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STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

GOVERNOR

POLICY

POLICY

POLICY

POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION

CIVIL SERVANTS

STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

How to Guide 1:
Preparing a Policy

UK**aid**
from the British people

Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn · PERL ·

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Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (now FCDO)
ExCo	Executive Council
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
G&SI	Gender and Social Inclusion
IGR	Internally Generated Revenue
IMEP	Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project
KM	Knowledge Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
M/F	Male/Female
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTSS	Medium-Term Sector Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDG	Programme Development Group
PERL	Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PPP	Public–Private Partnership
QA	Quality Assurance
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SHoA	State House of Assembly
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
SPARC	State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
SPM	State Programme Manager
TCM	Technical Coordination Manager

Preface

The State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) was designed by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) to improve governance for better service delivery in ten state governments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Despite the wealth of resources in the country, development indices in Nigeria remain low. Although there is considerable variability across the country, 60.9% of the population live in poverty,[1] nearly one quarter of the working age population are unemployed,[2] 512 women still die in child birth per 100,000 live births[3] and nationally 30% of girls do not complete their primary education.[4] One underlying cause is thought to be weak governance.

SPARC produced four **Policy and Strategy Guides** to improve the impact of state government efforts to deliver public goods and services in order to improve the welfare of citizens. The four guides are:

- Guide 1: Preparing a Policy;
- Guide 2: Preparing a State Development Plan;
- Guide 3: Preparing a Medium-Term Sector Strategy;
- Guide 4: How to Conduct a Sector Performance Review.

Taken together, the guides suggest a policy and planning cycle that embraces:

- Evidence-based policy priority choices;
- Preparing a State Development Plan to define the overarching policy position of the state and the expected outcomes;
- Detailing these policy priorities into programmes and projects that are realistic and costed in a Medium- Term Sector Strategy that provides the base for preparing the annual budget; and
- A method for assessing performance of activities included in the strategy and funded in the budget to provide lessons for the future.

The Policy and Strategy Guides are multi-purpose. Although they can be read from the beginning to the end, this may not be the best way to use them. States may be at different stages in developing their policies, plans or strategies or may need to strengthen their work in certain areas. What is important is not to skip any steps, particularly in choosing and assessing options and getting buy-in from important parties. Time saved by cutting corners and not keeping those who need to know in the loop may lead to delays and poor or deficient policy further down the track. If priorities have not been thought through or accepted by those with important roles to play in developing policy, the process may falter or fail.

The Policy and Strategy Guides are intended to be useful for state governments (at a technical, executive and political level), legislatures and civil society. They are intentionally short and do not address all the nuances of what are complex issues. They do not cover everything. The steps are not exhaustive and there is scope to add. However, each guide is comprehensive enough to introduce concepts and methods that will provide a road map to lead politicians and civil servants through often difficult and sensitive tasks and decisions. More specific advice can also be sought from other FCDO programmes.

Well-articulated, evidence-based policies that set out a set of priorities, goals and programmes for the

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[1] Poverty Profile, National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2010
[2] Unemployment Survey, National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2011
[3] Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, Nigeria, 2018
[4] National Schools Census, Federal Ministry of Education, 2011

state government form the foundation for tackling poverty development. Throughout all of the guides there are five underlying principles:

1. Better governance is essential if efforts to provide services are not to be undermined by weaknesses where governments do not set adequate policy and strategy direction, do not manage public finances well and do not ensure the civil service is structured for delivery.
2. The production and consumption of public goods and services must be for the common good and satisfy both efficiency and equity criteria.
3. Policy must be focused on reducing poverty and should be used to eliminate excessively large disparities of living standards and access to basic services between individuals and communities.
4. The political decision-making process that determines policy and expenditure priorities must permit expanded popular participation so that social choices reflect the needs and preferences of all social groups, including the marginalised and deprived. The political decision-making process must also be accompanied by strong oversight by legislatures, the media and civil society.
5. Policy and strategy decisions must be based on sound, objective and verifiable evidence rather than unsubstantiated opinion or anecdote.

With new or returning administrations entering office, we hope the guides provide sound advice for administrations to robustly set their planning and budgeting frameworks towards service delivery, poverty reduction, employment creation and conflict reduction.

