influences on a policy issue and surface important issues about which there is uncertainty.

Overview

2. **PESTLE (P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**nvironmental) analysis is an approach (and a mnemonic) to identifying and summarising environmental influences on a policy. It helps you identify the environmental influences that have impacted on the issue in the past and how they might do so in future. It can be used to help make sense of the issue and to anticipate future trends or areas for further analysis.

Tools

3. PESTLE can be used at any time to identify the facets of a complex issue.

4. PESTLE is particularly helpful for identifying external factors over which policy- and decision-makers have no control but which are important now or could become important: i.e. factors that could be **drivers for change** in the future. This is of value when matters are complex and subject to rapid change and where outcomes are unpredictable. In other words, it is a way of identifying **uncertainties** (as opposed to risks that can often more easily be identified)

5. In relation to the policy issue you are considering:

   I. Identify factors that will or may impact on the issue. Choose factors:

   - that are important now and will or might be important in the next few years.
   - the outcomes or implications of which are unknown or unpredictable

   II. Describe the factors using language that doesn't imply a particular outcome. So, for example, instead of saying global warming, say climate change. An illustrative list of generic factors for each of the 6 headings is on the next page

III. Decide the next steps

- Prioritise influences most likely to impact the development and implementation of the policy issue to identify a few - perhaps the top 10 - key drivers for change

- Tease out assumptions

- Decide areas for further work.

LOOKING AHEAD: UNCERTAINTY AND, COMPLEXITY: SCENARIO BUILDING

1. In a complex and uncertain world, the government of the Republic of Macedonia can often hope only to influence, rather than control, events. We should be prepared to challenge assumptions about how things will or might develop and to think through the possible directions in which a policy issue could develop.

Issue

2. How to use scenarios to identify alternate outcomes.

Overview

3. Scenarios are a way of creating contrasting plausible futures which can help us to track changes and build resilience for our organisations and policies. Scenarios can also be used as the building blocks for a vision of the desired future which can, in turn, inform policy- and decision-making.

4. Scenarios are stories written in the present tense at some future date, such as by a newspaper reporter in 2019 or 2029. The stories explore how the world might look if certain plausible (though not necessarily probable) trends were to be realised

Tools

5. Scenarios can be used in various ways:

    - To build a model of the future in order to create triggers for tracking, reporting and responding;

    - improving an understanding of the future by teasing out dependencies, leads and lags;

    - sharing a possible view of the future as a precursor to a change programme

    - importantly, in government, forming the source material for a desired scenario or 'fifth scenario' that is a vision of the desired future

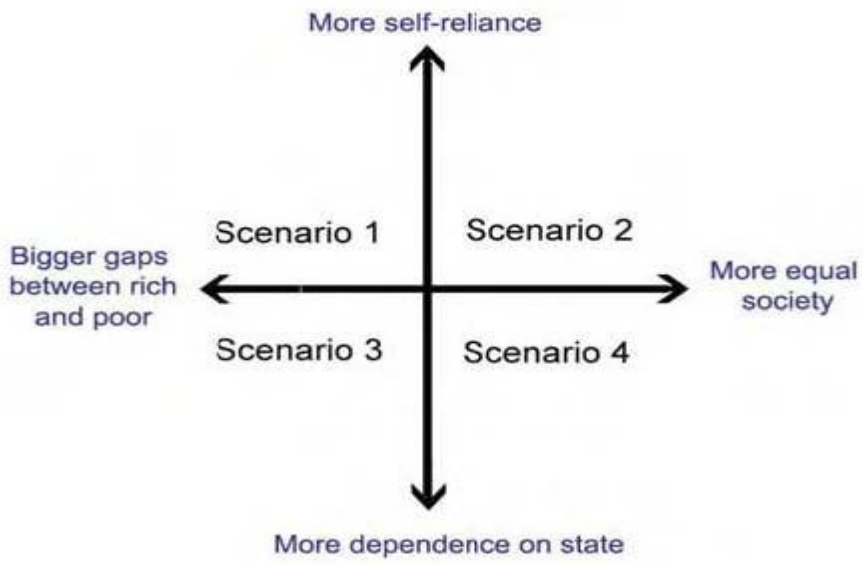
6. Effective leaders in all fields should be able to communicate a compelling view of the future. Scenarios form the raw material from which those compelling views can be created.

The 'axes of uncertainty' method

7. One way of building a scenario is to use axes (or 'dimensions') of uncertainty. Two axes cross to produce four quartiles. This method can be used to produce four strongly contrasting scenarios. The method takes two drivers or trends from PESTLE analysis (See previous chapter) and produces, in each quartile, a scenario that is based upon those drivers or trends.

