Knowledge Translation Curriculum

Module 2: Situation Analysis

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CCGHR CCRSM
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Foreword

On behalf of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR or the "Coalition"), it is my pleasure to write a foreword for this remarkable contribution to the growing and evolving field of knowledge translation (KT). We believe KT to be a cornerstone of health systems in Canada and across the globe, and see this *Curriculum* as further proof of the Coalition's strategic commitment to innovation in KT.

Why is KT so important? Despite the recognition that knowledge has led to significant improvements in health outcomes around the world, major challenges remain. These include health outcome inequalities among and within countries, and the continued rift – the "know-do gap" – between the research and policy communities. The World Health Organization has estimated that half of all premature deaths could be prevented by the implementation of known interventions – that is, by using *available* knowledge. And this is the complex challenge that KT addresses: making knowledge available, contextualized, and realistically implementatable.

What is the added value of this *Curriculum*? I suggest several unique features:

- It is comprehensive, including a thorough exploration of both theory and practice. Each *Module* begins with a discussion of the relevant theory and then moves into an array of tools and diagrams to illustrate the "practice" component. Each opens with some key suggested readings, and provides a list of readily available and relevant readings.
- After an extensive introduction to knowledge translation (*Module 1*), there are two additional modules not commonly highlighted in the KT field. They emphasize the critical importance of understanding the context (situation analysis) and of developing a consensus around a focus (priority setting).
- The document is called a "curriculum" as the primary intent of this document is educational. To facilitate this learning goal, each *Module* is divided into lessons, but stops short of including specific questions, problems (challenges, scenarios) or case studies. As this is intended for a wide global audience of adult learners, the assumption here is that instructors (or self-learners) are best able to adapt the tools and approaches to suit their own particular contexts. Discussing and learning this content is optimally done in a group, and it is our hope that each individual group will develop their own exercises to practice or modify these tools and approaches for a context–specific challenge.

As the author indicates, in some ways these three *Modules* represent a beginning, steps along a journey. In the spirit of on-going learning, we welcome your comments about how you used this curriculum, what worked well for you, and what could be improved and added. We wish you a productive and stimulating learning experience.

Vic Neufeld MD FRCPC
National Coordinator, Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research
May 14 2012.

Overview of the Knowledge Translation Curriculum

The three *Modules* within this KT Curriculum serve as an in-depth introduction to knowledge translation (KT). Since its star turn at the 2004 Ministerial Summit in Mexico City, KT has emerged as a leading approach in narrowing the gaps between health research, health practice and health policy. However, it is still a young concept that often means different things to different people. For some it is roughly synonymous with *communications* and/or *dissemination*, where "KT" is a peer-reviewed paper or a conference presentation. For others, it is rooted in the idea of *co-production*, where KT opens up the research, practice and policy processes, with policy- and practice-informed evidence leading directly to evidence-informed policy and practice.

This *Curriculum* provides a comprehensive – if unavoidably incomplete – overview of the key concepts, conflicts and methods in KT. It is grounded in philosophy and political science as much as it is in health, exploring the ideas and the theories behind the great complexity that shape the intersections among research, practice and policy processes.

We define KT in very broad and simple terms as: *an ethos connecting contextualized knowledge with its application to improve health and well-being*. While the literature is replete with KT definitions,[1] our choice here is deliberate in its simplicity and reach. Above all else, KT describes the intersections among research, policy, and (clinical) practice processes. Whereas in the past these processes have evolved separately, the complex, multi-sectoral nature of health in the twenty-first century demands they now develop together, intertwined. And thus the more that each of these processes can influence the others – so that, for instance, the needs of policy and practice might influence the types of knowledge we create – the better our abilities to respond to our current and future health challenges.

This is by no means a straightforward task.

"Unless ye believe,
ye shall not understand."
– St. Augustine [2] –

The *Curriculum* is intended for a global audience of students and instructors. While it draws in many instances on evidence and experience in low- and middle-income settings, its focus is not restricted to this context. KT is a universal concept and phenomenon.

Each *Module* within this *Curriculum* is broken into a number of lessons that can be taught individually, as a whole, or combined with other material. Each lesson aspires to be a complete "lesson out of a box" that can be taught as-is. Each begins with a suggested reading list (with links to *pdfs* for all articles), which leads into a lecture of prominent ideas, a review of the major

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[1] See *Lesson 1.2* of *Module 1* for the major definitions, types and frameworks.

[2] cited in Tsoukas (2002)

literature, diagrams and graphics, and quotations of particular relevance. There are, however, very few real-world examples illustrating a particular tool or approach. These can be found in the literature – this *Curriculum* is intended to discuss relatively generic and theoretical approaches that can be adapted to particular issues or problems; we have left the case studies or real-world examples to the available literature.[3] Each lesson does, however, include suggestions for instructors in guiding group work or leading discussion. All *Modules* feature modifiable presentations that may be customized according to need and audience.

In terms of bias, there are definitely some strategic content choices throughout. The field of knowledge translation is crowded with actors, ideas, scientists and theorists, and to navigate this one must invariably be selective. First, this *Curriculum* focuses primarily on integrated KT (i.e. KT that explores the co-production of knowledge and the co-creation of responses, be they policies or practice guidelines etc). Second, it focuses largely on the intersection between research and policy development as this is the connection that predominates in the literature and most closely aligns with author experience. This omits significant fields of interest. There is a *Module* to be written on KT for practitioners (e.g. nurses, clinicians), and one on KT for policy implementation, but unfortunately these are *Modules* for another day.

Each *Module* should help students identify, analyze and comprehend KT principles, approaches and tools, understanding why they are important, when they might be used, and how. Above all, it is hoped that each *Module* will allow students to understand and interact with some of the major ideas emerging in KT, and further, to apply this learning to the development of KT strategies and to the many other KT-related challenges they might face throughout their careers.

Module One: An Introduction to Knowledge Translation details, as the title suggests, the central currents in KT. *Lesson One* includes particular attention to the traditional research and policy processes to see the potential for reforming each; the four major domains KT seeks to open and influence; and concludes with an overview of the major approaches in KT, including end-of-grant KT, integrated KT and KT research. *Lesson Two* goes back to first principles: what is the knowledge that KT hopes to translate? This includes a look at the types and layers of knowledge, how knowledge changes as it moves among stakeholders, and the hierarchy of evidence. *Lesson Three* examines the barriers and facilitators to creating evidence-informed policy and policy-informed research, while also discussing scenarios where the research conflicts with political values (issue polarization). *Lesson Four* focuses on the three major sets of activities within KT: brokering, synthesis and dissemination. We discuss in particular: the KT Platform, the Rapid Response Service, the policy brief/dialogue model, and then provide an overview of the major dissemination tools available to researchers, asking of each: *how might this tool be improved to actually influence key research stakeholders?*

Module Two: Situation Analysis examines the arts of understanding the context surrounding research, policy and social change. This is a critical act for any research project, policy or KT

[3] Previous drafts of this *Curriculum* saw each Lesson conclude with "Questions, Challenges, Scenarios" to operationalize some of the learning. However, reviewers felt that these were either too broadly generic or too context dependent to be of consistent value. Instructors are encouraged to devise their own means to reinforce the key Module principles.

strategy, yet one that is ill-explained in the peer-reviewed literature. *Lesson One* outlines a process issue fundamental to situation analyses and to KT more broadly: deliberation. Only an open, balanced and representative group of stakeholders can arrive at an open, balanced and representative analysis of the prevailing situation. This *Lesson* details how such groups can be organized, and how they might choose to deliberate among themselves. *Lesson Two* discusses stakeholder analysis and offers a range of different practical tools groups might use to identify and analyze stakeholders, their power and interests, and the dynamics that exist among them. *Lesson Three* compliments this by focusing on political context analysis, which looks at how previous related policies have been formulated, implemented and evaluated, what opportunities exist to influence policy, the foundational factors shaping policies and interventions, and the external factors that play a role in everything from policy development to evaluation.

Module Three: Priority Setting frames priority setting as where KT ultimately begins. In bringing together different stakeholders to identify, weigh and rank a society's knowledge needs, priority setting guides investments in health research. *Lesson One* discusses the broad theory of priority setting and details the two major types of priority-setting processes – priority setting for service delivery (used by institutions to choose among interventions) and priority setting for research (used by research and policy communities to weigh and rank a society's knowledge needs to choose among health research options). *Lesson Two* focuses on the latter type of priority setting, discussing tools for performing various different priority setting process.

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There are many other worthy topics within KT that deserve their own *Modules*. It is hoped that future *Modules* of this *Curriculum* will address additional topics such as: Designing KT Strategies, Monitoring and Evaluation of KT, Methods in KT Research, and KT for Practitioners and Planners. Moreover, given technological advances, it is also hoped that future *Modules* will embrace multi-media, with embedded video interviews or narrated animations explaining key concepts. Ultimately, these three are a beginning – an incomplete yet rigorous beginning – to teaching core KT principles. As KT methods continue to emerge and evolve, equal parts art and science, so too will its instruction: just as we have a great deal to learn in KT, so too must we understand how best to teach it.

Sandy Campbell
October 18, 2012
for the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research

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Module 2: Situation Analysis

Overview of the Module

Understanding the backdrop, the surrounding scene – the context – is critical to the success of any research project. The more comprehensively a project respects its context, the likelier its chances of achieving impact. This seems logical and is in fact a routine observation in the KT literature (see, for instance, Kitson et al 2008; Ward et al 2010) – yet there remains very little guidance on exactly *how* to do this. We argue throughout this *Module* that if we want to develop effective KT strategies – or even just to launch a single KT activity – then we must have a meticulous appreciation of the prevailing context. This includes, in varying degrees, understanding the composition and positions of relevant stakeholders, the dynamics that exist between these stakeholders, particular policy processes, and the broader culture that shapes stakeholder interaction.

"Context dictates the realm of the possible"
– Contandriopoulos et al 2010 –

In this *Module*, we've grouped a number of approaches and tools designed to illuminate this concept of context, bringing them together under the umbrella term of *Situation Analysis*.[4] For many KT strategies, understanding the context is the first step. For instance, in crafting an integrated KT approach, we need to know the range of perspectives and stakeholders we might wish to include in designing or executing a research project. For any end-of-grant KT approach that features dissemination – e.g. creating take-home messages for a policy-maker – the more we know about our audience, how they absorb research evidence, the context in which they operate, and so on, the greater the possibility of research evidence achieving its desired impact.

Much of the cited literature in this *Module* has by necessity been culled from the grey literature. This lack of peer-reviewed publication however does not reflect on the quality of the available grey lit – there are many rich situation analysis pieces, often published by agencies that have employed one or more situation analysis tools to provide depth and understanding for a specific project. This *Module* attempts to bring together much of this thinking and experience, providing a range of tools from which KT practitioners can choose.

Lessons Two and Three of this *Module* are dedicated to these situation analysis approaches and tools. A brief first lesson, however, focuses on a key process issue – how the act of *deliberation* shapes all situation analysis work (as shown in *Diagram 2.1*). While an individual can certainly execute a situation analysis, we argue here that only a balanced and representative group can create a balanced and representative picture of the overarching situation. For most issues within KT and health research more broadly, the situation, whatever it may be, is likely too complex for any one individual to have an ideal, balanced or comprehensive perspective. To that end, *Lesson*

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[4] This choice of terminology is deliberate. As opposed to context mapping or political mapping – two widely used terms – a Situation Analysis implies much more than the act of mapping. Mapping tools may well be part of the exercise, but the fundamental value of a Situation Analysis arises from how these inputs are ultimately *analyzed*.

One sketches the arts of deliberation, and suggests some deliberative techniques that may be of use in guiding a representative group through the steps of a situation analysis.

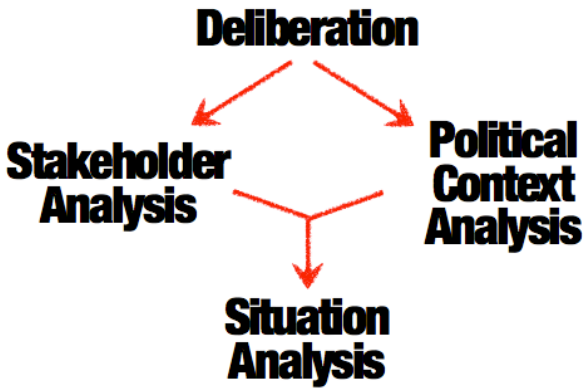

Diagram 2.1: Deliberation at the root of Situation Analyses

Lessons Two and Three explore the two major elements of a Situation Analysis: the stakeholders and the prevailing political context. In a stakeholder analysis, we identify and analyze *who* is involved on a particular issue and why, gauge the power dynamics and relationships among those stakeholders, and possibly understand how those stakeholders interact with research evidence. In a political context analysis, we arrive at a thorough understanding of the wider political dynamics, where we analyze the **policy processes** related to the issue at hand (how have previous agendas been set? how have policies been formulated, implemented, evaluated? what opportunities exist to influence policy processes?), the **foundational factors** related to the issue at hand (how do underlying governance, financial, social and/or economic arrangements influence policy or a particular project or intervention?) and the **external factors** shaping the issue at hand (what ideologies, special interests, networks, research evidence are at play?).[5] [6]

Importantly: the distinction between a stakeholder analysis and a political context analysis is arbitrary, and done here primarily for didactic purposes. While they do convey separate sets of actions, they are deeply intertwined. Any comprehensive stakeholder analysis will have to account for the political context, much as stakeholders are an essential component of any political context analysis. Making this distinction, however, allows us to highlight the different sets of tools that can be used individually or sequentially in a facilitated brainstorming environment.