Section 1:
How to Use this Step-by-Step Guide

Purpose of the Guide

The How to Guide 1: Preparing a Policy is for State Officials – politicians, civil servants, and policy advisers to the state and members of the public and legislatures who seek to understand the policy-making process in the state.

The Guide seeks to provide practical guidance on the policy-making process at the state level. It is intended to provide a starting point to help those working on developing or reviewing policy to identify what issues need to be taken into account to ensure that a comprehensive, appropriate and relevant policy is developed.

The aim is to improve a state government's ability to develop effective policies that will, in turn, lead to more focused budgets and expenditures that result in the state government's increased capacity to deliver better public services and to improve the welfare of its citizens.

Structure of this Guide

- Section 2 provides an overview of policy making and suggests what could be described as characteristics of good policy.

- Section 3 presents the people who make policy – politicians, civil servants and members of the public.

- Section 4 presents the process of and techniques to follow in policy making. The need for seeking and providing evidence for policy decisions is emphasised.

- Section 5 deepens the policy-making process by looking at the engagement of external stakeholders.

- Section 6 looks at how to package and present policy.

- Section 7 looks at policy implementation. Implementation and delivery issues should be fully considered from the outset and continually reviewed.

- Section 8 looks at the Gender and Social Inclusion (G&SI) and conflict resolution/sensitivity issues.

- Section 9 addresses arrangements that need to be put in place for the regular review and evaluation of the policy.

Section 2:
Overview of Policy Making

What is Policy?

There are many ways to look at policy but the simplest way is to look at it as a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual for a purpose.

Policy making is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver 'Outcomes' – desired change in the real world.

Policy is often confused with **Strategy** and they are sometimes used interchangeably.

In very simple terms, Policy is about defining expected overarching goals and outcomes, whereas Strategy is about how we may achieve them. In other words, 'Policy' is mostly about 'What' and 'Strategy' is about 'How'.

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Policy making is therefore about 'Outcomes' and 'Outcomes' being consequences, not outputs and inputs, which are ultimately about people. An 'Outcome' is a statement of how life is better than it was before, in some way, for some people. Deciding upon these outcomes for the state is the key policy-making challenge.

Some examples of the distinction between 'Outcomes' and 'Strategies' and elaboration of the meaning of 'Outcomes' and 'Strategy' are given in the following boxes.

A policy can be that a state government aims to reduce the incidence of malaria by a stated number of cases from the existing level to a stated lower level by the end of 2015. The strategy for achieving this result could be to make investments in the public health sector, but an alternative strategy might be to use services purchased from the private sector.

In policy terms, a new road (which is an **output**) is a way of achieving an **outcome** such as reducing social exclusion of a previously isolated community, by allowing people to take goods to market in order to stimulate that local economy and bringing educational, medical and safety services into the community. The road matters but the policy is aimed at the results it brings, not the stretch of physical road as such.

Having a nation of educated, ambitious youths – both young women and men – who can apply their skills to developing the economy is an **outcome**. It is a result of a successful education system and is part of the reason for having that system. Building that system will have needed inputs – schools, books, desks, latrines for girls and boys – but the outcome is much more important than simply having all these material objects. The result will also have needed people – skilled teachers, janitors and administrators – to teach the children and to run the system.

Eradicating a disease may need inputs, such as vaccines, needles and health centres, but the outcome of people being free from that disease will also have come from doctors, nurses and other staff who have carried out the vaccinations and other interventions needed to achieve the health outcomes – as well as good water and sanitation systems to allow people to remain healthy.

Policy would normally be found in Vision Statements and State Development Plans and sometimes in preambles of legislation. Strategy statements are found in Medium-Term Sector Plans or Strategies that aim to describe how policies are achieved. Separate guides are available that provide guidance for the understanding and preparation of Vision Statements, State Development Plans and Medium-Term Sector Plans or Strategies.

Are There Different Types of Policy?

There are a variety of types of policy. These types are not mutually exclusive and can be combined – for example, substantive public policy can have a strong redistributive focus. Some of the common ones are:

1. **Substantive Public Policy.** These are policies concerned with the general welfare and development of society and provision of education and employment opportunities. Economic stabilisation, law and order enforcement, and anti-pollution laws, etc. are examples. It does not cater to any particular section of society.