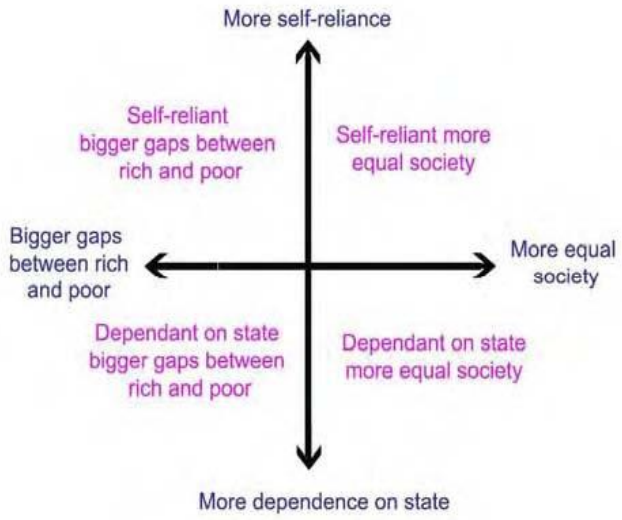
8. You must choose as your axes drivers or trends ones that are both important and uncertain. It is also helpful to have at least one driver that relates to attitudinal/behavioural change – this is because behaviour is crucial in driving change in society, yet we tend to overlook behavioural drivers in devising policy. The next step is to identify the key drivers in the system – those that are both most important and uncertain.

9. In the following example, we create scenarios using the axes of 'reliance on the state by the citizen' and 'equality of society'. Each end of the axis expresses one extreme of the chosen driver. For example the extremes for reliance by the citizen on the state could be either: 'citizens dependent on the state', or 'citizens self-reliant'. The extremes for equality within society could be either: 'a society of equality' or 'a society divided. Now the axes of uncertainty are labelled which gives the basis of 4 contrasting scenarios. They are:



- More self-reliant, and a more equal society.
- More self-reliant, and with bigger gaps between the rich and poor.
- More dependent on the state, and a more equal society.
- More dependent on state, and bigger gaps between the rich and poor

The next stage is to use your top ten drivers for change (See previous section: PESTLE) and consider how each of these will play out in each scenario to produce four scenarios of plausible futures.


More self-reliance
Self-reliant
bigger gaps between
rich and poor
Self-reliant more
equal society
Bigger gaps
between rich
and poor
More equal
society
Dependant on state
bigger gaps between
rich and poor
Dependant on state
more equal society
More dependence on state

LOOKING AHEAD: RISK

Overview

1. Risk is where something that may happen could have an impact on the achievement of objectives. Different people tend to focus on different aspects of risk: they will be very concerned about some aspects and ignore or down play other aspects. It is important to look at the whole picture and identify and prioritise risks according to their potential likelihood and impact. We should also be able to propose ways of mitigating risk

2. In the policy context there are a different types of risk:

   - **Policy** risk
   - **Political** or **strategic** risk
   - **Financial** risk
   - Risk to **delivery** of the project or programme
   - **Communication** risk
   - **Reputational** risk

3. Risk in policy work can be further characterised in four main ways:

   - **Actual risk**: for instance, the risk of travelling to a conflict zone; of failed diplomacy; of harm to trade and investment etc.

   - **Communication risk**: poor communication is a risk in itself, causing opposition and hostility

   - **Policy process risk**: the failure to undertake an essential part of the policy process can result in "nasty surprises" later in the process. Unexpected critics can suddenly shoot down a cosy consensus, or a policy proves destructively costly to implement.

