



Template – Engaging Policy and Practice

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A 6-step strategy for engaging policy and practice

The template follows the 6-step strategy for engaging policy and practice as provided in the training workbook and training (May 5-6, 2014 in Sri Lanka)

Step 1: Define the issue (1-2 pages)

Step 2: Articulate the goal and objectives (1/2 page or less)

Step 3: Understand your context (1-2 pages)

Step 4: Identify decision makers, key actors, and relationships (1 page)

Step 5: Describe your engagement process (1 page)

Step 6: Monitor and learn (1 page or less)

Your **summary strategy** (for sharing purposes) should aim to be 6 pages maximum keeping in mind you may have a **more detailed version** to guide your process internally.

Step 1: Define the issue: What challenge are we addressing?

In 1-2 pages, define the issue.

The following questions will help you think through the issue and define your challenge:

- What is the problem we want to address?
- Is it widespread across many settings, or confined to certain localities?
- What is the root cause of the problem? (if we know)
- Can the problem be solved? (i.e. new knowledge and attention from new stakeholders will make a difference)
- What evidence do you have of the problem?
- Is the evidence credible? What is the legitimacy of the knowledge?
- Who are the other actors addressing this problem? What is their approach?
- Can you present compelling evidence and recommendations for tackling the problem?

Step 2: Articulate the goal and objectives: What change do we want to achieve?

In half a page or less, articulate your goal and objectives. You should have one overarching goal and a maximum of 3-5 to objectives.

Reminder:

A goal is a brief vision statement that describes a change we want to see in the world. This is expressed as an outcome, not an activity or plan. The objectives represent progress toward the goal. This may be similar to the goal/objectives in your work plan or might be different based on changes to your thinking through the research process.

Step 3: Understand your context: What is the environment for change?

If you intend to build bridges between research and policy or actively engage in policy you must first understand the policy making and knowledge environment.

In 1-2 pages, describe the context for page. The following questions should be considered.

- How is policy made in relation to this issue?
- Have there been other policy recommendations on this issue? If yes, what happened?
- How do practitioners get information?
- What relevant policy processes are going on?
- What are the current debates in parliament? What are the hot button issues among members?
- What are the best opportunities to influence change? What are potential windows of opportunity?
- Who really controls the agenda?
- What may block or enable change?

Step 4: Identify decision makers, key actors and relationships: Who do we need to engage?

In 1 page, define specific people and organisations you need to reach in order to implement the desired outcome.

You will need to undergo a network mapping exercise as per the training workbook.

As a reminder, this includes:

1. List of actors
2. Mapping actors on a power/interest grid
3. Drawing links (influence, knowledge, relationships)
4. How does your institution fit (links to the hub)
5. How does the present map differ from a future map?

Step 5: Describe your engagement story: What is your process of change?

In 1 page, briefly summarise your strategic approach to achieving the change you want.

Think about potential uses for the research and the impact it might have on policy and planning as well as what steps should be taken to ensure that the right people are willing to pay attention to the findings of your research. **Communications activities** should be included in this section.

Your approach should reflect what you learned about the policy and knowledge landscape from your mapping exercise. Some questions to consider:

- How do you propose to bring the knowledge to the attention of your target audience?
- Who are the key actors you will work with and who you will try and engage them with your knowledge and communications work and how?
- What opportunities exist to tell people what you are working on and what you are learning? What new opportunities can you create?
- How will you build trust in your research (legitimacy of data, analysis and recommendations)?
- What steps do you need to take? (build your capacity, establish networks, engage media, etc.)
- When will it happen?

Important! Document your assumptions. Ask yourself why your approach will work, why not, why is one course of action better than another and note it down as part of the strategy. [This step is your Theory of Change]

Step 6: Monitoring and Learning: improving and adapting our process

In 1 page or less, list a maximum of five indicators that will help you:

- Track progress
- Assess the degree to which things have changed

Use the following table to help you and refer to your training workbook for examples of indicators for policy/practice influencing.

How will you assess if you are heading in the right direction?			
How will you track whether you are doing what to planned to do (and take note of what was unplanned)?*			
How will you ensure your outputs are the right quality?			
What indicators of success will you use	Expect to See	Like to See	Love to See
How will you measure this?*			
What will you do with the results?			
How will you ensure you are learning?			
How will you share your learning with others?			

*Recall:

- We have monthly reports (submitted to ADB) that you should use to track progress on the workplan, success, and challenges.
- We have monthly team leader discussions by skype to discuss progress, learning and emerging ideas.
- We have twice yearly reflections scheduled by skype to reflect on what we are learning about engaging in policy. (June/December)
- We have mid-term reflection meeting (face to face) focused on how we are doing, what we are learning, anything new? (2016)
- We have final reflection meeting at the end of project for reflecting on major lessons learned along the way that we can use to help ourselves in the future and share with others. (2017)