2. **Regulatory Public Policy.** These policies are concerned with regulation of trade, business, safety measures, public utilities, etc., and are performed by independent organisations working on behalf of the state government. Examples are standards in the provision of power, water and telecommunications. Organisations rendering these services are known as Regulatory Authorities.

3. **Distributive Public Policy.** These are policies meant for specific segments of society especially those with particular needs, such as those suffering a lack of access to education or health care. Public assistance and welfare programmes, adult education programmes, food relief, social insurance, vaccination campaigns and public distribution systems are all examples of such policy.

4. **Redistributive Public Policy.** These policies are concerned with bringing basic social and economic changes that aim to reduce inequalities, for example in terms of poverty in rural areas and slums, or lack of employment among women or young people. Certain assets and benefits are divided disproportionately among certain segments of society and need to be redistributed so they reach those in need – for example, ensuring young people and women have access to agricultural grants.

5. **Capitalisation Public Policy.** These policies are related to financial subsidies given by the state and local governments and state business undertakings and are not directly linked to public welfare as are the others listed above, although they do contribute indirectly. They consist of infrastructural and development policies for state government business organisations to keep functioning properly. Examples include road infrastructure programmes, rapid transport transit systems and water delivery. These can have a significant impact on tackling inequalities by ensuring, for example, that isolated rural communities have access to clean water and transportation, or that slum dwellers have good public transport to jobs.

6. **Technical Public Policy.** These are policies framed for the arrangement of procedures, rules and framework of the state government providing for discharge of action by various agencies in the field. Examples include procurement procedures, procedures for the subdivision of land and licensing procedures.

What Are the Characteristics of Policy Making?

Experience from elsewhere suggests that if policy making is to respond effectively to challenges faced by the policy makers or the areas they manage – and to the needs of the population served – it needs to be forward looking, outward looking, innovative, flexible and creative, evidence-based, inclusive, joined up, able to learn from past experience, be communicated effectively, and incorporate ongoing evaluation and review.

Forward looking

Ensuring that policy making is forward looking is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it must be based on a long-term vision strategy, aimed at achieving defined intended outcomes. It is important in most areas of policy making to take a view at least five to ten years into the future. Indeed, in many cases, policy decisions taken now will have many long-term implications. For example, the educational experience of school children now will have an impact on the skills of the workforce until the 2050s! Policy makers in all areas should therefore have in mind the vision and goals to which   they are contributing.
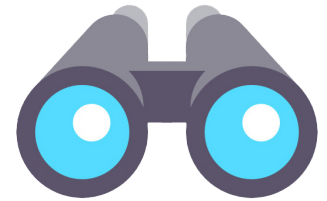
It is also important when developing policy to ensure that it is sufficiently robust to deal with change in the outside world, whether predictable or unpredictable. There are some specific techniques designed to assist policy makers in thinking about future challenges. For example, scenario planning[5] can be used to provide a structure for considering how policy makers need to respond if the world develops in various possible ways in the future.

Forward looking aspects

- Focus on intended outcomes;
- Take a long-term view based on statistical trends and informed predictions. Effects of policy decisions taken now will be felt many years from now;
- Are robust to deal with the risks and unknowns in the future and to be able to deal with change.

Outward looking

It is helpful to use comparisons of policies and experiences in other places as part of the policy-making process. This can contribute very positively to the policy-making process, in particular helping to guide policy makers to new solutions to problems and new mechanisms for implementing policy and improving public service delivery. It can also provide useful evidence of what works in practice and what does not work. It is of course important to take account of social, economic and institutional differences that may require adjustment to policy solutions that work elsewhere to meet local circumstances. It is not always necessary to look very far afield for policy comparisons as, for example, other states may have already tried to address similar issues.

Outward looking aspects

- Learn from other states;
- Learn from other parts of the world;
- Lessons guide policy makers to new solutions to problems and new mechanisms for implementing policy;
- Lessons provide evidence of what works in practice and what does not work.

[5] Scenario planning is about imagining or drawing pictures of different futures. The point of such an exercise is not to predict the future but to help determine what should be priorities for the organisation under any of the possible scenarios.