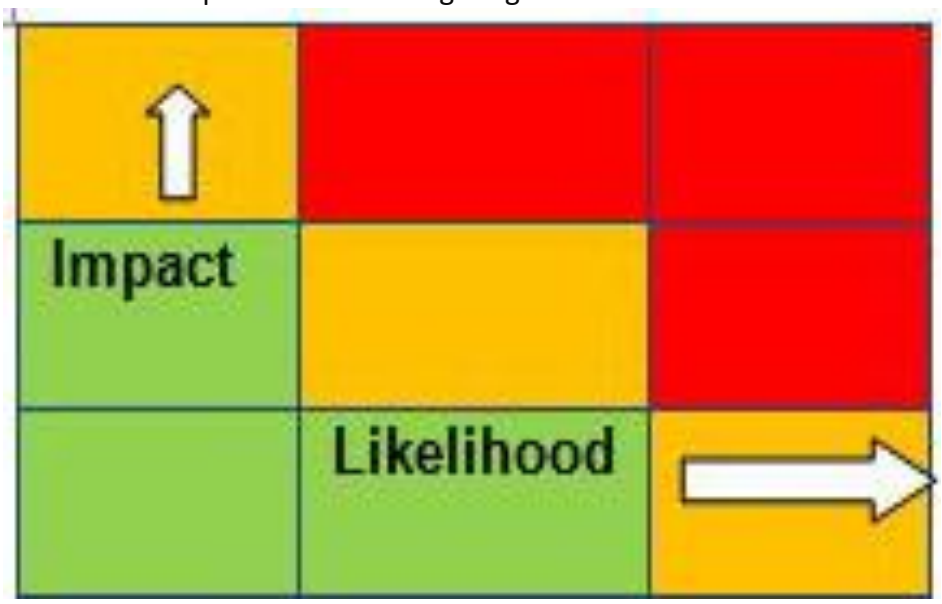
   - **Loss of capacity to make policy**: A series of policy failures, of mishandled risks of the first three varieties can lead to such a profound loss of public confidence in a Government's ability to make policy that almost any initiative becomes severely constrained by "accumulated risk".

4. A simple way to think about risks is to plot them according to their likelihood and impact, then concentrate on mitigating the most serious ones ie those which are most likely to happen and if they do happen will have the biggest impact.

Tools

5. A **risk matrix** is a tool to surface how likely a risk is to occur and what the impact will be if it does. It helps you to evaluate the amount of risk judged to be appropriate – the risk appetite, and prioritise those risks where you need to take mitigating action – those in the top right hand corner of the matrix..

6. A way of presenting a risk matrix is by colour coding the boxes red amber and green to identify which risks should be prioritised for mitigating action.



7. The resources available for managing risk are finite and so the aim is to achieve an optimum response to risk, prioritised in accordance with an evaluation of the risks. Risk is unavoidable, and every organisation needs to take action to manage risk in a way which it can justify to a level which is tolerable. The amount of risk which is judged to be tolerable and justifiable is the "**risk appetite**".

8. Response to risk which is initiated within the organisation, is called "**internal control**" and may involve one or more of the following:
    - **tolerating** the risk;
    - **treating** the risk in an appropriate way to constrain the risk to an acceptable level or actively taking advantage, regarding the uncertainty as an opportunity to gain a benefit;
    - **transferring** the risk;
    - **terminating** the activity giving rise to the risk.

9. In any of these cases the issue of opportunity arising from the uncertainty should be considered. The level of risk remaining after internal control has been exercised (the "**residual risk**") is the exposure in respect of that risk, and should be acceptable and justifiable – it should be within the risk appetite.

3. Articulate your classifications of Risk Appetite:

For example:

Classification	Description
Averse	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key Organisational objective.
Minimalist	Preference for ultra-safe business delivery options that have a low degree of inherent risk and only have a potential for limited reward.
Cautious	Preference for safe delivery options that have a low degree of residual risk and may only have limited potential for reward.
Open	Willing to consider all potential delivery options and choose the one that is most likely to result in successful delivery while also providing an acceptable level of reward (and value for money etc.).
Hungry	Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher business rewards, despite greater inherent risk.

Extract from H M Treasury Guidance, "Thinking about Risk", November 2006

INFLUENCING: GENERATING AND ASSESSING OPTIONS

Issue

1. How to identify and assess options to deliver a desired policy outcome.

Overview

2. A policy maker's role is to advise a decision-maker on how to achieve their policy goals. However, the range of options presented to decision-makers is often limited – by lack of time to consider alternatives; because of risk aversion; by limited awareness of scope and potential: Good options offer
    - genuine choices for decision-makers that align with corporate and political priorities and objectives;
    - workable solutions for those involved in implementation and delivery; and
    - support and acceptance from those who have a direct or indirect interest in the changes made to achieve the policy outcomes.

3. In identifying options look beyond what has been done before: this may not always be the best option. New, creative and innovative options may be able achieve the policy outcome you want, often at less cost or within a quicker timeframe.

4. Where you have a lot of options you will need to sift them to identify three or four lead options and then come up with an objective way of assessing the options against defined criteria, so as to identify an option you can recommend to senior decision-makers. Always consider the "do nothing" option when assessing options. This will give a benchmark against which to assess other options, and will help Ministers decide whether or not they want to intervene.