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[5] Throughout this *Module*, we use the term "issue at hand" as a container for an objective, project, policy, policy reform or issue. While much of the situation analysis literature orients itself around a particular project – i.e. determining stakeholders or politics that may affect the design, implementation and evaluation of a project – we take a much broader view and wish to understand situational dynamics around any given objective, project, policy, policy reform or larger issue. This perspective allows the student to apply this learning to any given project or KT strategy.

[6] Note that the political science literature uses a different terminology to express the dynamics captured here – typically under the umbrellas of institutions, interests and ideas. See, for instance, Lavis et al (2012) and Stone (2011). We emphasize policy processes, foundational factors and external factors as they're more descriptive and immediate for KT practitioners and health researchers.

And lastly, we do not perform a situation analysis simply because it's the right thing to do. Given the time, human and financial resources required to perform one comprehensively, we must always have a larger plan in place, an understanding of how the analysis will ultimately be used. How might a greater awareness of stakeholders and their dynamics slot into or inform a broader KT strategy? What KT approaches (as discussed in *Module One*) could become more sophisticated as a result of performing a situation analysis? On what *very specific issue* do we require greater contextual knowledge – and why? In what precise ways would an understanding of the politics around an issue increase our abilities to influence policy?

Module Goals

Upon completing this Module, students should understand:

- the types of deliberative techniques multi-stakeholder groups can use to execute both a stakeholder analysis and a political context analysis.
- the core tenets of a stakeholder analysis, from relatively simple techniques (e.g. completing stakeholder sheets) to more complex undertakings (e.g. analyzing stakeholder-issue relationships)
- the rudiments of a political context analysis, again from relatively simple techniques (e.g. completing a force-field analysis or trend analysis) to those of much greater complexity (e.g. a power analysis).

Key Module Principles

1. As situation analyses strive to create a balanced, representative picture of the overarching context, they must be completed by a group that is itself balanced and representative.
2. Situation analyses move in complexity from stakeholder analyses (understanding major actors and the dynamics between them) to political context analyses (synthesizing the many influences on policy processes). Both are essential parts of a comprehensive situation analysis.
3. There are many different tools useful in completing situation analyses, but each group should discuss and arrive at a context-suited combination of tools to ensure the investigation of relevant and important angles.
4. Situation analyses ultimately depend on *what comes next*: how will they be used? How do they slot into or inform a larger knowledge translation strategy? They are a beginning to a process, not an end.

Note to Instructors

All Instructors are encouraged to read the core texts around situation analysis before beginning instruction. This could be particularly helpful in identifying examples that will help a given class experiment with some of the tools detailed here. To this end, suggested texts include Zimmerman and Maennling (2007) <pdf>, the World Bank (2007) <pdf>, the World Health Organization (2009) <pdf> and Nash et al (2006) <pdf>. Note as well that a daily newspaper or similar online source would likely have an issue of note that could be subject to any of the tools detailed here. As students may have not-fully-formed opinions of such an issue, this could result in some dynamic discussion. Instructors should carefully select the situation analysis tool that adds the most value to that particular issue. Suggestions are made throughout this *Module* reflecting the kind of group work that could explore each of these tools.

Module 2: Lessons

1	*An introduction to deliberation*. For any situation analysis to be done comprehensively, it must be done in a group. A multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder group reduces individual bias, resolves institutional conflicts, draws upon much wider social networks, and orients the group beyond any particular sector or perspective. Of course, a "group" is not without its own characteristics and dynamics: to arrive at a situation analysis that is reflective of the situation at hand, a great deal depends on who is in the group, and the way in which the group deliberates.	*page 83*
2	*Stakeholder Analysis*. Understanding the stakeholders relevant to any given situation can be complex, and identifying them must go much deeper than simply creating a long list of individuals, groups, organizations, departments, structures or networks. While brainstorming such a list is a good first step, a deliberating group should then add nuance and depth to the list, potentially by prioritizing stakeholders, by understanding how they might affect, or be affected by the issue at hand, by describing their power and interests, and by describing the dynamics that exist among them. Analytical tools here are divided into (arbitrary categories of) simple and complex approaches.	*page 90*
3	*Political Context Analysis*. This type of analysis often includes understanding the policy process factors relevant to the issue at hand (how have policies been formulated, implemented, evaluated? what opportunities exist to influence policy processes?), the foundational factors related to the issue at hand (how do underlying social and/or economic elements influence policy or a particular intervention? what systemic considerations bear high relevance?) and the external factors shaping the issue at hand (what ideologies, special interests, networks, research evidence are at play?). Analytical tools here are divided between simple and complex approaches.	*page 103*

Note that all papers cited in this Module can be found (along with other online resources) here.

Lesson 1: An Introduction to Deliberation

Suggested Readings

- McDonald D, Bammer G and Deane P. *Research Integration Using Dialogue Methods*. The Australian National University E Press, 2009. <pdf>
- McCoy M and Scully P. "Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What kind of talk does democracy need?". *National Civic Review*. 91:2. 2002. <pdf>
- Campbell S. Deliberative Priority Setting. A CIHR Knowledge Translation Module. 2010. <pdf>
- National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Deliberative Processes and Knowledge Translation. 2010. Institut national de santé publique du Quebec. <pdf>
- Isaksen S. A Review of Brainstorming Research: Six Critical Issues for Inquiry. Monograph #302. Creative Problem Solving Group, Buffalo NY. <pdf>
- McKee N. Visualisation in Participatory Programmes (VIPP): Taking stock of its diffusion and impact**.** *Journal of Communication for Development and Social Change: A Global Journal*, Hampton Press: Creskill, N.J. 2:4. 2009. <pdf>
- Gregory J, Hartz-Karp J, Watson R. Using deliberative techniques to engage the community in policy development. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*. 5:16, 2008. <pdf>

1.1	*The arts of deliberation*. This lesson discusses how a core group may take shape in order to lead (often facilitated) brainstorming on stakeholders and their dynamics relevant to the issue at hand. Here we present the idea of a Senior Advisory Team and suggest some structure for a Core Group, and how it might want to organize itself to create a balanced, open space for discussion.	page 83

Lesson 1 Presentation:

A presentation highlighting the major aspects of *Lesson One* is available in three different formats:

- as a <pdf> for printing. Can be used as a handout, but cannot be modified. Can also be used as a presentation in full-screen mode.
- as a <key> for presentations. This uses Apple's proprietary Keynote software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired.
- as a <ppt> for presentations. This uses Microsoft's proprietary PowerPoint software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired. Please note that the presentation was not created using ppt software; it looks best in pdf or key formats.

Lesson 1.1: The Arts of Deliberation

For any situation analysis to be done comprehensively, it must be done in a group. In recognition of the great complexities lying within and between research and policy, a multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder group can reduce individual bias, resolve institutional conflicts, draw upon much wider social networks, and orient the group beyond any particular sector or perspective. Of course, a "group" is not without its own characteristics and dynamics: to arrive at a situation analysis that is truly reflective of the situation at hand, a great deal depends on who is in the group, and how the group functions. These are not insignificant details. While this *Module* will focus primarily on the actual tools for performing elements of a situation analyses, these tools depend above all on who uses them, and how. Thus, identifying the people who will use these tools, and determining the tools they will use, is an obvious place to begin.

Almost every tool in this *Module* begins with a group deliberating or brainstorming. This can be a very simple act – led by a chairperson moderating the group's discussion – or one of great depth requiring expert facilitation. Whatever the desired format of this deliberation, the aim should be for a process that balances and synthesizes different voices, providing equal opportunities for all to participate. As McCoy and Scully (2002) observe, any multi-stakeholder deliberative dialogue should embrace the following principles:

- the process should encourage a multiplicity of voices, with listening as critical as speaking, and the conversation more "horizontal" than "vertical" (i.e. among equals);
- a range of views should be heard and discussed before any decision or resolution is made;
- the discussion should emphasize analysis and reasoned argument. "The powerful work that occurs in dialogue – identifying the connections between personal and public concerns, creating mutual understanding, and building relationships based on trust – is necessary for solving complex public problems" (McCoy and Scully 2002).

To reflect the assertions in this *Module* about the primacy of a group in owning any situation analysis process, for the sake of uniformity and convenience, throughout these pages we will call this leadership group the Core Group (CG). Though attention to the formation of such a group may seem excessive, we argue that in many contexts the success of any situation analysis depends enormously on *how* its leadership group is created and *who* sits upon it. A situation analysis is, after all, inherently political, and thus we must have these political concerns in mind from the outset.

Lastly, while this first *Lesson* discusses group processes of deliberation as the basis for a situation analysis, it should be noted that the art of deliberation extends into many other areas of KT. Deliberation is a crucial component of the policy brief and dialogue process discussed in *Module 1*; underpins all activities of a priority setting exercise as discussed in *Module 3*; enriches research processes and findings by providing a platform to combine explicit and tacit knowledge; and enables KT strategists to better slot research evidence alongside other policy inputs. For those reasons and more, deliberation is in itself a major KT method.

"by promoting the co-production and co-interpretation of research, the deliberative model of KT ensures the democratization of research knowledge and increases the likelihood of its being implemented".
– NCCHPP (2010) –

1.1.1: The Core Group: formation

There are many different approaches for forming, appointing or electing a CG, but the composition of each should reflect a wide sample of stakeholders. A researcher, for instance, may wish to create a CG to execute a situation analysis on a particular issue. A government ministry may wish to create a CG to better understand particular policy dynamics. Members of the CG need to possess not only knowledge of the particular issue, but must also have the abilities and time to perform, manage and/or review these analyses. Each CG should be composed of 5-15 members; it should base itself where the majority of its members are located. This may exclude some individuals critical to the CG's operations, but as described below, there are other promising means for including the voice, perspective and expertise of members unable to participate in person or as a full-fledged CG member.

In some contexts, a legitimate, approved body may already exist that could either become or create the CG. In order to ensure that every CGs possesses the necessary skills *and* the required political support and acceptance among all major stakeholders, this *Module* outlines a number of connected steps leading to a participatory, multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary, even multi-sectoral group representing a range of voices.[7] That's a lot of *multis* for sure – but going beyond the individual or a cadre of particular individuals (e.g. university professors; Ministry officials) is essential. If this is done subjectively or arbitrarily, the workings of the CG may be perceived as biased, unbalanced and/or incomplete.

1.1.2 The Senior Advisory Team

In ways, forming this Core Group seems like a paradox: how can you identify the stakeholders to perform a stakeholder analysis if you haven't done the stakeholder analysis in the first place? The idea of a Senior Advisory Team (SAT) is one way around this. In most countries or sectors or even within particular issues, there tends to be a small handful of individuals with great seniority, wide respect, and a deep knowledge and perspective on where the situation analysis work should go. Ideally they would have a neutrality as well. This champion or champions can begin the process by selecting three other individuals to jointly create a Senior Advisory Team (also called in other contexts a *Council of Elders*). These four members should all have decades of experience in a relevant field; they should have experience in multiple (domestic and international) sectors, including the public, the private and civil society.

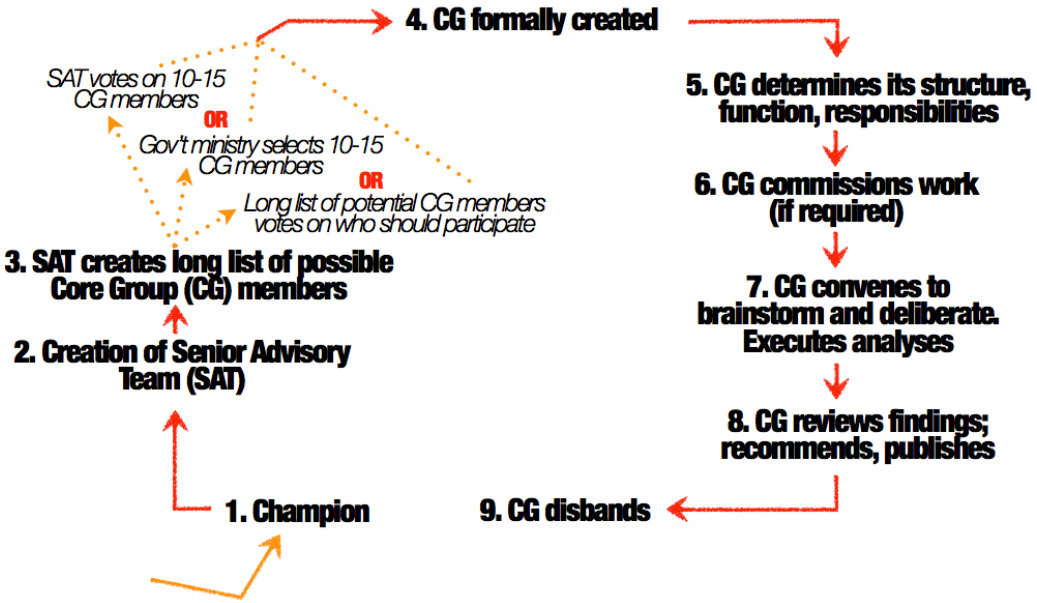

Diagram 2.2: Nine steps for a core group to execute a situation analysis

The SAT's primary role is to discuss possible CG members. For each possible candidate, the SAT should consider: experience and knowledge related to the issue at hand; experience and/or skills in situation analysis; educational background; gender; age; and perhaps as important as any

[7] These steps are an amalgam of those outlined in the priority-setting literature (see, for instance Campbell 2010), the deliberative dialogue literature (see McDonald, Bammer and Deane 2009), in Tuckman (1965), in programmatic decisions supported by international entities (see, for instance, UNICEF 2003), and in Dodge and Bennett (2011).

variable, their *realistic availability*. Following completion of this first list (which could certainly include SAT members), there are three choices to determine the ultimate CG composition, as shown between steps 3 and 4 in *Diagram 2.2* above: the SAT itself could vote on possible members; the relevant government ministry (e.g. a Ministry of Health) could select or appoint CG members; or all possible members of the CG could vote on themselves, with the top 10-15 vote getters becoming members.