Innovative, flexible and creative

The policy should be flexible and innovative, questioning established ways of dealing with things, encouraging new and creative ideas and, where appropriate, making established ways work better.

Innovative, flexible and creative policy aspects

- Generate alternatives to the usual way of working – if the usual ways are not achieving the desired results;
- Define success in terms of outcomes;
- Take steps to create management structures which promote new ideas and effective team building.

Evidence-based

Policy decisions should be based on sound evidence rather than personal political whims and unsubstantiated opinion. The purpose of seeking evidence is to help:

- Identify and clarify the problem which is being addressed;
- Identify potential solutions that are viable, affordable and likely to result in desired outcomes.

Sources of Information/Evidence

- Evaluation of previous policies;
- Sector reviews;
- Existing local, national and international research;
- Existing statistics, including data disaggregated by sex and other socioeconomic factors, and by LGA/LGEA where possible;
- Stakeholder consultation, including meaningful involvement of civil society, such as women and marginalised groups relevant to the sector.

It is important to use evidence from those already involved in the policy area and those who will be affected by/benefit from the policy proposal. In any policy area there is a great deal of important evidence held by both front-line managers and staff in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the citizens or consumers to whom the policy is directed. Very often these groups will have a clearer idea than the policy makers about what the problems are, why the situation is as it is and why previous initiatives did or did not work. They are also well placed to advise on how a new policy can be put into practice on the ground and what pitfalls need to be avoided.

Gathering that evidence through interviews, surveys, approaches such as participatory needs assessment or focus groups can provide a very valuable input to the policy-making process. It may well also help to avoid expensive mistakes later.

Making best use of available data and information – for example from ongoing data collection or sector reviews – should involve data disaggregated by a range of socioeconomic factors that will allow identification of both successes and challenges. Key data will be disaggregated by sex (e.g. workforce, sectors – such as education, health, agriculture, employment), age (e.g. education and health, or young unemployed people), Local Government Area (LGA) or Local Government Education Area (LGEA) (to allow identification of areas with the poorest and best outcomes). It is also useful to compare data – for example to Nigerian national averages and to figures in other states (both with a comparable profile and those that are more or less well developed).

It is important when looking at data not to rely on state- wide average figures, as these can mask considerable variation between LGAs or urban and rural areas. Using smaller area data where available can help planners to identify and target inequalities.

Including experts in data collection and analysis is essential for planning policy. Where critical information is not available it is important to develop plans to collect, analyse and use it, as well as to look for alternatives ('proxy data') that might be able to inform decision making.

Key principles for assessing evidence

Some key issues that need to be thought through before deciding whether to use a piece of evidence are set out below. Policy makers will need to consider drawing on specialist expertise and knowledge to help assess evidence (e.g. advice from researchers, statisticians and economists).

Is it relevant?

- Does the evidence address the key policy issues and questions?
- Is it appropriate to use evidence collected in a different context? That is, how far can results of local or national studies inform a state policy?
- Was the study that produced the evidence undertaken recently? Have things changed since it was done? (Note: This does not mean that research evidence can be ignored just because it is old – in some policy areas, research can remain relevant for a long time.)
- Does the study clearly identify implications for policy and/or practice?

Is it good quality?

- Were the research or data collection methods used appropriate to the key questions being asked?
- Does the study consider the issues from a range of perspectives e.g. involving service users and non-users/other stakeholders?
- Has the study been conducted properly – is there information on how the methods were implemented e.g. response rates for surveys? Does the individual or organisation which undertook the study have previous experience of research on the issue and/or the methods used?
- Is the data disaggregated by factors such as sex and LGA? Are there other sources of data that can help create a picture?
- Has the study been undertaken, commissioned or funded by individuals or organisations with views or vested interests which may favour particular conclusions?

Inclusive

The policy-making process should take account of the needs of all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy as well as the policy's potential impact on the whole population, so that it does not contribute to increasing inequalities. Policy has the potential to be more beneficial to some than others; to avoid this it is important to build in particular redistributive policy elements. Policy makers should systematically assess whether proposed plans will reduce or increase inequalities (e.g. in relation to gender, poverty, rural isolation) to avoid increasing the risk of worsening outcomes for some groups or conflicts.