Tools

5. Use the tools below to help you generate, sort and appraise options.

Option generation – creative thinking techniques

6. You can quickly generate many ideas for possible solutions using lateral thinking techniques - especially by working with a group of people. Some of the ideas generated may at first seem unacceptable as options, or completely off-the-wall. Don't discard these. The trick is to produce ideas without judgement during the creative thinking process. They may form the basis for a novel and effective solution. When using any of the techniques listed always think about the problem you are seeking to address or the outcome you are looking for as a "How to …" question. Capture your ideas eg on flip chart for further analysis.

   Brainstorming: In a group, start with your desired outcome, or some intermediate objectives. Ask everyone in the group to come up with quick fire answers to the "How to…" question – giving the group a set amount of time to do this. Generate as many options as you can in the time you have given. Don't start to judge or evaluate the ideas as they are being generated – just go with the flow and be as whacky or as outrageous as you like.

   Reverse Brainstorming: This does what it says on the tin! In a group, generate as many reasons as possible that would make achieving the desired outcome impossible, or would achieve it in a thoroughly bad way. It is often easier to think negatively than positively! By then reversing some of these negative ideas, you should be able to produce lots of extra good potential options.

   Forced Relationships: Take seemingly unrelated ideas or events, and ask what new ideas would be produced by combining them.

   Mind Mapping: A method of generating, developing and recording ideas rapidly by producing spider web type diagrams with the problem at the centre of the web and the ideas recorded as growing branches. This is particularly useful when working alone. It can also be used to sift options.

   Empathetic Thinking: View the policy from someone else's point of view. For instance: the Minister; the implementer; or the customer.

   The Famous Person: Pick a famous personality and imagine how he or she would have solved the problem concerned**.**

   Random word stimulation: Take a book and three numbers at random (say 90, 12 and 6). Turn to page 90, line 12 down and word 6 across. Whatever the word you find ("aubergine"?) use it to stimulate some further ideas.

   Picture Stimulation: Take a magazine, or a collection of pictures. Summarise what the picture shows you to someone else (or to yourself). Use that summary to

stimulate some further ideas that are relevant to the "how to…." problem you have set yourself.

Sifting and sorting options

1. Once you have generated ideas – tens or perhaps even hundreds of ideas, some of which may seem bizarre and/or of dubious value or quality - you need a way to structure, group, and assess the value and importance of the ideas you have come up with. This will help you identify lead options. You should aim to come up with 3 or 4 lead options for change. .

2. Two techniques to help make sense of options generated are **fishboning** and **mindmapping**.

Fishboning

- Draw the fish.

  In a fishbone diagram the head of the fish represents the problem or desired outcome and the whole fish - from tail, along the spine to the head - represents the direction you want to go. From the spine draw bones, or spurs, see the diagram below.

- Label the spurs

  Label each spur to represent a significant theme, issue or question related to the overall problem. Agree these labels as a group. For example, if your problem is "How to influence Turkey's accession to the EU?", some of the spurs might be labelled: "Economic," "Governance," "Political," "Other EU members," "Human Rights," and so on. Some of the themes will be obvious from scanning the ideas generated through creative thinking.

- Attach ideas to the spurs

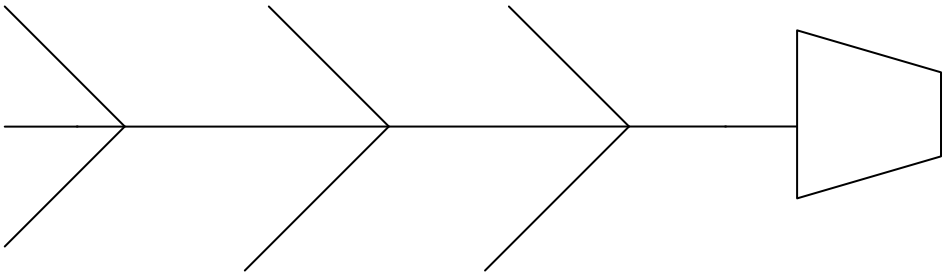
  Take the ideas from creative thinking and attach them, with sub-spurs, to relevant themed spurs. (Some ideas may fit with more than one theme). Think about the ideas as you transfer them. Where they have a negative aspect, try to convert them into the positive. Where there is the gist of something good and relevant in an idea that otherwise seems bizarre, develop the gist.

- Make connections and identify possible options

  Pause if you can. Now is a good time to leave the fish to "cook", in other words to allow time for thoughts and ideas to crystallise. However, if you are under time pressures at least stand back and look at the diagram as a whole. Then begin to identify within it ideas that, linked together in "packages", might form coherent, alternative ways of addressing the problem. It is a good idea to codify these by using identifier numbers or symbols.