1.1.3 Determining CG Structure, Function and Responsibilities

The CG must determine its terms of reference, and wider rules of operation. Its first meeting should be dedicated to these, with particular attention to:

- the intentions, goals, general and specific objectives of the situation analysis work.
- what is expected of of the CG.
- the rules that will guide its operations. Who will chair meetings? What methodologies for meetings/analyses etc. will be used? How will responsibility for various tasks be determined? Who will create the final outputs? And so on.
- selecting or electing a chairperson.
- knowing when the CG will disband.

As shown in Step 6 in *Diagram 2.2* above, the CG should also arrive at an idea of the types of activities it can do, and the type it will commission others to do. This could include desk research, key informant interviews, scoping exercises/landscapes, etc. When drawing up a list of possible consultants to perform any of these tasks, the CG may also wish to brainstorm individuals who have the necessary expertise and experience to facilitate its deliberations. Facilitation is a *crucial* variable in brainstorming. Though typically expensive, facilitation can add the necessary rigour and objectivity to proceedings, while also creating an atmosphere where the less talkative have space to voice their views (Isaksen 1998; Kitson et al 2008).

Diagram 2.3 below breaks down in more detail the possible sequence of Core Group operations, framing the remainder of our discussion in this *Lesson*.

Box 2.1: Facilitated Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an essential method for initiating any situation analysis, first in creating raw amounts of qualitative data and then in determining the ways in which that data will be sharpened into an incisive and comprehensive analysis. For the stakeholder analysis, brainstorming is used to:

- determine the purpose, plan and overarching process for the stakeholder analysis
- produce some of the data or information describing primary and secondary stakeholders and their interests
- decide upon the types of tools that might add value to that data or information
- determine who will do what, when, why and how
- agree on any follow-up work.

This is a significant amount of work. The CG needs to be clear on how much of its time will be required to complete this. CGs should also be clear about whether it requires facilitation, and if so draw up lists of possible facilitators. As outlined elsewhere, having a professional facilitator is often a key variable in a successful situation analysis process.

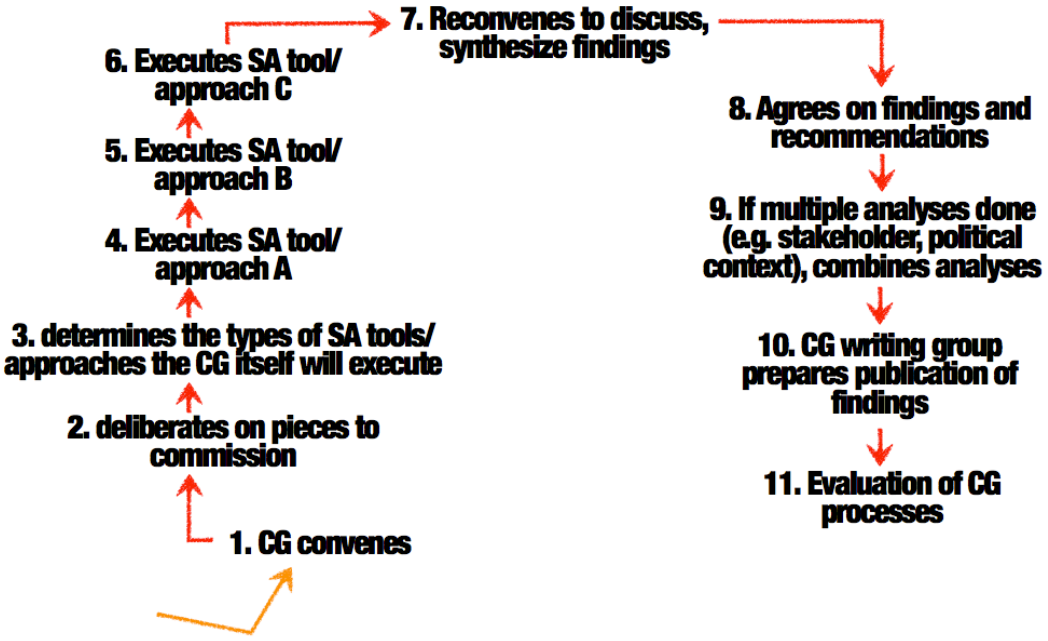

Diagram 2.3: Possible sequence of Core Group operations

1.1.4 Deliberative Techniques

There are several different types of deliberative dialogues that can take best advantage of the participatory brainstorming techniques of the CG. Below is a brief list of four different types of dialogue modalities that might allow the CG to: structure its brainstorming; hear, weigh and assess competing opinions; incorporate and absorb specific pieces of expertise; furnish individuals within the CG the opportunity to participate and speak as individuals – and not as official, institutional representatives – without fear of public attribution.[8]

Virtual Models

The first place a CG might begin its deliberations is virtual. Recognizing the great expense and logistical complexity of bringing busy, senior people to a single place for one or more days, virtual models have in recent years become increasingly attractive. While there are many different online platforms – from *facebook* to *academia.edu* – these all have stark shortcomings when used for collaborative purposes. However, the one virtual tool that people do have and already use on a daily (even hourly or by-the-minute) basis is email. For deliberative purposes, the Core Group could begin its deliberations by emailing all members a *focus prompt*. This could see each member of the CG responding individually to a question designed to spur dialogue and discussion, which could be either relatively vague and exploratory – "*On Issue X, the key stakeholders are…*" – or quite specific – "*On Issue X, one thing that limits the adoption of the proposed policy is…*".

There could be one focus prompt or a structured series of them, with each probing different areas of interest (moving horizontally) or digging ever deeper into one area (moving vertically). The CG could then analyze these responses in a variety of different ways, and present that analysis

[8] For more deliberative methodologies, see Campbell (2010) and McDonald, Bammer and Deane (2009).

back to the group to initiate an even deeper level of discussion. This could take the form of a circulated synthesis paper (with responses to the paper encouraged – all circulated via email), a presentation highlighting trends and incisive quotations (potentially done via *Skype* or other online tool), or as a concept map (see *Box 2.2* below) that creates a visual clustering of CG responses. The well-known *Delphi Technique* could also be used to systematically elicit CG opinions through sequential questionnaires, information summaries, and feedback. As with other methods, this could be used before the group physically meets to probe complex issues and to begin a preliminary synthesis of ideas, concerns and priorities (McDonald, Bammer and Deane 2009).[9]

Box 2.2: Concept Mapping[10]

Sometimes referred to as "structured conceptualization," concept mapping is a participatory tool that combines organized brainstorming with statistical analysis to create a visual aide that can be used to kick-start, plan, inform or even evaluate deliberation (Novak and Cañas 2008, National Cancer Institute 2007). The tool begins with a focus question or focus prompt that isolates the problem or concern a concept map can address. Following this initial elicitation, organizers group those responses into 15-25 concepts. "These concepts could be listed, and then from this list a rank ordered list should be established from the most general, most inclusive concept, for this particular problem or situation at the top of the list, to the most specific, least general concept at the bottom of the list. Although this rank order may be only approximate, it helps to begin the process of map construction. We refer to the list of concepts as a *parking lot*, since we will move these concepts into the concept map as we determine where they fit in. Some concepts may remain in the parking lot as the map is completed if the map-maker sees no good connection for these with other concepts in the map" (Novak and Cañas 2008).

A preliminary map should reveal linkages between the concepts, and suggest ways that ideas might be combined or further contrasted. This map can be the visual aid brought to the deliberation, or it may, for instance, be posted online for further revision and concept re-positioning, with a "final" map ultimately informing the actual deliberation.

To see a full concept map process, refer in particular to the National Cancer Institute (2007).

Expert Witness Panels

Once the CG has achieved degrees of maturity and experience – with clarity of structure, and experience in its teamwork – it may decide to convene an expert witness panel. This is a familiar technique to many government bodies – even to many systems of jurisprudence – and allows the CG to gain particular insights from particular actors. An expert witness panel can allow the participation of individuals who, because of geographical/financial limits, time constraints, or institutional/personal conflicts, cannot or should not serve on the CG. In convening an expert witness panel, the CG could:

- deliberate on possible experts and what they might contribute to the proceedings
- invite some of those experts to attend a future CG meeting
- interview those experts formally. This would see the CG preparing specific questions for those experts designed to extract the information the CG believes to have particular value

[9] For more on this method, see Delbecq et al (1975), McDonald, Bammer and Deane (2009) and Campbell (2010).

[10] Text modified from Campbell (2010).

for its deliberations. The experts should not simply present on what *they* believe to be important.[11]

Following this panel, the CG should summarize, synthesize and even prioritize the expert input, using this as needed in its deliberations and reports.

Visualization in Participatory Planning
Visualization in Participatory Planning (VIPP) is an extremely useful tool in creating and bonding disparate groups and bringing out the best of each individual member. VIPP embraces these group dynamics through the use of diagrams, cards and photographs to express main ideas, with the "less talkative" participants finding a means of expression, and the group arriving at an effective and genuine consensus. VIPP depends upon an expert facilitator to guide the group through its structuring.[12] "In VIPP processes… those who usually dominate cannot control the process and are forced to let others contribute. Through visualization, repetition and circularity in discussion are reduced while new ideas are highlighted and processed. This adds to the creativity of group processes and the practicality of their outputs." (McKee 2009).

The Chatham House Rule
This technique can be added to any deliberative dialogue, assuring those present that nothing will be attributed, thus opening up discussion to areas that some may deem sensitive, or may be hesitant to comment on for fear of misrepresenting or exposing an institution. "The rule allows people to speak as individuals and to express views that may not be those of their organizations, and therefore, encourages free discussion. Speakers are free to voice their own opinions, without concern for their personal reputation or their official duties and affiliations." (Wikipedia 2010).[13]

There are many other different modes of deliberation (see, for a good list, McDonald, Bammer and Deane 2009). For the subsequent two *Lessons*, the major type of deliberation described will be facilitated brainstorming, which in turn will be further informed or enhanced via key informant interviews (a common type of deliberation, though more as a one-directional input designed to add other voices to the Core Group) and focus groups.

Note to Instructor
While there is likely insufficient time to create and convene a mock Core Group, students should be encouraged to discuss some of the key (and debatable) aspects within this *Lesson*. This includes: what each deliberative technique might uniquely offer and dialogues that feature no formal attribution. In what ways might this be particularly useful? For an example of concept mapping used to explore tobacco control issues, see National Cancer Institute (2007).

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[11] For more on the precise methodology of interviewing an expert witness, see Dodge and Bennett (2011).

[12] For more, see Dodge and Bennett (2011), McKee et al (2009) and Smith (2005).

[13] Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatham_House_Rule.

Lesson 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Suggested Readings

- Bryson J. What to do when stakeholders matter: stakeholder identification and analysis techniques. *Public Management Review*. 6:1. 2004. <pdf>
- Varvasovszky Z and Brugha R. How to do (or not to do)… a stakeholder analysis. *Health Policy and Planning*. 15:3. 2000. <pdf>
- MEASURE Evaluation. Stakeholder Engagement Tool. USAID. 2011. <pdf>
- Department for International Development. *Tools for Development*. Version 15.1. March 2003. <pdf>
- World Wildlife Foundation. Cross-Cutting Tool: Stakeholder analysis. October 2005. <pdf>
- Zimmerman A and Maennling C. *Tools for Stakeholder Analysis: 10 building blocks for designing participatory systems of cooperation*. GTZ, Eschborn, DE. 2007. <pdf>

2.1	*An Overview of Stakeholder Analysis Approaches*. This brief *Lesson* defines the concept of "stakeholder" and presents the ways in which simple stakeholder analysis tools might combine with complex tools to provide a comprehensive analysis of stakeholders relevant to the issue at hand.	*page 91*
2.2	*Simple Stakeholder Analysis Tools*. Here we walk through a series of steps that allow a core group to begin their deliberations on primary, secondary and key stakeholders. Of particular note here are the development of Stakeholder Sheets – an excellent tool for grounding stakeholder discussions – and the Stakeholder and Research Evidence tool, which assesses how a stakeholder has and will interact with research evidence.	*page 94*
2.3	*Complex Stakeholder Analysis Tools*. These tools focus less on the individual stakeholders and more on the relationships and connections among them. Understanding these dynamics is a core part of any stakeholder analysis, adding nuance and depth to the tools described in *Lesson 2.2*.	*page 100*

Lesson Two Presentation:

A presentation highlighting the major aspects of *Lesson Two* is available in three different formats:

- as a <pdf> for printing. Can be used as a handout, but cannot be modified. Can also be used as a presentation in full-screen mode.
- as a <key> for presentations. This uses Apple's proprietary Keynote software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired.
- as a <ppt> for presentations. This uses Microsoft's proprietary PowerPoint software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired. Please note that the presentation was not created using ppt software; it looks best in pdf or key formats.

Note to Instructor

As suggested in the Note at the opening of this *Module*, Instructors may wish to find examples that are highly relevant to the class from the available literature. It is highly encouraged for the class to complete one "simple" tool to get a feel for how we come to understand stakeholders, and one "complex" tool to help gauge the dynamics among stakeholders. Instructors should at the very least have the class complete a *Stakeholder Sheet* exercise, as this is relatively

straightforward yet gives a good window into larger analytical processes. This could then easily be complemented by, for instance, a *Power vs Interest* grid.

Lesson 2.1: An Overview of Stakeholder Analysis Approaches

In this *Lesson*, we move to concrete stakeholder analysis tools. At this point it must again be stressed that before using any stakeholder analysis tool, a Core Group must have a very clear idea of the issue on which they seek to know more information. Performing a stakeholder analysis of a national health system, for instance, would be a very different task than performing one relative to task shifting at a district health system level. The more precise a Core Group can be in identifying how the stakeholder analysis (or situation analysis) will eventually be used, how it slots into a KT strategy, how it serves larger health research purposes, the more rewarding the analysis will be. In other words, this type of analysis must be done for a specific purpose because the purpose itself changes *how* we perform the analysis and *what* we hope to get out of the analysis. Every issue demands a different approach.

