

10 Steps to Developing a Policy Brief

PROBLEM STATEMENT	1 Define the Problem
	2 Identify Modifiable Root Causes & WHICH Root Causes to Modify
	3 Determine WHAT Policy Options Will Address the Modifiable Root Causes
POLICY OPTIONS	4 Map Out, Step-by-Step, HOW You Will Implement Each Option
	5 Create an Inventory List for Each Policy Option
ECONOMIC EVALUATION & FEASIBILITY OF OPTIONS	6 Add Cost Values to Inventory List
	7 Go Back to Your Decision-Tree from “Step 4” and Add the Number Values to Each Branch
	8 Conduct an Economic Evaluation
	9 Compare the Economic Evaluation for Each Policy Option
RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS	10 Select Best Policy Option(s) and Write Summary and Additional Actions

Define the Problem

1

The health issue you want to address must be a quantifiable problem with a specific health outcome or impact.

Be specific and focused on highlighting answers to the following:

- 1. Who, or what population is affected by this problem?
- 2. Where, or what geographical region is affected?
- 3. When is this problem occurring – annually, daily, etc.?
- 4. What is the overall cost of the problem - monetary, burden, etc. to government or society?

You need to select ONE perspective from which you will evaluate the problem (i.e. Government or the population impacted–society). You will maintain this ONE perspective throughout this project.

Tip: The health problem selected needs to be evidence-based so you'll need to access local data and do a systematic and in-depth literature review



STEPS MAY REPEAT 1-2

Identify Modifiable Root Causes & WHICH Root Causes to Modify

2

Use the 'Fishbone Diagram' to perform root cause analysis – identifying the key factors, or root causes, contributing to the health problem. Overall, this tool will help you to understand WHY this problem exists.

Once identified, you'll need to determine how modifiable each root cause is. Select the root causes which are most modifiable. Make sure to eliminate root causes which are already being addressed through existing policies or programs.

Supporting literature is needed to determine the magnitude that each root cause has on the problem (i.e. what impact that root cause has on the health problem) and ultimately how to identify potential interventions to address these root causes.

Tip: It is essential that you engage key stakeholders to review the health problem and root causes, they may be able to comment on their modifiability too.



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STEPS MAY REPEAT 1-2-3

Determine WHAT Policy Options Will Address the Modifiable Root Causes

3

Now that you have selected the most modifiable root causes of your health problem, you need to search the literature for interventions which are proven to be both impactful and effective at targeting those specific root cause you're trying to modify and will ultimately lead to an improvement in health outcomes. These interventions will build the foundation of your policy options.

- Select 2-3 interventions that:
- target the specific root causes you are trying to modify
 - evidence-based to be both impactful and effective and will lead to improvement in health outcome
 - can be adapted and implemented within your local setting

These interventions will be your policy options.

Tip: Perform literature review on interventions addressing the root causes to assess effectiveness and impact. Start with the local setting first, then if nothing is available, expand to regional, or global context in literature.



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Map Out, Step-by-Step, HOW You Will Implement Each Option

4

After selecting the interventions that will be your policy options, we can then start to think of "HOW" each of those option would be implemented within your local setting.

Just as we needed evidence for the option itself, we also need evidence about how it can be implemented to be most effective to provide the greatest health impact.

You must answer for each option:

- 1. Who will be responsible to do the work?
- 2. Is it feasible?
- 3.What are the specific steps you will need to do to implement each option?

Create a visual diagram called a "Decision-Tree" tool on the excel template provided. This will help to illustrate the steps for each policy option and how it leads to changes in the health outcome occurring in a population.

Tip: Consider what specific resources will be needed for each step of your implementation process



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STEPS MAY REPEAT 4-5

Create an Inventory List for Each Policy Option

5

On separate tabs of an excel spreadsheet, create an inventory list of all resources associated with each of your options. Start on the left side of the excel sheet to create your list for each option. You will need to include all resources associated with each step of the implementation process.

Examples of resources include bed nets, screening tests, helmets, vaccines, clinic staff, brochures, tv ads, additional staff, test kits etc.

Keep in mind the ONE perspective you are working from, only include resources to your list that are needed for that perspective.

Tip: You will not need to have any quantitative values at this stage. Just a list of resource items by name only (Eg. NO dollars, salary figures, cost of brochures, number of test kits, fees, etc.)

Add Cost Values to Inventory List

6

After your inventory lists are complete, refer to your decision-tree and review each step once more for any gaps in resources that you may not have accounted for.