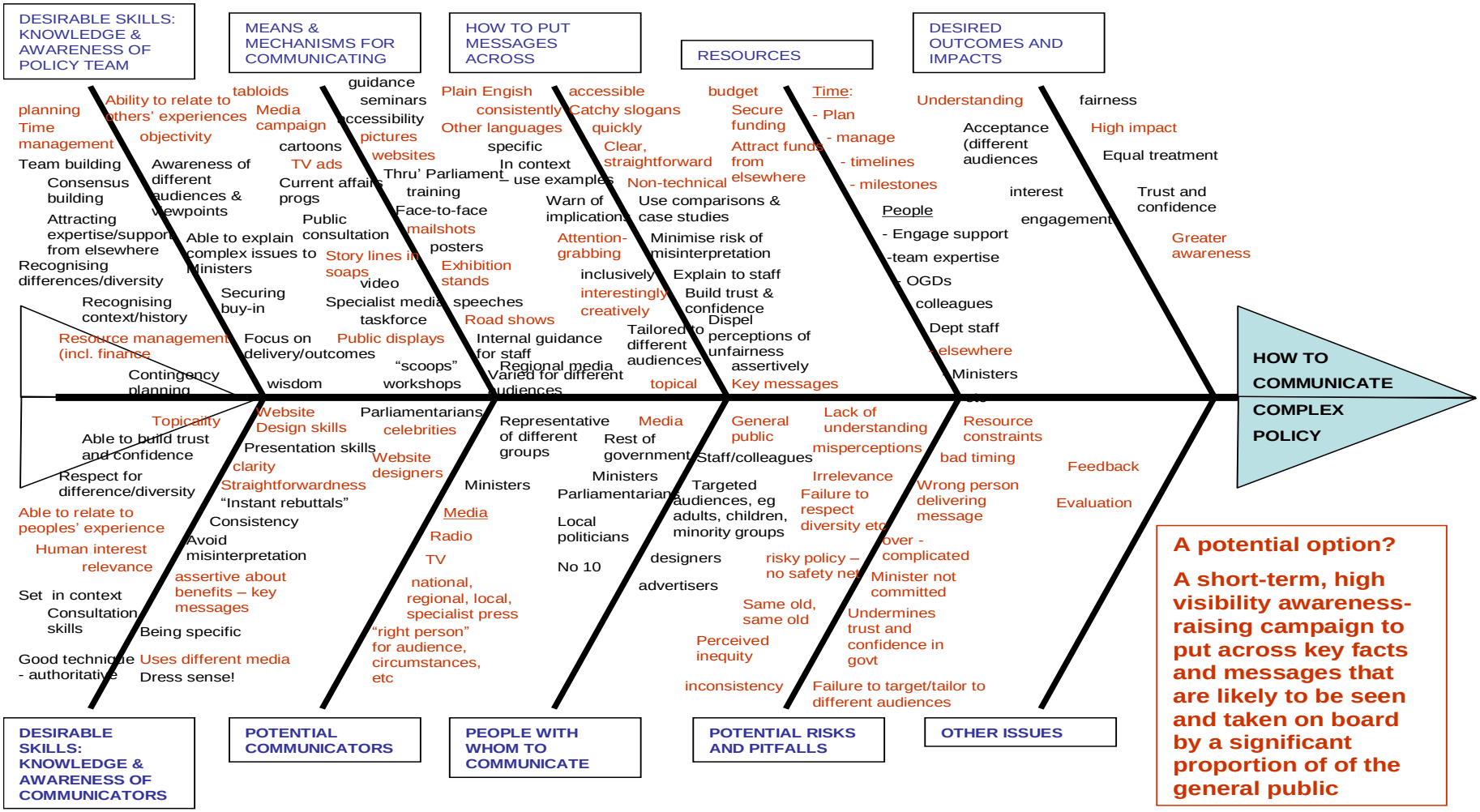
- <u>Finally, identify gaps</u>

  If there are spurs that you know represent important themes or questions, but have few ideas attached to them, this could be the trigger for further creative thinking. Or it might set you thinking about what you want to achieve – whether the desired outcome has been correctly defined.



The example on the next page is based on one developed during a policy management training event, following a creative thinking session focused on one of the participants' own issues. It shows one (of three) options derived from the fishbone approach.

Note: This technique is also called the *Ishikawa diagram* after its originator, Kaoru Ishigawa, who first used the technique in the 1960's.



A potential option?