Performing a stakeholder analysis can be a highly complex undertaking: understanding relevant stakeholders goes much deeper than simply identifying stakeholders or creating stakeholder lists. While brainstorming stakeholder lists is certainly a useful first step, CGs must then add nuance and value to these lists. This comes through prioritizing stakeholders, by understanding how they might affect, or be affected by, the issue at hand, by detailing their power and interests on the issue at hand, and by understanding the various dynamics that might exist among them. CGs may then analyze the forces for and against change, and understand these stakeholders against a context that is constantly changing (for more on this see *Lesson 3*).

Box 2.3: Stakeholder definition

Stakeholders are defined here as any individual, group, organization, department, structure or network with a vested interest in a particular issue. They stand to gain or lose if conditions stay the same or if conditions change. As they have a stake in those conditions, they have rights, possibly ownership and, very likely, information that is critical to the successful creation or implementation of any policy or policy change. The term variously includes the ideas of "participant," "involved/responsible party," and "recipient".[14]

A stakeholder analysis identifies, understands and analyzes stakeholders relevant to the issue at hand, and the dynamics among them. While the literature presents many different examples and theories of stakeholder analysis (see MEASURE 2011 and DFID 2003 for an assortment of examples), such an analysis typically features different steps that can be done individually or sequentially. As shown in *Diagram 2.4* below, the "simple" stakeholder tools (examined in detail in *Lesson 2.2*) aim to:[15]

- document stakeholders' names, titles, locations, and any other relevant identification details.

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[14] Definition informed by Bryson 2004; Varvasovszky and Brugha 2000; Zimmerman and Maennling (2007). Modified from Campbell (2010).

[15] Note the separation between "simple" and "complex" tools is arbitrary and done here to draw an important distinction between tools that dissect stakeholders vs. those that dissect the dynamics among stakeholders.

- describe the particular role the stakeholder plays in the issue at hand, and determining whether it's positive, neutral or negative.
- dissect the component parts of complex stakeholders. For instance, a government ministry may be a single stakeholder on Issue X and yet multiple stakeholders on Issue Y (when, for instance, different ministry departments have varying positions or responsibilities towards the issue at hand).
- determine how individual stakeholders typically respond to or absorb research evidence (noting that this will not always be a relevant step) (WWF 2005).

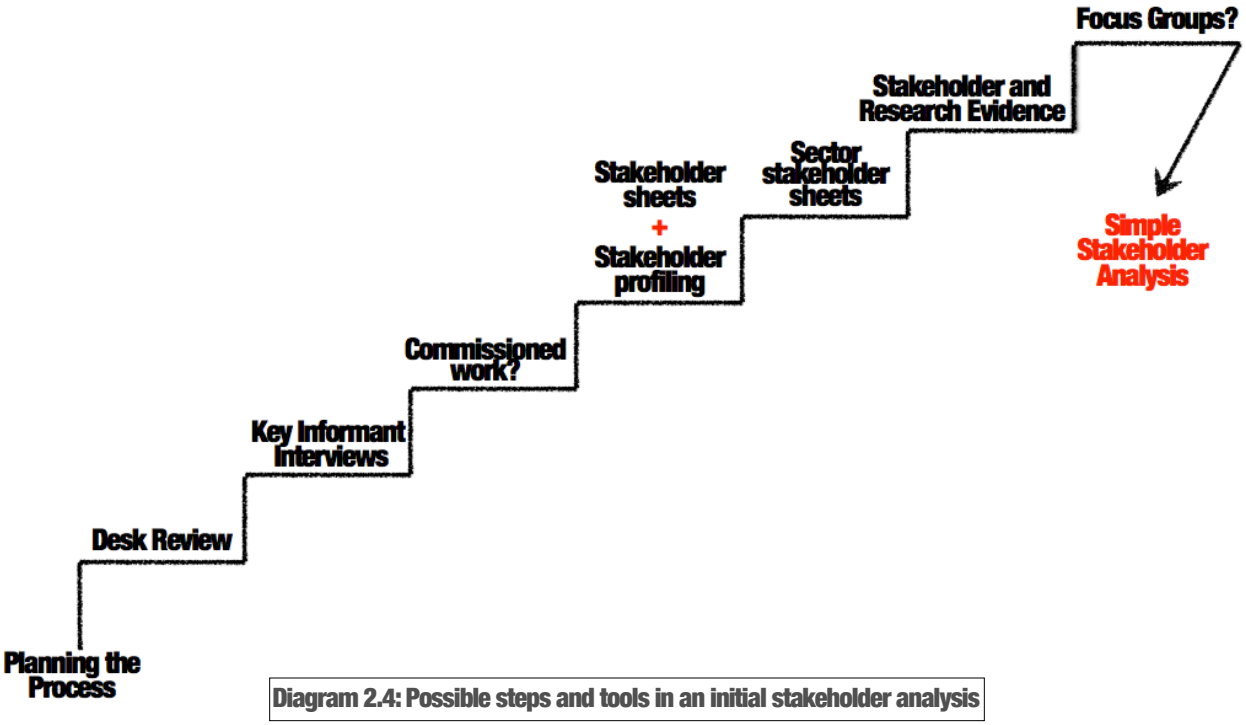

Diagram 2.4: Possible steps and tools in an initial stakeholder analysis

Note that these steps are relatively straightforward, yet can introduce bias if not done comprehensively. As discussed in the tools section below, group discussion around the steps in this category is critical to achieving a degree of objectivity.

"… typically, stakeholder analysis is done informally, in an ad hoc way. The rationale behind choosing and engaging stakeholders is rarely consistent, systematic, or documented. A researcher may talk to people to identify stakeholders and their roles, but the process is intuitive rather than systematic, and it rarely happens the same way twice. As a result, the following scenarios are typical: only those stakeholders in agreement with the proposed plan are invited to participate; stakeholders are selected only from the organization that is directly involved in the project; stakeholders are invited to a preliminary briefing, but they are not included thereafter in project design; the process includes only the bare minimum number of stakeholders required to obtain formal approvals; and stakeholders included in the project may not be at the appropriate level in a community or organization to contribute to the project or make decisions.

– MEASURE Evaluation (2011) –

Stakeholder analysis acquires complexity when it examines the dynamics that exist among the stakeholders and among inter-related issues. These more complex steps include:

- determining the relative influence, importance and power each stakeholder has in the issue at hand. Who will support the issue, who will oppose it and in what ways should the CG respond?
- gauging the unfolding context around stakeholders and the issue at hand.
- documenting how stakeholder interests may converge, overlap or be in opposition.
- describing the history of stakeholder interaction (e.g. understanding previous cooperation, relationships and potential conflicts) and how this may affect future interactions.

A stakeholder analysis "considers not only the characteristics of stakeholders with regard to the issue of interest, whether it be around a policy, project or organizational objective. It can also be used to illustrate existing organizational relationships and predict – or help develop – stakeholder alliances. Where there is a short-term pragmatic goal – e.g. implementation of a specific policy or project – the identification and assessments of the nature and strengths of these relationships can assist in developing strategies for managing the stakeholders"

– Varvasovszky and Brugha (2000) –

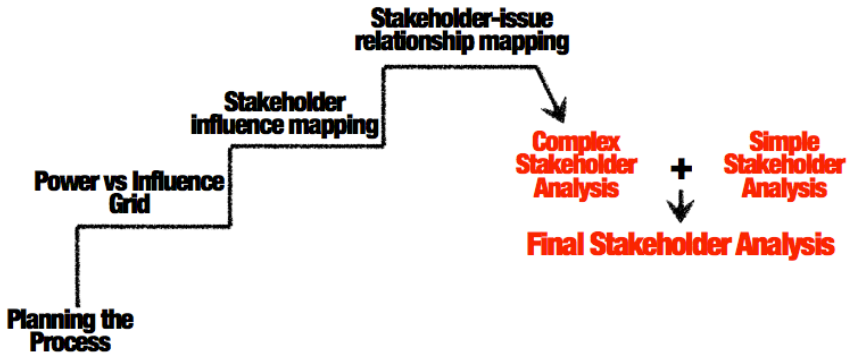

Diagram 2.5: Possible steps and tools in a secondary stakeholder analysis

In its toolkit for projects focusing on development issues, DFID (2003) importantly observes that the type of stakeholder analysis undertaken depends upon *when* the analysis is executed during the project cycle. At a project's *identification stage*, a stakeholder analysis can use an initial understanding of the various stakeholders to determine how they might be involved in executing the project. At the *design and appraisal stage*, a stakeholder analysis might describe possible risks to the project's operations. At the project's *inception stage*, a stakeholder analysis might detail the involvement of different stakeholders at the project's outset. During the *implementation stage*, a stakeholder analysis can be used "an an aide-memoire to ensure the effective involvement of key stakeholders who support the programme, and to monitor key stakeholders who are opposed to it" (DFID 2003). And lastly, during the *evaluation stage*, all of the preceding analyses can be reviewed with an eye to how stakeholders can be better involved in future projects.

"every stakeholder analysis is based on a particular outlook. All the actors, including "donors" and their implementing organizations, adopt a particular point of view in relation to the issue and to the change objective of a project...stakeholder analyses therefore require a separating of perspectives based on the actors' positions in relation to the intervention (above/below, inside/outside, proximity and distance in relation to the issue), their gender, their socio-cultural characteristics (background, education, access to

resources etc.) as well as their state of knowledge, capacities and influence; this is needed in order to understand their perceptions, motivations, agendas and strategies."
– Zimmerman and Maennling (2007) –

As a last point before proceeding to a discussion of the tools, Bryson (2004) notes the utility of separating stakeholders into key, primary and secondary categories. Key stakeholders are those on which the issue at hand depends; primary stakeholders have a fundamental interest in the issue at hand; and secondary stakeholders may be less directly interested in the issue or may be influenced directly by the actions of the primary or key stakeholders. The CG should discuss these distinctions – including their necessity – as each of the below tools may be employed slightly differently for each category of stakeholder.

Note that each of the following tools is not an end unto itself – instead, each provides different inputs and perspectives that must be synthesized into a final stakeholder analysis. Again, note that it is only for didactic purposes that we have divided these tools into "simple" and "complex" categories; some CG-determined combination of these tools will lend itself to the ultimate synthesis destination.

Lesson 2.2: Simple Stakeholder Analysis Tools

What steps will the CG use to identify the range of stakeholders? How exactly will it brainstorm – and when, where, with whom? Many of these questions can be answered in advance of any physical meetings through virtual platforms (e.g. email – as discussed above). For a stakeholder analysis, two issues that deserve discussion ahead of time include the *plan* – what is the process? what does it aim to achieve? how does this analysis slot into a larger KT plan or research project? – and the *timing* – how will the analysis proceed? when will it be deemed complete? The CG should open its stakeholder analysis deliberations by discussing these issues – its purpose, its plan to achieve that purpose, and the process underpinning the plan.

Lastly, if the CG is to commission any of the stakeholder analysis work (e.g. consultants visiting different institutions; consultants performing scoping/landscape studies or more general key informant interviews), it should have a list of all tasks to be commissioned, and understand who might undertake them. The decision to commission may be reserved until achieving a deeper appreciation of stakeholders – for instance, following the Stakeholder Sheets exercise (below), the CG may determine that it requires more information that is best done through an individual (e.g. a consultant) and not the CG itself.

2.2.1 Desk Review

While likely a tool familiar to most, a desk review may be the best place to start any stakeholder (or indeed situation) analysis. A consultant or a member of the CG could search for and review all available documentation (e.g. policy documents, peer-reviewed papers, grey literature, newspaper articles, project reports, meeting minutes etc.) to isolate stakeholders and stakeholder dynamics of note. A full, academic-style report, indicating all references and sources, could then be presented to the CG for its review; this report may well suggest certain tools that will be of greater utility in the process.

2.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

At this stage, key informant interviews may also be used to generate information and opinion not present in the existing documents. As each issue will demand a different approach to the interviews – and as these are a widespread and well-known technique – this *Module* will not discuss these in further detail.

"Face-to-face [key-informant] interviews using checklists, semi-structured interviews and structured – often self-administered – questionnaires can all be used to collect data from primary sources. Usually these are individual respondents, though groups of stakeholders may also be interviewed, e.g. through focus group or informal group discussions. Secondary sources include published and unpublished documents, reports, policy statements, internal regulations of organizations, etc. Interviews provide opportunities to access additional secondary sources, e.g. internal documents not obtained in the initial literature search. Semi-structured interviews can help structure data collection while keeping the focus sufficiently broad to allow for hidden or emerging themes. When analyzing complex issues, especially for policy analysis, qualitative approaches are essential so as to preclude premature focusing on a limited number of aspects of the issue, to the neglect of others which may emerge during the process of data collection and analysis"

– Varvasovszky and Brugha 2000 –

"the process of identifying key stakeholders generally starts through conversations with different informants (resource persons) who are familiar with the issue and the change objective… These conversations may focus on the following four questions: i) who would you go to in order to learn more about the given issue? ii) who defines the rules in relation to the given issue? iii) who has particular knowledge and important resources in relation to the given issue? iv) who has a variety of relationships to other actors concerned with the given issue?"