As you review ask the following questions:

- 1. What is my perspective for these resources?
- 2. Is the perspective the same for all the resources needed?
- 3. What resources will have fixed costs?
- 4. What resources will vary in costs based on quantity?
- 5. Are there any additional resources to consider?

Begin to add in all the quantitative and cost values to the inventory list. Include a citation for where each cost value was found to refer to later. Some values will be easier to source than others, so fill in what you have readily available, then complete the rest of the list as you gather the missing information.

If a value is not readily available or is unknown as stakeholders or look for them in literature for similar interventions conducted in comparable settings and geographic locations. Look locally first, then regionally.

Tip: When costs are not available in literature or from stakeholders you make an educated estimation and make note of your assumption in your citation source



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STEPS MAY REPEAT 5-6-7

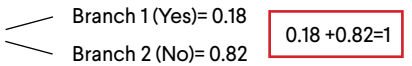
Go Back to Your Decision-Tree from "Step 4" and Add the Number Values to Each Branch

7

In addition to costs, you have other quantitative values to complete in your decision tree. This will enable you to compare effectiveness between policy options. Determine any rates, proportions, probabilities, population estimates, etc. that you will need.

Refer to data and literature for these values, with a preference for local sources. Add this to your master list on the left side of the excel sheet (i.e. Incidence rate, data source, value) for each option. You will use this list as the reference for input values along each branch of the decision-tree, rather than writing in individual numbers. This will make it easier to make changes and reference each value and calculation both as you go and later too!

Begin setting up formulas for the economic calculations associated with each branch to determine the probability of each outcome. This involves multiplying the value at each branch together. Remember each branch should total 1.

Ex. Intervention 

Tip: Use the "=cell #" formula function to enter values from your inventory list for each step on the branch instead of numbers into your decision-tree



STEPS MAY REPEAT 7-8

Conduct an Economic Evaluation

8

After you have added values to each step, begin your economic evaluation to compare costs and economic impact. There are three types of economic evaluations that you can perform for each of your policy options:

- 1. Program cost analysis (partial economic evaluation): gives total cost of an ONLY the program intervention option (ex. Screening program, bed-net distribution program, etc.)
- 2. Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA): gives relative costs and outcomes of an option (e.g. cost (savings)/lives saved, cost/premature deaths averted, etc.)
- 3. Cost-benefit analysis (CBA): gives total expected cost vs. total expected benefit of an option.

You should complete the same type of evaluation for all options. This allows you to compare each option to the other. For example, conduct cost-effectiveness (CE) of "option 1", CE of "option 2", etc. The compare CE of "option 1" to CE or "option" 2, etc.

Select the type of economic evaluation that will be of most interest to the stakeholders you want to convince.

Remember, all economic evaluations should be from ONE perspective: Ask, who is spending or saving in the proposed option?

Tip: You may perform a sensitivity analysis to offer a range of possible outcomes to adjust for any assumptions you have made or to assess changes in the intervention and health outcomes on economic impact.

Compare the Economic Evaluation for Each Policy Option

9

Once you have completed your economic evaluation for each option, compare the results and determine the best option(s) to recommend.

You need to evaluate based on feasibility also, refer to the "Policy Options Checklist" and consider at least the following:

- 1. Political Feasibility: Will there be political support for this? Is the option likely to be enacted?
- 2. Operational Feasibility: Will the option be possible to implement (and within a reasonable timeframe)?
- 3. Budgetary Impact: Is there a high cost to implement?
- 4. Economic Impact: Is the cost high to implement relative to the benefits?
- 5. Health Impact: Is there a large reach and high impact on the target population at risk? Overall, major improvement in the health outcome?

Ask your stakeholders again for input and feedback on your results.

Tip: You may have more than one option that have similar economic results. You may suggest more than one option and give the reasoning for why in your recommendations OR you may select the one that is more feasible to implement.



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Select Best Policy Option(s) and Write Summary and Additional Actions

10

Congratulations! You have now determined which policy option(s) to recommend based on your economic evaluation, feasibility evaluation, and stakeholder feedback. You can write a summary of your recommendations and note any additional actions that must take place to implement the policy option to effectively modify your health problem.

You now have everything to write a policy brief (if have not yet started). The policy brief will provide essential information on your health issue to key stakeholders and decision-makers.

In this, be sure to include a concise summary of any assumptions and considerations that should be noted when interpreting your economic evaluation (i.e. any estimated values, additional costs not considered, etc.). Make sure to cite your statements in the brief and create an appendix (ENDNOTE, Mendeley) where detailed information for your sources can be found.

Tips: Use the policy brief template provided. Cite references in text using AMA Style. Include one or two clear and purposeful visualizations to support your recommended option(s)