A short-term, high visibility awareness-raising campaign to put across key facts and messages that are likely to be seen and taken on board by a significant proportion of of the general public

Mind Mapping

3. Put your problem at the centre of a diagram and develop spurs and sub-spurs out from the centre. The process and intended effects are similar to fishboning but some people prefer mind- mapping. The diagrams are not linear and that can stimulate the imagination and allow deeper insights to develop.

   Note: Mindmapping has been used for centuries by different cultures but it was made popular in recent times by Tony Buzan

Analysing Options

4. When you have identified your lead options, the next step is to assess the options against defined **criteria** and to identify an option or set of options you can recommend to decision-takers. This assessment should be as objective as possible, assessing each option against defined **criteria**. The criteria you choose will depend on your issue but key criteria often include:

   - Is it **effective**? - i.e. how well does it meets the objective set?
   - Is it **consistent** – does it complement or go against your country's/Department's/organisation's strategic objectives and/or other policies?
   - What is the **cost**? (you may set this as "will it cost too much/is it cheap?"). Consider both hard costs and non- monetary costs, e.g. displacement of other resources
   - Is it **practical and deliverable**? – i.e. can the option be delivered – do we have the levers or influence to produce the desired outcome?
   - Is it **acceptable** ?– i.e. how will it be perceived by those the policy is aimed at and others with an interest. For this, it will help if you go back to your stakeholder analysis
   - Can it be done in **time**? – you may have a short or long timescale to deliver your policy so timescale can be a factor

Assessing options using a weighting and scoring system

5. You should weigh your options systematically against the criteria you have selected. A relatively simple approach is a grid scoring system. This analysis will also be useful in looking at the impacts of the options, identifying where you need more evidence planning your stakeholder engagement strategy, and planning how to present the policy once an option has been chosen.

   - **Weight each criteria** on a scale of 1-10 to show **how important** that criteria is. So if cost is an overriding criteria then cheapness will have a weighting of 10. If timing is not so important this might have a weighting of 5 or less.
   - **Score each option** against the criteria on a scale of 1-10. 10 means the option totally meets the criteria, 1 means the option doesn't meet the criteria.

- Multiply the score against the weighting to give a **weighted score** for each.
- Total the columns for each option to come up with the option that scores the highest

Example of weighing and scoring options

Criteria	Weighting	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Cost. Low public expenditure (cheap)	10	8 (80)	3 (30)	6 (50)
Effectiveness. Achieves objective	8	7 (56)	5 (40)	3 (24)
Practicable/deliverable	7	5 (35)	6 (42)	4 (28)
Acceptability to key stakeholders	8	2 (16)	6 (48)	8 (64)
Consistency. Achieves/complements wider policy objectives	6	7 (42)	4 (24)	8 (48)
Time: can be completed soon	4	5 (20)	6 (24)	3 (12)
Weighted total score	-	253	208	226

Note: this is not a scientific way of assessing options. But it is a quick and helpful way of showing which option best meets which criterion, and will help you explain to decision-makers why you are recommending a particular option. **NB** make sure your criteria point in the right direction so good things carry a high weighting/score and bad things a low weight – so if it is cheap the score is 10, expensive is 1.

SWOT analysis

6. SWOT is an acronym for **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities** and **threats** (threats can be equated to risks). You can use a SWOT analysis to assess how robust an option or scenario is both internally and also by looking at the external environment and trends the policy will be delivered in. As with all these techniques you will get a more useful result if you do this in a group.

7. Draw 4 quadrants labelled **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities** and **threats** . Then look at each in turn and identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the option followed by the external opportunities or threats to making the option happen. Strengths and opportunities will help achieve the desired outcome, opportunities and threats will work against achieving it. Once you have your matrix you can then consider how to harness the strengths and opportunities and how to counteract or manage the weaknesses and threats.