– Zimmerman and Maennling (2007) –

2.2.3 Stakeholder Sheets

Bryson (2004) describes the tool (modified here) that CGs should begin with in arriving at a list of stakeholders. While it is the simplest stakeholder analysis tool, it is also the best place to start, generating in-depth discussion and arriving at useful visuals that can spur other steps in the process. Possibly using some of the deliberative techniques described in *Lesson One* above, the CG could:

- Lead brainstorming (possibly through a facilitator) on *all major stakeholders* relevant to the issue at hand. This could stretch from the local level to the national, regional and global levels. These stakeholders could include individuals, organizations, networks, departments, institutions and/or structures of note. The CG eliminates those deemed less influential; or it may rank all stakeholders from 1 to X through voting or other consensus-building methods.[16] It may also be helpful to start qualifying stakeholders as key, primary or secondary stakeholders.

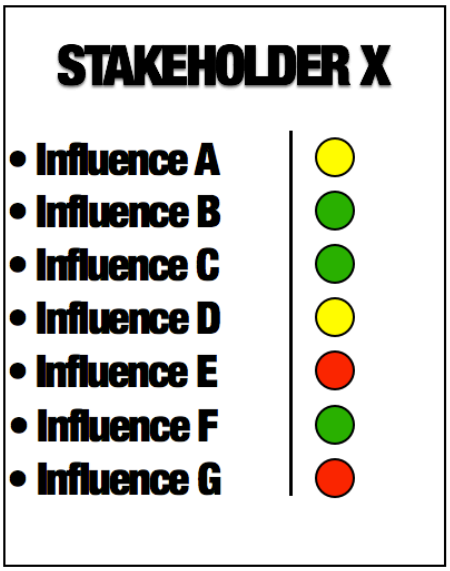

Diagram 2.6: Example of a Stakeholder Sheet

[16] Two such methods include the Delphi Method and the Nominal Group Technique.

- following this initial brainstorming and selecting/ranking of stakeholders (e.g. deciding to focus only on key and primary stakeholders), the CG then prepares a separate flipchart sheet for each stakeholder and writes one stakeholder's name at the top of each sheet (see *Diagram 2.6* above).[17]
- drawing a line down the right-centre side of each sheet and leaving the columns on either side of the line blank, the CG lists, in the area to the left of the line, the way in which each stakeholder influences the issue at hand.
- then, the CG places coloured dots beside each influence to indicate the CG's judgement of that influence, either positive (green), neutral (yellow) or negative (red).
- the CG should then take a photograph of the flipchart sheet for its records.

And finally, the CG should then analyze and discuss the ramifications of the exercise, including a preliminary assessment of each stakeholder's general and specific influence on the issue at hand. While this type of analysis is relatively simple, it may help the CG in revising or solidifying its distinction among key, primary and secondary stakeholders, and may suggest the other stakeholder analysis tools that are (and are not) required to add more depth and meaning to the overall analysis.

Box 2.4: Core Stakeholder Characteristics

As Zimmerman and Maennling (2007) detail, this first step of identifying and analyzing stakeholders can also cluster around three core characteristics of key stakeholders – their legitimacy, resources and connections. This adds depth to the process, analyzing "those stakeholders who are significantly able to influence decision-making by virtue of their position, capabilities, knowledge, connections and scope of influence" (Zimmerman and Maennling 2007). For each stakeholder, the CG can determine how the three characteristics apply, in what ways, and to what degree:

- **legitimacy**: does the stakeholder have informal (ascribed) or formal (legal) rights in relation to the issue at hand?
- **resources**: what are the "knowledge, expertise and capabilities, as well as material resources, that allow the key stakeholder to exert a formative influence on the issue and the change objective or to manage and monitor access to these resources"? (Zimmerman and Maennling 2007).
- **connections**: how integrally connected is the stakeholder to other actors or key dynamics at play?

This type of questioning could result in a deeper understanding of those stakeholders with strong legitimacy; those with control over critical resources; and those with vibrant networks. Clearly, those stakeholders that possess a mix of these functions are increasingly important to the issue at hand.

Note to Instructors

Completing *Stakeholder Sheets* is an excellent place to begin in understand the arts of stakeholder analysis. Instructors may take an example from the peer-reviewed literature, but are also encouraged to find from the newspaper/online source a contentious issue (e.g. political squabbles over a new project or idea that need not be restricted to the health sector) that resonates strongly with the students. Issues that polarize the class may provide the most useful examples. Depending on time and interest, other tools in this *Lesson* may also be applied to this issue of note.

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[17] *Diagram 2.6* adapted from Bryson 2004.

2.2.4 Stakeholder Profiling

Building on the Stakeholder Sheets above, the CG may then continue adding depth to this analysis by completing profiles of individual stakeholders. This approach sees the CG apply the following set of questions to each stakeholder, with the answers informing a matrix (as detailed in Zimmerman and Maennling 2007):

- what is the stakeholder's particular **agenda** (mandate/mission/objectives) that relate to the issue at hand?
- in what **arena** (field of action, where the stakeholder has particular influence) does the stakeholder operate?
- who are the stakeholder's **allies**, and what is the nature of their connection in terms of: regulated dependency; active information exchange; coordination; and co-production?

Stakeholder Profiling Matrix			
on Issue X:			
Stakeholders	**Agenda**	**Arena**	**Alliances**
Stakeholder A			
Stakeholder B			
Stakeholder C			

2.2.5 Sector Stakeholder Mapping

A third relatively straightforward task the CG could initiate to help document the relevant stakeholders comes in completing a Sector Stakeholder Map (for more see DFID 2009). By sector this could be the "health sector" or it could be modified for a particular issue – e.g. malaria prevention or food safety. This type of mapping tool does not weigh, rank or assess stakeholders, but might be useful in providing some visual perspective on relevant stakeholders by unpacking dynamics at the sector level (DFID 2009).

Modifying the tool as outlined in DFID (2009), this method begins with:

1. the CG brainstorming and identifying the major sectoral stakeholders (as perhaps already done through the Stakeholder Sheets)
2. the CG then refining these sectoral stakeholders by asking:
   - what are the formal/informal roles and mandates of each stakeholder?
   - what is the relevant history of the sector or issue at hand? How might that influence current stakeholder relationships, dynamics and/or perceptions?
   - in what way is power vested in the hands of specific individuals/groups?
   - what ideologies and values shape the sector or issue at hand? To what extent may these serve to constrain change?
   - who makes the decisions that define the sector? Who has access to these decision-making processes?

- Once made, are decisions implemented? Where are the key bottlenecks in the system? With changes in the system, who wins and who loses? Are there any key reform champions within the sector? Who is likely to resist reforms and why? (DFID 2009).

3. As shown in *Diagram 2.7* below, the answers to these questions can contribute to a simple visual graphic, with the thickness of the arrows showing the relative influence each stakeholder has in the sector. As with many stakeholder analysis tools, though, the visual exists largely to prompt group discussion and to provide commentary for the final report. The advantage of a simple visual lies in energizing a group: people want to get the visual *right*, no matter how simple it is. And getting it right means having a robust discussion around it.
4. Lastly, the brainstorming and answers to the above questions should all contribute to a robust group discussion and then a synthesis document providing much more detail on each of the sectoral (or issue-based) stakeholders.

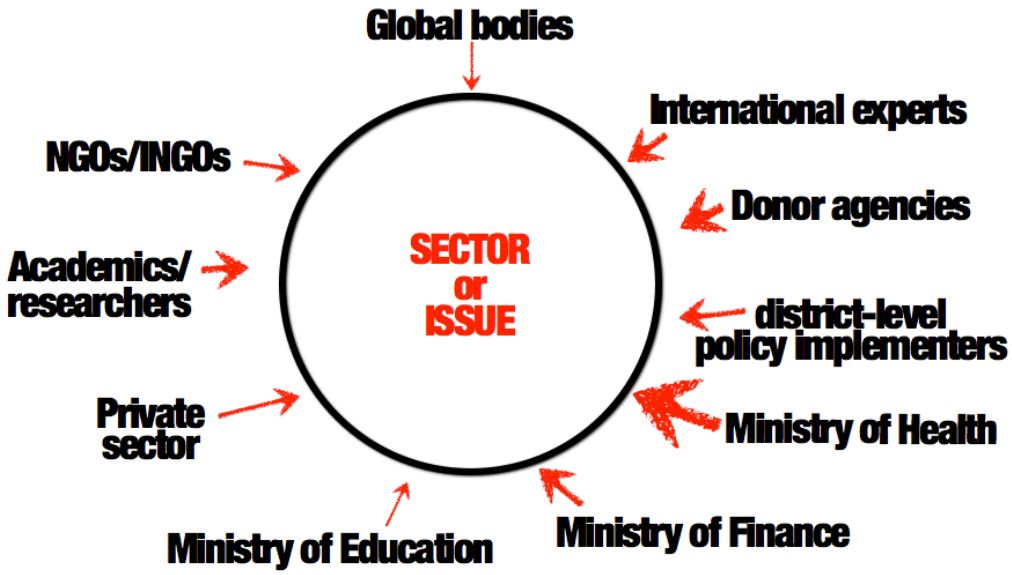

Diagram 2.7: Sector stakeholder map

The process of completing both the stakeholder sheets and the sector stakeholder map can clearly reveal the avenues the CG will be required to move into, when and how. For instance, there may arise significant information or knowledge gaps about particular stakeholders. Secondly, the qualification of the stakeholders done, for instance, through the green, yellow and red dots of the stakeholder sheets may be too crude or simplistic a device to understand and label the positions and interests of stakeholders, lending weight to the more complex stakeholder analysis tools discussed in *Lesson 2.3* below.

2.2.6 Stakeholder & Research Evidence

This type of analysis is quite different than the preceding or ensuing steps, and may not be of relevance to all stakeholder analyses. However, particularly for researchers with a singular interest in connecting their work with the relevant decision-makers, this may well be the most vital type of stakeholder analysis to perform. Noting the limitations in disseminating research evidence with the primary intention of influencing policy (Walley et al 2007; Bero et al 1998;

McGrath et al 2009), the CG may wish to better understand exactly how a stakeholder demands, uses and/or absorbs research evidence in order to determine how, when and where research evidence might best influence them. This can also be an instrumental step in the dissemination of research evidence.

To accomplish this, the CG should:

- write the name of the major stakeholders as identified and discussed in the Stakeholder Sheets and Sector Stakeholder Maps atop a flipchart sheet;
- review the ways in which a stakeholder has demanded, used and/or absorbed research evidence in the past. Of particular note here is the question of absorption: has the stakeholder, for instance, used research evidence in an annual report or strategic plan; issued any policy or other proclamation citing research evidence or based on a particular finding; if the stakeholder is an organization, does it have staff trained in research methodologies, and has it participated in any capacity strengthening training courses geared towards building skills in acquiring, assessing, adapting and applying research evidence?[18] What, in general, is the organizational culture of the stakeholder in terms of research use (Dobbins et al 2009)? The group may wish to commission a think piece or other article on a stakeholder's history of interacting with research evidence, with an eye to assessing current and future abilities.
- rank the stakeholder's abilities, on a scale from 1 as weak to 10 as strong, to understand and interact with research evidence related to the issue at hand. A robust group discussion of a stakeholder's history of understanding and interacting, along with particular examples, should ensue. The CG may arrive at a final ranked list or simply use this as a prompt to guide discussion.
- discuss and assess the key communications variables of relevance to the stakeholder and the issue at hand, including considerations related to timing, message, tools, channels and communications support.[19] While the intention here is not to discuss the creation of a wider communications strategy, this type of group discussion may be invaluable in:
  - brainstorming precise events for influencing the stakeholder (e.g. at an upcoming conference);
  - determining the type of tool that has relevance for a given stakeholder (e.g. a one page of take-home messages, a three-page executive summary, a 25-page evidence synthesis; a radio spot, community drama etc.)
  - discussing the types of messages likely to reach that stakeholder (e.g. scientific messages – "evidence shows that…" – or more emotive messages – "Children don't cure AIDS," etc.);
  - discussing the types of support these tools need to be effective (e.g. a website with more information, etc.).

Focus groups and key informant interviews may be two further methods of particular value here.

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[18] For more along these lines, see the CHSRF's *Self-Assessment Tool*, designed to support "decision-making organizations who want to generate an internal discussion about how well they use research and where there is potential for improvement".

[19] For more details about developing a communications strategy, see the Research Matters *Knowledge Translation Toolkit*.

Box 2.5: Focus Groups

As this is another well-known tool in the research community, this *Module* will not discuss it in any great detail. According to WHO (2009), focus group discussions involve a small group of people, often known to each other, and often reflecting the wider stakeholder community; rotate around facilitation that does not seek to form consensus but rather to air diverse opinion; and should be analyzed by the CG with trends identified and some overall conclusions made, particularly in situations where multiple focus groups have been used.

Lesson 2.3: Complex Stakeholder Analysis Tools

This section continues with a selection of stakeholder analysis tools but focuses more on the spaces *between* stakeholders – on their dynamics, relationships, and the prevailing power structures that dictate how stakeholders can interact. They are critically important in adding value and depth to the more simple tools of section 2.2; they also anticipate some of the tools discussed in *Lesson 3's* discussion of political context.

Note to Instructor

As the distinction between "simple" and "complex" tools is arbitrary, there is some unavoidable overlap in this *Lesson*. Note as well that Instructors should use relevant examples (from the literature or the newspaper) for the tools they feel the students are best suited to use, given time constraints.

2.3.1 Power vs. Interest Grid

These grids (as described in Bryson 2004) are a powerful way of understanding complex or multi-sectoral issues. Stakeholders are placed on a matrix with a Y-axis of stakeholder interest (usually its political interest) in the issue at hand, and an X-axis representing the stakeholder's power to influence the issue at hand. Four categories of stakeholders result, as shown in *Diagram 2.8* below:

- *players* who have both an interest and significant power in the issue at hand. The CG may seek to mobilize these stakeholders in order to gather more interest and gain more influence on the issue at hand
- *subjects* who have an interest but little power over the issue at hand. The CG may wish to leverage these stakeholders, using their power to win over or influence others.
- *context setters* who have power but little direct interest. The CG may wish to co-opt these stakeholders, convincing them of an interest in the issue at hand in order to benefit from their power.
- the *crowd,* who generally have little interest or power. The CG may seek to persuade these stakeholders to exhibit a greater interest in the issue.