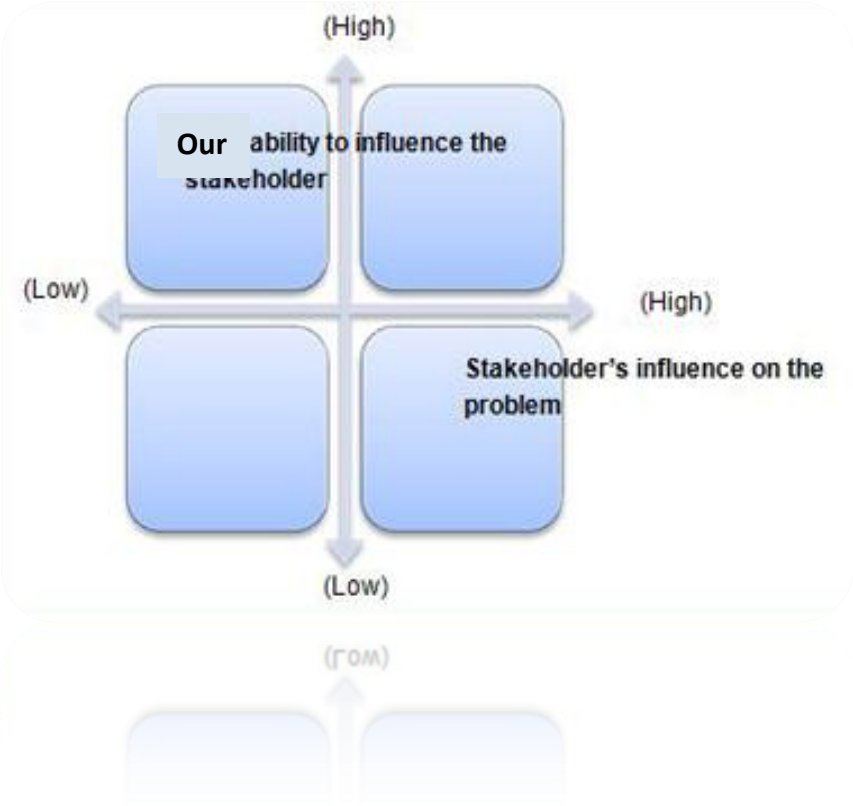
	Helpful to achieving outcome Maximise	Harmful to achieving outcome Minimise
Internal to the organisation or within control	**strengths**	**weaknesses**
External to the organisation or outside control	**opportunities**	**threats**

Windmill Consulting Ltd, 2015

INFLUENCING AND MAKING IT HAPPEN: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

1. The implementation of policy depends heavily on players outside of government. They include Civil Society Organisations but also a myriad of individuals whose behaviour and attitudes will be critical to the success or failure of a policy.

2. An analysis of the relative influence of these players can provide a useful additional dimension to the more traditional stakeholder map. To view stakeholders from this perspective, plot your stakeholders on a matrix according to our ability to influence them, and their influence over (or degree of interest in) the policy in question. Those in the top right offer the most immediate opportunities, but moving others towards the top is also crucial to success..



Working with your stakeholders

3. How you work or communicate with your stakeholders will depend on which quadrant they are in on your stakeholder map. Your most important stakeholders will be those in the top right hand quadrant i.e high influence on problem/we have high influence over them. These are the people/organisations you should try and involve as you develop your policy. Think carefully about those in the other quadrants – those who have high influence but over whom we have

little influence may need to be kept informed/ reassured that the policy work is being well managed.

4. Use the stakeholder map as a "living document". If possible keep it on a wall or in a prominent place so you can keep it under review and add or move stakeholders as their interest and influence in an issue changes. Also think about whether stakeholders are where you want them to be. Repeat the exercise this time looking at where you want them to be use this to help you plan how you can move stakeholders around the map.

5. A UK Department of Health/COI 'Stakeholder Toolkit' identified trust, managing expectations and being flexible about problem solving as key principles in successful engagement with stakeholders:

    - *Trust* – trust your stakeholders to behave responsibly in return for you being as open and honest with them as you possibly can be. If you need to set ground rules, do so early on. Don't change the 'rules of engagement' half way through. To build trust you need to behave consistently with stakeholders.
    - *Manage expectations* – be open and realistic about the impact of their views and opinions on the process, so they don't feel exploited or they have wasted their time.
    - *Be flexible about problem-solving* – in other words, don't simply seek stakeholders' support for your preferred solution to a policy problem, but tell them what the *desired outcome* is and let them offer you ways of achieving it.

Influence Mapping

6. An influence map is a visual model showing the people who have influence over your desired policy outcome. The map helps you understand how stakeholders relate to one-another, so that you can quickly see the way in which influence flows. Influence mapping can be a very useful tool in identifying who to engage with to make the policy happen.

7. Remember that even the most powerful people rarely act alone. Politicians and other people in authority rely on advisers. Find out who the advisers are, and understand how they operate. This can be vital to policy success.

8. There are three key things to consider when you draw an influence map:

    - The **importance** or weight of a stakeholder's overall influence (represented by the size of the circle representing that stakeholder).
    - The **relationships** between stakeholders (represented by the presence of lines or arrows between them).
    - The **amount of influence** stakeholders have over others (represented by the heaviness of the lines drawn between them).

9. An influence map shows the stakeholders with the most influence as individuals with the largest circles. Lines (arrows) drawn to other stakeholders show the presence and strength of influence.

Stakeholder engagement plan

10. Once you have identified your stakeholders you need to plan who you need to engage with, what your objectives are in communicating with each stakeholder, how you will engage/communicate with them and who will take responsibility for managing each stakeholder

Reality Testing

11. Assess the extent to which policy proposals, decisions, plans and actions are, or are likely to be practicable and acceptable.

12. It is not always possible to carry out full consultation on proposed policies and legislation. In seeking to influence the way in which policies are implemented it is helpful to bring to light any weaknesses that the proposal may have so that you, the government, or anyone else involved in implementation, can consider what what to do to improve the proposal and make it fit for delivery.

13. You should seek to:

    - test the robustness of the evidence base and expose any uncertainties
    - assess how acceptable and practicable the proposals are likely to be
    - capitalise on positive aspects
    - uncover negative aspects,potential pitfalls, risks or obstacles
    - surface assumptions
    - identify what needs to happen to address the issues brought to light through this kind of analysis

EVALUATING AND LEARNING:

1. Monitoring and evaluating results can be challenging in the policy environment because the world is complex and sometimes it is difficult to establish precisely which actions have led to which outcomes; and everything can change very quickly.

2. We should be careful not to fall into the trap of assuming that this means we can't evaluate impacts and outcomes. On the contrary, It is very important that we regularly take stock of whether policies and decisions, and the way they are being implemented, are actually achieving the desired effects. Evidence collected in this way can help us to decide whether, how and when we should seek to exert influence.

3. There is no perfect model for evaluating policy outcomes, and how we do this will depend to some extent on the nature of the issues. Some useful questions to ask are:

    - Are we moving closer to ultimate desired outcomes?
    - What is actually changing in the real world?
    - Are these changes the result of action taken by the government or the result of others' actions / influence? Are other factors at play?
    - Do policy- and decision-makers need to adjust their approaches?
    - Do we need to re-think our approach?
    - Can we draw lessons from this policy that will have wider application for the government and for civil society? How should we share these?

Issue

1. How to assess and measure policy outcomes.

Overview

2. Policies most often fail because the early thinking and planning necessary for success has not been done thoroughly, properly or, in some cases, at all. Political imperatives, over-eager officials, difficult stakeholders, media attention, crises and impossible deadlines all conspire to stop policy- and decision-makers from considering just what will need to be done to make desired outcome achievable.

3. Monitoring and evaluating results is difficult due to the complex and fast changing nature of the world in which policy is delivered. But it is important to look at whether the policy is achieving what it set out to achieve, what is changing in the world and whether this is a result of the policy intervention. This means setting out criteria and performance measures at the outset against which the results can be judged and being objective and realistic about the impact of the policy intervention when compared to what would have happened anyway.

4. The sort of questions that planning for success will raise are:

    - *Where are we now?*
    - *How will we know when the desired outcome has been achieved?*
    - *What steps are needed to get there?*
    - *What will get in the way?*

Tools

5. An implementation and evaluation plan should include:

    - the desired outcome and evidence to be used to judge whether it has been achieved
    - evidence of the starting point
    - available resources (or 'inputs')
    - constraints and obstacles
    - intermediate objectives which help us to define the output of activity to be undertaken to overcome obstacles to the achievement of the overall aim
    - milestones
    - measures of effectiveness and efficiency
    - would the desired outcomes have been achieved anyway; without any policy intervention?

6. Adjusting or overhauling a policy in response to evaluation or external factors should not be an unusual event or be seen as a cause for concern. In fact it would be extremely unusual if a course of action, once established, did <u>not</u> need adjusting in some way to secure the best possible outcome. It is, however, often politically difficult for governments to contemplate changing course. An important role of civil society organisations is to challenge the way policy is made and decisions taken. But they can only do so on the basis of effective analysis and firm evidence.

About Windmill Consulting Ltd

We provide tailored training and consultancy in strategic thinking and policy planning, as well as the essential briefing skills to support those processes.

We have an excellent team of highly experienced professional trainers, specialising in policy development, Ministerial briefing and support, strategic planning and policy communications. Windmill Consulting Ltd has been working in these areas internationally since 2005. We have an impressive track record in providing constructive and structured support for those seeking creativity and forward-thinking approaches to their business processes and planning whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors.

Our portfolio is extensive, and has included design and delivery of policy training for a wide variety of organisations in the UK and internationally, including: design and delivery of international policy skills training for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; a "writing to persuade" programme for the European Space Agency; political briefing and political thinking training for the EU Council in Brussels; and training and consultancy in regulatory reform, strategic planning and policy development for a wide range of international government clients.

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