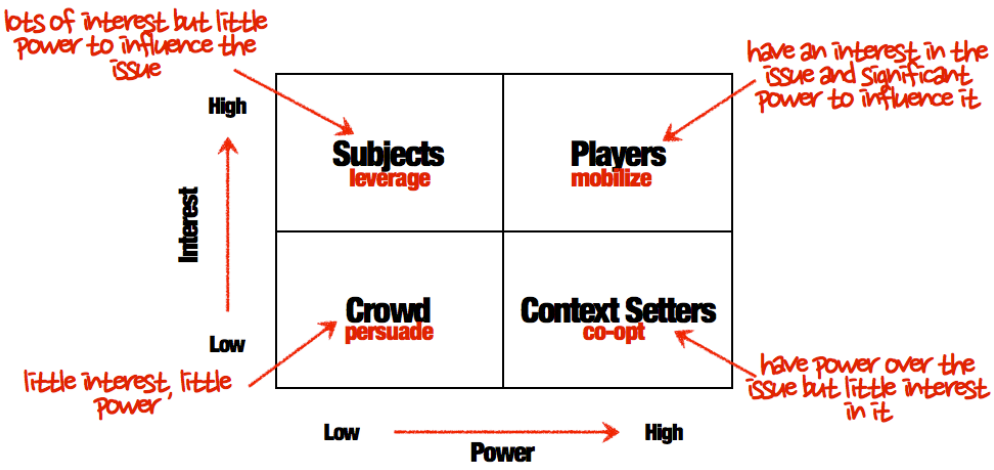

Diagram 2.8: Power vs Interest Grid

These grids provide a visual representation of interest and power bases. This representation has particular value by helping the CG see: possible coalitions or alliances among stakeholders; whose buy-in may be necessary for the issue at hand to progress or change; how power and interest combine in unique or formidable ways; and the number and type of stakeholders who are essential in bringing about social change – those who have a strong interest in the issue at hand yet lack the concrete abilities to bring about that change.

"the exercise of power is always linked to stakeholder interests, and shifts in power relations always give rise to new types of authority which, again, are rooted in power."
– Zimmerman and Maennling 2007 –

To create a Power vs Interest Grid, the CG can:

- on a flipchart, create the empty power vs interest grid as depicted in *Diagram 2.8* above;
- on 3"x5" (76x127mm) index cards, write the names of specific stakeholders;
- discuss and determine where each stakeholder should be positioned on the grid;
- move index cards around until all CG members are satisfied with the relative position of each stakeholder;
- the CG should then discuss and summarize the implications of stakeholder placements on the grid – in particular and in general.
- take a photograph of the flipchart for the CG's records.
- produce a document describing the process with implications for the wider stakeholder analysis.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Influence Mapping

As a compliment to the Power vs. Interest Grid, Stakeholder Influence Mapping works to understand how stakeholders interact with and influence one other. The CG could:

- remove all index cards (with stakeholder names) from the power vs interest grid.
- at random, pin each card onto a blank flipchart page.
- begin to draw lines of influence from one stakeholder to another (in pencil).

- discuss the primary direction of that influence. In some cases it may be impossible to determine this primary direction, but where possible the CG should focus on the major direction of that influence.
- discuss these influence relationships. All CG members should agree on the lines of influence (drawing them now in pen as in *Diagram 2.9* below), and then start to analyze the results and implications of the diagram. This is clearly the essential aspect of the exercise, and as with other stakeholder analysis tools, the diagram is really a group focus prompt to arrive at this discussion. Analyzing the flow of influence (particularly the direction of the flow) can also help to determine some of the power dynamics, and also the relative "sizes" of stakeholders. Those exerting the most influence on other stakeholders most likely have more power on the issue at hand.

"too much differentiation may lead only to confusion: in an increasingly globalized world, every stakeholder is potentially linked to every other stakeholder".
– Zimmerman and Maennling (2007) –

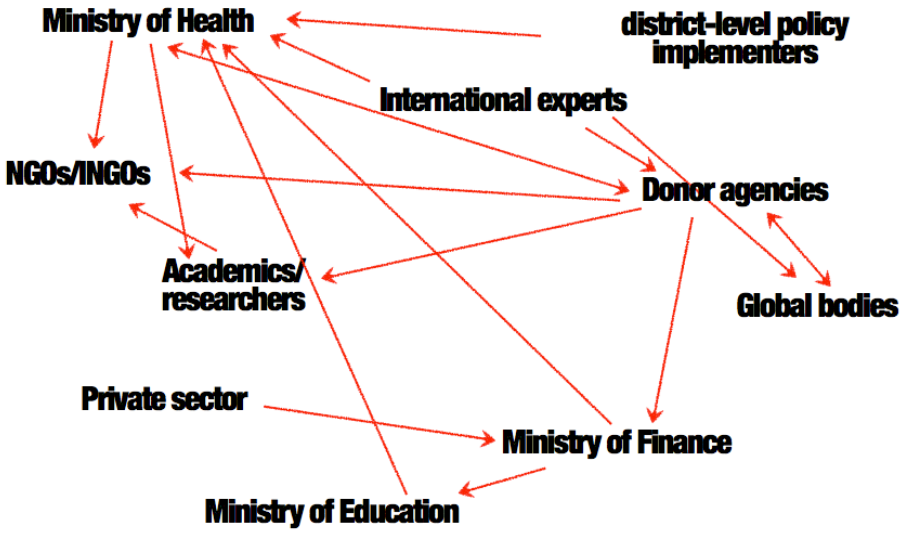

Diagram 2.9: Stakeholder Influence Mapping

2.3.3 Stakeholder-issue relationship mapping

A final exercise that can add more depth to a stakeholder analysis maps the relationships between stakeholders and issues. This illustrates the interests different stakeholders may have in similar issues, and to what degree the issues, stakeholders and relationships are all connected. This again furnishes the CG with a visual representation of how stakeholders relate to each other and to the issue or issues at hand – only this time showing areas of potential conflict and/or cooperation.

The steps are ideally done following the completion of other steps in the stakeholder analysis process – particularly the Stakeholder Sheets, the Power vs Interest Grid, and Stakeholder Influence Map. Then the CG could:

- brainstorm particular issues of importance or urgency. These can be listed and discussed, with a final list of 5-10 issues created and ranked.

- on a second blank flipchart page, the top issue should be written in the middle of the page. Then the CG should brainstorm on which stakeholders have an interest or influence on that issue. Arrows should connect stakeholders and issues, possibly labelling the arrow (e.g. "sets this policy" or "provides funding for this issue"). Stakeholders may be involved in one or many issues.
- continue this brainstorming for each of the 5-10 identified issues.
- once there is a completed flipchart page for each of the issues, the CG should attempt to create a map integrating the stakeholders and the issues (as shown in *Diagram 2.10* below), with discussion focusing on which stakeholders are connected on which issues (and why), and the nature of this relationship (from cooperation to conflict).[20] The diagram won't catch these dynamics, but again, it may well serve as a visual prompt to illustrate previously un-thought-of relationships.

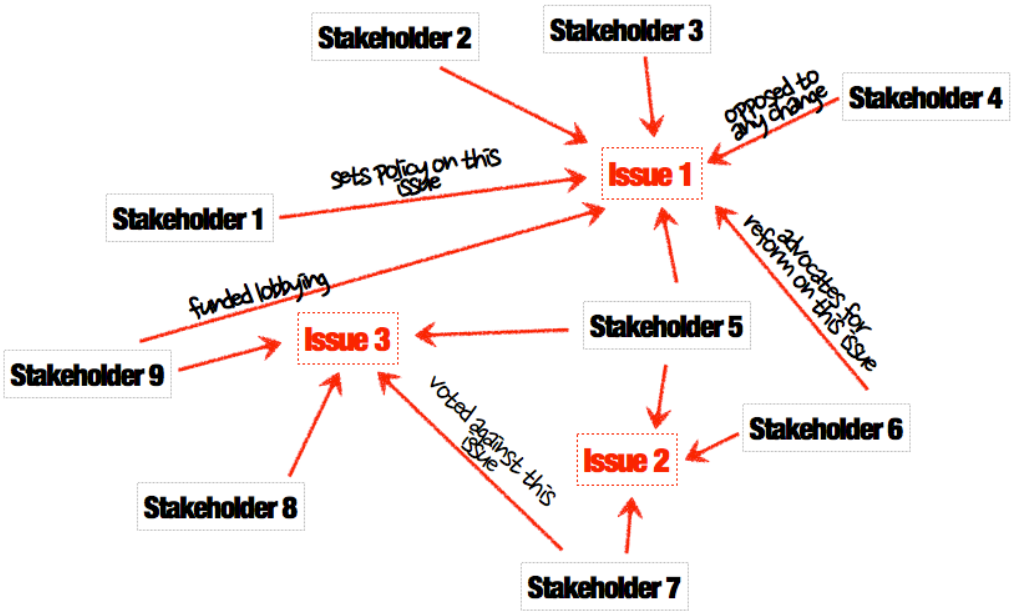

Diagram 2.10: Stakeholder-Issue Interrelationship Diagram

Lesson 3: Political Context Analysis

Suggested Readings

- Nash R et al. *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for CSOs*. Overseas Development Institute: London. 2006. <pdf>
- The World Health Organization. *Situation Analysis of Male Circumcision*. WHO: Geneva. 2009. <pdf>
- Bjuremalm H. *Power Analysis – Experiences and Challenges*. Sida: Stockholm. 2006. <pdf>
- The World Bank. *Tools for Institutional, Political and Social Analysis of Policy Reform*. The World Bank: Washington DC. 2007. <pdf>
- Lewis J. Being around and knowing the players: networks of influence in health policy'. *Social Science and Medicine* 62. 2006. <pdf>
- Lavis JN et al. Guidance for evidence-informed policies about health systems: linking guidance development to policy development. *PLoS Medicine*. 9:3. 2012. <pdf>

[20] *Diagrams 2.9* and *2.10* adapted from Bryson (2004).

- Walt G and Gilson L. Reforming the health sector in developing countries: the central role of policy analysis. *Health Policy and Planning*. 9:4. 1994. <pdf>

3.1	*An Overview of political context analysis tools*. A compliment to the preceding *Lesson* on stakeholder analysis, this type of analysis studies the distribution of power, interests and ideas, and the rules governing stakeholder interactions.	*page 104*
3.2	*Simple political context analysis tools*. With particular attention to policy process factors, foundational factors and external factors, this *Lesson* sketches the use of a Force Field Analysis and a SWOT analysis among others.	*page 105*
3.3	*Complex political context analysis tools*. Much as the division among simple and complex stakeholder analysis tools, this *Lesson* focuses on more difficult or complex concepts, such as documenting power and understanding networks.	*page 111*

Lesson Three Presentation:
A presentation highlighting the major aspects of *Lesson Three* is available in three different formats:

- as a <pdf> for printing. Can be used as a handout, but cannot be modified. Can also be used as a presentation in full-screen mode.
- as a <key> for presentations. This uses Apple's proprietary Keynote software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired.
- as a <ppt> for presentations. This uses Microsoft's proprietary PowerPoint software; users of this may modify the presentation as desired. Please note that the presentation was not created using ppt software; it looks best in pdf or key formats.

Lesson 3.1: An Overview of political context analysis tools

Performing a stakeholder analysis is a critical first step for any situation analysis, and in many ways sets the scene for a deeper analysis of the prevailing political context. This type of analysis studies variables "such as the distribution of power, the range of organizations involved and their interests, and the formal and informal rules that govern the interactions among different players. *Political context shapes the ways in which policy processes work*." (Nash et al 2006; emphasis added). A political context analysis often includes understanding the **policy process factors** relevant to the issue at hand (how have previous agendas been set? how have policies been formulated, implemented, evaluated? what opportunities exist to influence policy processes?), the **foundational factors** related to the issue at hand (how do underlying governance, financial, social and/or economic elements influence policy or a particular intervention? what systemic considerations (e.g. a constitution; health system design) have high relevance?) and the **external factors** shaping the issue at hand (what ideologies, special interests, networks, research evidence are at play?).

Mapping, understanding and analyzing these processes and factors hinges, again, on (facilitated) brainstorming sessions. However, due to the complex, often technical nature and interconnections of these factors, this political context analysis would also benefit from some commissioned work. This could include:

- a literature review of policy processes, foundational and external factors relevant to the issue at hand, covering both peer-reviewed and grey literature;
- a desk review of existing strategies, institutions, management, capacities and regulations relevant to the issue at hand; and
- key informant interviews. This method is particularly useful in assessing some of the more delicate dynamics.

There are overlaps between the stakeholder analysis and the political context analysis. To prevent any duplication or confusion, the CG must have a sound plan in place and understand how all the elements will slot together.

Box 2.6: Institutions, Interests, Ideas and External Factors influencing decision-making

Related to the policy process factors, foundational factors and external factors presented here are concepts from political science that work to understand how institutions, interests, ideas and external factors influence decision-making (sometimes called the 3i framework). They are presented here to provide another framework that may prove useful to CGs performing a political context analysis. For more see Lavis et al (2012) and two articles it cites: Weatherford and Mayhew (1995) and Hall (1996). The below bullets are adapted from Lavis et al (2012).

Four categories that have high relevance to decision-making include:

- **Institutions**:
  - government structures (e.g. the constitution dictates the level and ministries at which health decisions can be made; Minister of Health wields particularly strong influence).
  - policy legacies (e.g. role of civil servants in influencing or implementing policy).
  - policy networks (e.g. ad hoc or standing committees provide expertise and recommendations on issues).
- **Interests**:
  - interest groups (e.g. corporations able to bring pressure to bear on policy-makers).
  - civil society (e.g. NGOs pushing for adoption of particular policy option).
- **Ideas**:
  - values; personal experiences; research evidence.
- **External factors**:
  - political change; economic change; technological change; new diseases; media coverage.

Lesson 3.2: Simple Political Context Analysis Tools

As in the preceding lesson on stakeholder analysis, we make the same arbitrary distinction here between those political context analysis tools that are relatively straightforward, and those that are much more complex. This is for didactic purposes only.

3.2.1 Brainstorming the Political Context

As with so many of the tools in this *Module*, open brainstorming is a critical start. Before using any of the structured tools that follow in this *Lesson*, open brainstorming – perhaps via emailing focus prompts to CG members – could see the CG determine exactly what they want to analyze, the types of outputs they might create or contract out, how a (previous) stakeholder analysis might inform this analysis, and how this work might slot into a larger situation analysis. The CG could also use this brainstorming to create a long list of:

Policy Process Factors

- national-, district- or local-level policy experience related to the issue at hand. How have previous policy agendas been influenced and set? What opportunities currently exist to influence the policy agenda?
- national-, district- or local-level policy implementation related to the issue at hand. How have previous related policies been created, implemented and evaluated?
- health system history and reactions. What components of the health system itself have high relevance to policy formulation or implementation concerning the issue at hand?

Foundational Factors

- rules, a constitution, regulations, codes of conduct, responsibilities etc. at the national level relevant to the issue at hand
- domestic roles and responsibilities relevant to the issue at hand, including financial, human resources and public-private partnerships.
- domestic cultural events or practices (including values, traditions, ideologies, religions) relevant to the issue at hand.
- external occurrences affecting any of the above (e.g. natural disasters, climate change).

External Factors

- global regulatory or guidance bodies (e.g. WHO), global agencies (e.g. multilateral and bilateral funders), global initiatives, and multinational corporations with long histories or investments within the country relevant to the issue at hand.
- cultural events or practices arising from the global level (disseminated, for instance, on the internet or through online social media platforms) with particular ramifications for the issue at hand. What national campaigns, coalitions, foundations are, for instance, working to mobilize the public or major stakeholders relating to the issue at hand?

The CG may wish to use a simple tool such as creating modified Stakeholder Sheets (as in *Diagram 2.6* above) for each of these factors – or indeed adapting any of the stakeholder analysis tools to treat these factors. This could provide an ease and familiarity for the CG to visualize the different factors at play and better understand those of high relevance or urgency. A synthesis document summarizing some of the results of the this brainstorming could help to shape:

- a shared understanding of the prevailing political context.
- a deeper understanding of the elements that may support, drive or impede future change, including an identification of possible risks.
- a recognition of how/when/where key stakeholders might discuss the major political challenges and opportunities.
- how a more detailed understanding of the political context can contribute to change.

3.2.2 Force-Field Analysis

This is a strong brainstorming tool that allows the CG to understand how particular factors influence the political context – in terms of how they push for or resist change. A force-field analysis works best as part of a facilitated workshop, and it may be informed by lit reviews and/or key informant interviews. It shows who or what – i.e. the policy process, foundational and/or external factors – is for or against change. Its results are usually quite telling. By understanding

and assessing the "forces for change" it can help to predict whether shifts (in particular factors or in general) will unfold easily, or with great resistance.

To execute a force-field analysis, the CG starts by:

- defining the problem. What is the issue requiring modification? There could be a list of problems to address; a Force Field Analysis exercise could be applied to each problem in the list, potentially serving to weight and prioritize the problems.
- clarifying the overarching "change objective". What is the desired situation to work towards?
- identifying 4-5 driving forces. What are the factors or pressures that support change in the desired direction? That impede change? And what are the relative strengths of these forces?
- as in other exercises, using 3"x5" (76x127mm) index cards to list all driving forces
- identifying 4-5 restraining forces. What are the factors resisting the proposed change? What factors hope to maintain the status quo? Use index cards to list all restraining forces.
- using the chart depicted in *Diagram 2.11* below, place individual forces in their relative positions – driving on the left and restraining on the right. Then CG members should draw arrows reflecting the relative strength of each force. Then, members should assign a numerical score (1=weak, 5= strong) to represent the strength of the force. Varying arrow thickness could also represent the strength of the force. Place the numerical score on the far left side for driving forces and far right side for restraining forces.
- discussing these forces. Can they be changed? Which ones are absolutely critical? How could driving forces be strengthened? Added to? How could any of the restraining forces be weakened? What unintended consequences may arise?
- adding up the numerical scores to have a full view of forces acting on the change proposal. This will provide another means for assessing whether the change is viable.

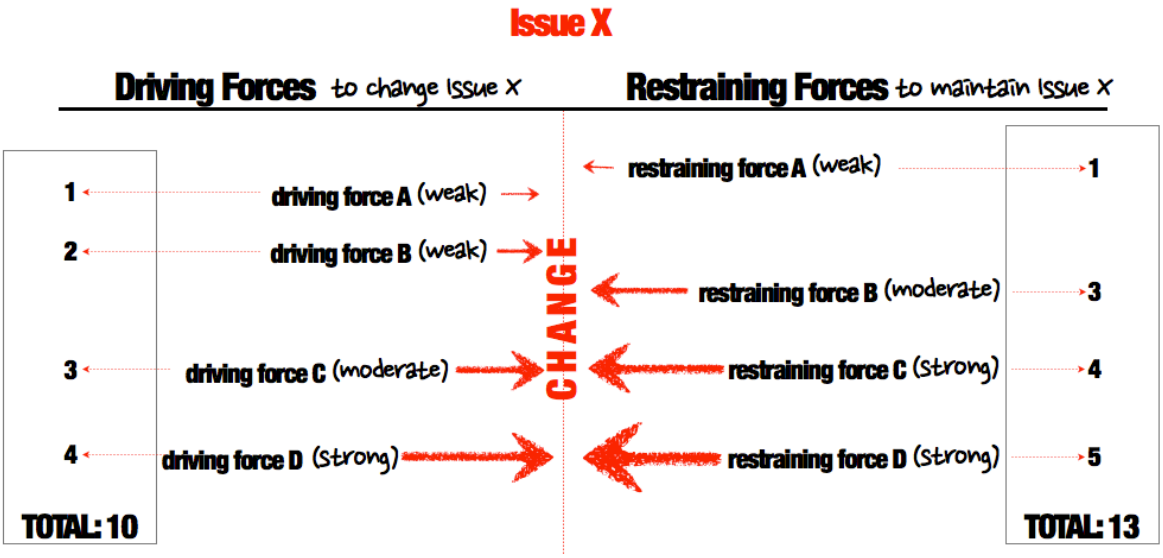

Diagram 2.11: Force-Field Analysis

Note to Instructors

As with the Stakeholder Sheet in *Lesson 2.2.3*, this is an excellent place for students to start understanding the political context. Again, using an example from the peer-reviewed literature or

from the newspaper/online world (that is contentious or has equally valid but opposed sides) would make for a worthwhile exercise.

Box 2.7: Drivers of Change

Similar to the Force Field Analysis is the Drivers of Change tool, originally developed by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). This is more intended to assess macro-level aspects at the national level, with a particular focus on their linkages with the foreign donor community. However, given its foundational focus, it could easily be adapted to suit a CG's purposes. According to Nash et al (2006), this tool focuses on "power relationships and the institutional and structural factors affecting the lack of political will. It is based around a three-part conceptual model of structures, individual agents, and mediating institutions, and is coupled with an emphasis on how to effect change. As a result, this tool is better suited than many others to capturing the importance of informal institutions and relationships". As a framework for basic analysis, this tool examines foundational factors (how, for instance, social and economic structures influence the political system), institutional factors (how power is distributed and shared), and short-term factors (available resources, mechanisms, capacities across the political system).

For more, see Nash et al (2006) and DFID (2005).

3.2.3 Trend Analysis

Like a force-field analysis, a trend analysis is another way of analyzing the forces that act upon a particular issue. How have these forces changed over the past five years? And why did these forces change at all? As described in WHO (2009), a trend-analysis brainstorming session could see the CG:

- identify eight unique factors that have affected the issue at hand over the past five years. The group should verify and/or replace any of these factors to ensure consensus on the top eight.
- rank each factor from 1 to 10, with one signaling weak influence or imperfect function and ten signaling a strong influence or ideal function.
- repeat this ranking exercise as the situation might have appeared five years ago.
- create spider diagrams to illustrate "then" and "now" (as shown in *Diagram 2.12* below).
- the CG should discuss discrepancies between then and now, along with ramifications for future change. If all factors were to be strong or ideal (i.e. at 10), what, given the current situation and past trends, would need to happen? When large changes do happen – as in *Diagram 2.12* below where Factors E and B have shifted dramatically – what explains the movement?
- a final analysis should describe these overarching trends, discuss each factor individually (including the factor in the past, present and future), and what is or is not causing change. Final conclusions should be reached suggesting how the situation could move towards a more ideal form.

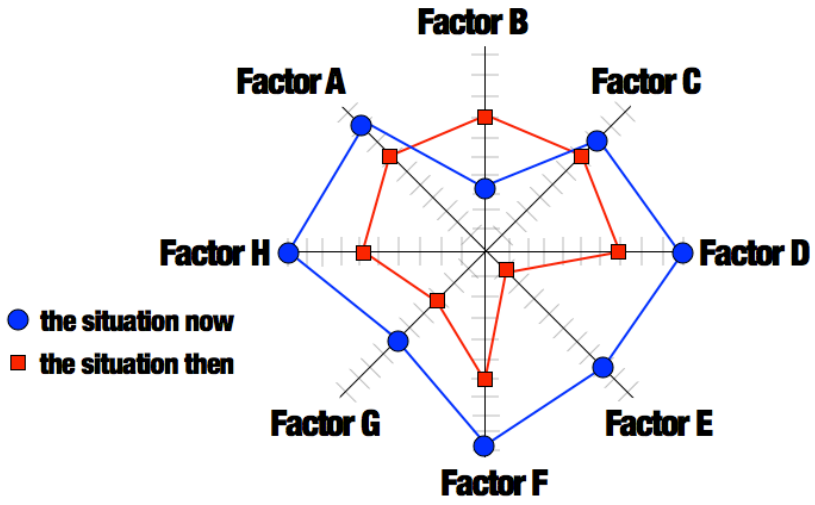

Diagram 2.12: Spider Diagram showing trends now vs. then

3.2.4 SWOT Analysis

This is a very familiar and well-used tool that allows the CG to analyze the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of the prevailing situation in relation to the issue at hand. This can focus in particular on the internal and external factors of note or remain at a more general level and analyze broader aspects of the issue at hand. Following WHO (2009), the CG could begin its SWOT analysis with another focus prompt: *in the current environment, what are the primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that might influence the success of the issue at hand?* The CG can then split into subgroups or remain as one large group and:

- brainstorm on the individual strengths and weaknesses (which both tend to be internal features – i.e. a function of the project or program or policy), and then the opportunities or threats (which tend to be external).
- on a flipchart, complete a matrix as shown in *Diagram 2.13* below. Some issues may be considered as both a strength and a weakness, or both an opportunity and a threat – the CG must discuss and resolve this as an issue can only go in one of the quadrants.
- the CG should then rank the issues that appear in each quadrant, and ultimately identify the two top issues per quadrant
- the CG should then discuss relationships between the issues on the matrix: are there ways where a strength could overcome a weakness? Where an opportunity could trump a threat?
- following this discussion of relationships and linkages, the CG should have a clearer picture of the prevailing situation and how it might best respond.

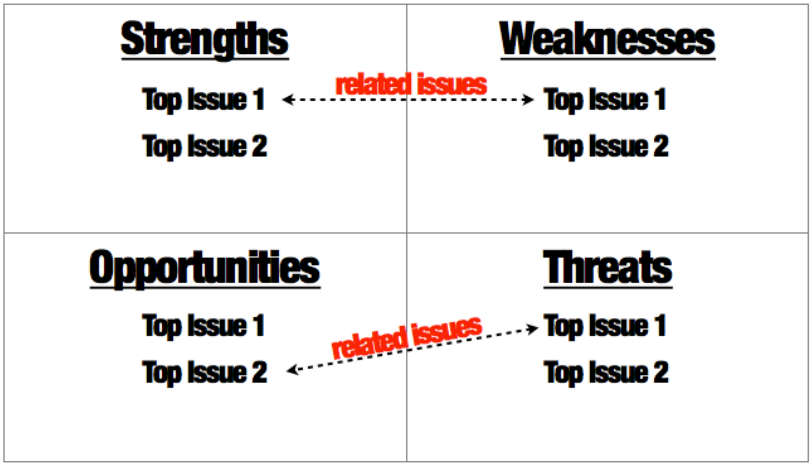

Diagram 2.13: SWOT Matrix

In analyzing the SWOT matrix, WHO (2009) highlights three important aspects a CG should focus on:

1. Finding links between strengths and weaknesses, and between opportunities and threats. This is of critical importance. The CG should pose and answer the following questions:
   - "Are there any stated strengths that enable weaknesses to be overcome, and if so, how?
   - "Are there any stated opportunities that, if taken up, could reduce threats, and if so, how?
   - "What *existing* strengths and opportunities need to be developed/taken up to cancel out or overcome the weaknesses and threats, and how could this be made to happen?
   - "What *missing* strengths and opportunities need to be developed/taken up to cancel out or overcome the weaknesses and threats, and how could this be made to happen?" (WHO, 2009).

Answering these questions should ideally create "conclusions in the form of a to-do list" (WHO 2009).

2. Pay close attention to the external factors:
   - "What are the positive external factors (strengths and opportunities) that the programme needs to build on and protect, and how should it do this?
   - What are the negative external factors (weaknesses and threats) that the programme will need to overcome or be prepared for, and how should it do this?" (WHO, 2009).

3. And finally, the CG should return to the original focus prompt (e.g. *in the current environment, what are the primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that might influence the success of the issue at hand?)* which it can now answer in much sharper detail. This should form the basis for a document analyzing the SWOT process (and contribute to the larger situation analysis).

Lesson 3.3: Complex Political Context Analysis Tools

3.3.1 Mapping Policy Processes

Now that the CG has identified, analyzed and weighed relevant stakeholders for the issue at hand, along with some consideration for the forces for and against change, this approach offers another important piece of the puzzle: understanding policy processes. In relation to the issue at hand, how are policies made? Who influences the policy agenda? Who influences actual implementation? What are the avenues for incorporating knowledge into future policy processes?

To begin analyzing the relevant policy processes, the logical place to begin is for the CG to convene (perhaps virtually?) and use any of the described dialogue modalities to think through the major variables and desired approach of this analysis. Some of the elements to brainstorm include:

- arriving at a definition of "policy". We cannot understand "policy processes" if we all understand "policy" in different ways.
- arriving at a definition of "policy-maker". In some ways, this is a very difficult task, as policy is often developed, set and implemented by many different actors, at various levels from the local to the global. Addressing complex issues (e.g. tobacco control; obesity) may be the province of various different policy-makers; a government ministry may feature various types and levels of policy-makers and various types of policy implementers; and, what's more, the policies of a government ministry may be subject to or rejected by policies made by foreign governments, multilateral agencies, or other government ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Finance). In this sense, defining "policy-maker" is also about describing the various levels of individuals/institutions capable of setting policy within any particular sector.
- understanding the art of "policy analysis". In most countries, each sector (e.g. health, agriculture) employs a range of policy analysts to assist/pressure governments in developing policies. As this is often a private-sector pursuit, these analysts have a variety of tools and methods they use to analyze, focus, weigh and rank problems and solutions. As they often have long-standing experience in the world of policy, they may be an invaluable resource to the CG and could possibly form an Expert Witness Panel to provide specific information on the policy process.
- understanding the role that knowledge (especially research evidence) has played in the policy process, and what windows of opportunity may exist in the future. This should include an assessment of the knowledge base relevant to the issue at hand.[21] Is it robust? Is it in one place (virtual or physical) and can stakeholders easily access it? Is it marked by peer-reviewed literature or grey lit? Is it domestic or foreign? Are there mechanisms to synthesize any of this evidence to suit policy-maker demand? What, in general, is the relationship between researchers and policy-makers in the issue at hand?

One of the challenges for the information presented in this *Module* is that many of the tools and approaches in the literature describe possible policy reforms (e.g. to advance policy X, its

[21] a "knowledge base" includes aspects such as research findings, syntheses (e.g. meta-analyses, systematic reviews) evaluation reports, and other grey literature documenting wider "experience" (e.g. policies, programmes, project reports) in the area.

supporters should pursue avenue Y). While policy reform itself may be a focus on the CG, we have tried to keep these tools roughly generic, allowing CGs to customize them for their particular use.

3.3.2 The Policy Process Matrix

Advanced by the UK's Overseas Development Institute (ODI), this matrix captures some of the wide policy dynamics on the issue at hand. It focuses in particular on the policy priorities of key actors, their resources, reasons for (in)action, and degree of possible influence.[22]

For a CG, this tool could – like so many others – be used as a focus prompt to underpin group discussion. Its particular utility, however, arises when applied to very specific policies. The CG could:

- deliberate on relatively focused policy areas (e.g. "economic policies affecting Issue X"; "environmental policies influencing tobacco cultivation," etc.) that have strong relevance to the issue at hand
- per identified policy areas, discuss and isolate the key political, social, economic, local, national and international actors. This obviously echoes some of the stakeholder analysis work already done
- for each of these stakeholders, determine how great a priority (low, medium, high) this policy area is
- for each stakeholder, analyze their reasons for influencing (or failing to influence) policy
- for each stakeholder, identify their resources for influencing the policy area (from human to financial to networking)
- discuss and determine the degree of actual influence each stakeholder has in the policy area.
- determine whether there are any potential alliances among the stakeholders.

Following discussion, the CG should arrange answers to the above questions/scenarios by filling in the following table:

Stakeholders	Priority per policy area	Stakeholder reasons for policy influence	Stakeholder resources for policy influence	Degree of influence in policy area	Actual vs potential alliances
Stakeholder A					
Stakeholder B					
Stakeholder C					

As with many of the other tools in this *Module*, the CG should complete its policy process matrix with a synthesis or reflection document with observations, recommendations and/or conclusions.

[22] Details of this tool have been distilled from the ODI document available here.

3.3.3 Power Analysis

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) developed this tool to better document and understand the nature of power within a country or context, the "agents for or against pro-poor change, political will and possibilities, responsibilities, resources, informal and formal power structures and power relations" (Bjuremalm 2006). A feature of this tool sees the lack of a fixed definition of "power," recognizing that the term is highly context sensitive, and as such must be collectively defined. As Haider and Rao (2010) explain, "power" can mean many different things; among the elements of power the CG should discuss, determine and/or prioritize:

- "the legitimacy of power (e.g. elections or beliefs and cultural practices);
- "the foundations of the political power base (e.g. strong leadership or strong institutions);
- "the generation and transfer of power (e.g. informal agreements or formal elections);
- "the abuse of powers (e.g. semi-authoritarian behaviour and rules);
- "the formal power structures (e.g. formal rights of poor people);
- "the informal practice (e.g. underlying incentives and customs);
- "the ability of the poor and their advocates to articulate their interests (e.g. access to information;
- "knowledge and organizational capacity); and
- "the institutional channels and arenas for voicing these interests (e.g. elections, hearings and the media".

As this tool was created for bilateral and multilateral agencies, it is likely better suited to capture and analyze power at a more macro level (e.g. reaching the MDGs, following harmonization agendas). However, it does have some strong components to offer any CG completing a political context analysis. In particular, this tool can create a grounded perspective on the relevant social, economic, political and cultural dynamics – focusing in particular on *how* change could occur within and among those dynamics (World Bank 2007).[23]

In a power analysis, "what we want to achieve is to try another way of painting the political landscape, with more shades and nuances – including formal and informal power relations and structures, as well as another way of understanding how these factors affect and are affected by development cooperation. The analysis of actors, interest groups and structures will ideally show where real power in a society lies, how power is distributed, and possible conflicts of interest. It may also point to what kind of power is being exercised and how, as well as how this is understood or perceived, by whom and for what purposes and what consequences this has. It is hoped that allies/agents/incentives for change may be identified as well as operational recommendations on what to do… Some of the main areas of concern of a power analysis include analysis of actors, interest groups and structures with the purpose to show which are dominant, i.e. where the real power in society lies, and their scope and incentives for pro-poor reforms".

– Bjuremalm (2006) –

For a CG, the following steps may be performed in a combination of brainstorming sessions, commissioned papers, scoping studies, key informant interviews, and focus groups. As with other tools, the CG will need to synthesize the results into a final document, and then contribute these to the larger political context analysis or situation analysis.

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[23] There are a range of power analysis case studies, including Bangladesh, Kenya, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and Malawi. For details see Bjuremalm 2006.

1. Define "power" for the issue at hand, and then work to document the "powerful". Who determines the policy agenda? How do formal institutions (e.g. ministries) shape the distribution of power? How do informal institutions (e.g. networks) influence the policy process? (World Bank 2007).
2. Execute a *basic country analysis* detailing all relevant economic, political, social and institutional factors influencing the dynamics and possibilities for change in the issue at hand. This should include an analysis of formal and informal actors (i.e. with an emphasis on where *real power* lies); the structures and institutions involved in or concerned by the issue at hand; relevant history, geopolitics, demographics and socio-economic aspects. How, for instance, has history shaped the current distribution of power related to the issue at hand?
3. Examine the *medium-term dynamics* of change. This includes the incentives for and capacities of actors involved in the issue at hand to change their behaviour, that of others, or overarching policy concerns.
4. Understand the reach, dynamics, and strategies of *external forces* (e.g. global bodies; multinational corporations).
5. Determine relevant *operational implications*, with a focus on how stakeholders might institutionalize the needed change, alter their relationships with others, and possibly how knowledge on the issue at hand might translate into policy.

3.3.4 Network Analyses

A very helpful and relatively new type of analysis – particularly in understanding policy and charting roads to policy influence – comes through network analysis. Much like the *Policy Process Matrix* described above, these analyses study networks of individuals and institutions (formal and informal) to understand how policies, reforms and pathways are created, supported, fought over, rejected, and so on.

Networks are built of nodes (individuals and institutions) connected by relationships (e.g. trust and experience, a shared interest, a contractual obligation), all bounded by different variables (e.g. time, membership, geography etc.). Networks can assume many different configurations. A *policy network* is very simply one of individuals and institutions active in a particular policy sector, with the network typically closed in order to facilitate discussion on how best to share resources. A *social network*, on the other hand – made famous and even routine by *facebook* – tends to focus more on the interpersonal relationships between individuals in terms of direction, intensity, concordance, duration and vitality.[24] As Lewis (2005) comments, "mapping social networks of inter-personal ties allows the analyst to generate a detailed picture based on individual connections, which adds to the more formal inter-organizational relationships that constitute policy networks. By examining who is connected to whom, it is possible to see who has access to resources and who exercises control within a network. This can be based on competition, or on collaboration and trust, or simply who has the most similar personal characteristics."

[24] For more, see Provan, Fish and Sydow 2007; Merrill et al 2008; Wholey, Gregg and Moscovice 2009; and The World Bank 2007.

Box 2.8: Rapid Policy Network Mapping

This relatively new tool allows one to take a quick yet nuanced "snapshot" of any particular policy. Used initially in environmental policy, this method "delivers an insight to both technical and non-technical users into the lifecycle, relationships and dependencies of policy development. The method was applied to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive in the UK. These two case studies highlight the environmental policy challenges to protect the UK's marine coastal environment. They identify differences in the styles of policy implementation between the devolved authorities of the UK. Rapid Policy Network Mapping provides an opportunity to create a collaborative policy data environment with a relatively small investment. As a tool for civil society it should assist in their ability to understand and influence policy-making and implementation" (Bainbridge, Potts and O'Higgins 2011).

Undertaking a network analysis or drawing a network map are both complex undertakings; a CG should only consider doing this upon review of the peer-reviewed literature on the topic. In its most basic form (as shown in *Diagram 2.14*), a CG contemplating an analysis of a policy network or a social network could consider following these steps:

- defining the network for analysis and/or mapping. This stage could see networks defined using very focused parameters (e.g. those individuals and institutions charged with regulating Issue X) or very wide ones (e.g. all actors involved in policy implementation of Issue X). Brainstorming, key informant interviews, desk research, literature reviews, an expert witness panel etc. can clarify the stakeholders, relationships, flows (e.g. of resources, influence etc.), links and boundaries.
- now with suitable background information and definitions in place, the CG can begin its analysis. According to the World Bank (2007), "it is important to assess the location or 'centrality' of the actors/entities within the networks. This location can help establish the importance, or prominence, of actors/entities in the network and can be different from the location in a hierarchy or organizational chart. Three important network measures are 'degree centrality,' 'betweenness centrality,' and 'closeness centrality'. Degree centrality measures network activity through the number of direct connections a node has. Nodes with the most direct connections to others are 'connectors' or 'hubs'. It is important to examine where those connections lead and how they connect nodes that would otherwise be unconnected in addition to the number of direct connections. Betweenness centrality assesses where nodes are in terms of others. Nodes with high "betweenness" have a high level of influence over what flows in a network. They might have a powerful role in the network but could also be an important weakness if they fail, cutting off flows between other nodes. Closeness centrality measures the degree to which the pattern of direct and indirect links enables a node to access all the other nodes in a network quickly. Nodes with high "closeness" have short paths to all others and can often be in good positions to monitor flows within networks and to know what is happening within networks."

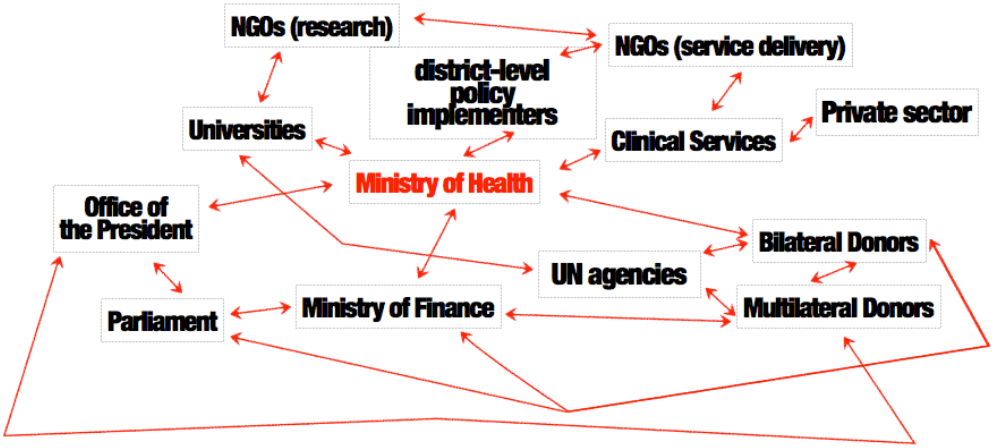

Diagram 2.14: Simple Network Analysis Map

Upon completing this analysis, the CG could have a deeper understanding of policy pathways; could see new forms of influence among stakeholders; and might be able to conceive new approaches to evaluate the network or to build new network programming. For more on network analyses, see Provan, Fish and Sydow (2007), Merrill et al (2008) and Wholey et al (2009).

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