There is also a need to meaningfully involve representatives of marginalised groups who are affected by the policy in the planning and review of resulting programmes and services to ensure the policy effectively meets the needs of all. It is also important to ensure that policies are conflict sensitive and do not contribute to increasing the risk of conflict (e.g. through exacerbating inequalities). Policy development therefore should meaningfully involve representatives of stakeholders (see Section 5 for further consideration of this subject).

Inclusivity features

- Consult those responsible for service delivery/implementation;
- Consult those at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy;
- Carry out processes such as participatory needs assessment or an impact assessment;
- Use disaggregated data and information that will ensure equitable benefits to the whole population;
- Address gender, inclusion and conflict issues throughout the policy;
- Seek feedback on policy from recipients and front-line managers through processes such as service charters, complaints procedures and staff surveys.

Joined up

The process takes a holistic view – looking beyond organisational boundaries to the state's strategic objectives and seeks to establish legitimacy for the policy.

It is also important that MDAs with an interest in the outcomes of another sector have input into policy planning. For example, commerce and agriculture have a view on the outputs of the education sector – an appropriately skilled future workforce. Joined up policy and strategy can also be more responsive to the needs of the population by breaking down barriers to service provision. Examples include ensuring parents in poor, rural areas have adequate income from effective farming practices to allow them to afford to send their children to school, or that policies for water and sanitation work with the health sector to ensure safe provision and practices.

Joined up aspects

- Crosscutting objectives clearly defined at the outset;
- Communication and joint working arrangements with other MDAs clearly defined and well understood;
- Barriers to effective joining up clearly identified with a strategy to overcome them;
- Implementation considered part of the policy- making process.

Lessons learned

Learning from experience of what works and does not work means that there is a better chance of desirable outcomes and value for the money spent on policies and programmes. Sources of information can include sector reviews, input from sector-specific community groups (e.g. School Based Management Committees, SBMCs), complaints procedures and reviews of service charters as well as wider sources such as sector experts, research projects, and similar initiatives in neighbouring states, countries, the region or internationally.

Lessons learned aspects

- Information on lessons learned and good practice disseminated;
- Account available of what was done by policy makers as a result of lessons learned;
- Important to draw a clear distinction between failure of the policy to have an impact on the problem it was intended to resolve and managerial/operational failures of implementation.

Communication

The policy-making process should consider how policy will be communicated to the public through a variety of media and include dissemination of messages to a range of audiences, including people who may not speak or read the main local language or who are unable to read.

Communication aspects

- There is a communication strategy that will ensure clear messages are disseminated to diverse audiences through a range of media;
- Agency responsible for information in place from an early stage.

Evaluation

Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of policy should be built into the policy-making process. It is important that assessments of the impact and effectiveness of policy include a focus on equalities issues and involve representatives of relevant communities.

Evaluation aspects

- Purpose of evaluation defined;
- Success criteria defined;
- Means of evaluation built into the policy-making process from the outset;
- Meaningful involvement by a range of stakeholders including marginalised groups.

Review

Existing/established policy should be periodically and systematically reviewed to ensure it is really dealing with the problems it was designed to solve. As with evaluation, it is essential that a review considers the effectiveness of policy on reducing inequalities and that there is meaningful involvement of relevant service users using a range of mechanisms. As noted in lessons learned, systematically including input from community- based scrutiny bodies such as SBMCs should be an essential component of the review.

Review aspects

- Ongoing review programme in place with a range of meaningful performance measures;
- Mechanisms to provide feedback direct to policy makers institutionalised, such as complaints procedures, service charters;
- Redundant or failing policies scrapped.

Section 3:
Institutional Roles in Policy Making

Making policy involves politicians, civil servants and the public, who each have key roles and responsibilities.

State Executive Council

The main responsibility for policy making in the state lies with the state's Executive Council (ExCo). It is responsible for translating the state's political vision into policies, programmes and actions. People's needs should be identified, assessed and suitable policies prepared to respond to these needs.

The ExCo sits at the apex of state administration and consists of an elected Governor with executive powers and appointed Commissioners, each of which is responsible for a sector or subsector portfolio and expected to ensure that a high standard of services is delivered in that portfolio. Thus the Commissioner of Health has primary responsibility for ensuring that adequate health services are provided in the state, and that the health of the state's population is maintained to acceptable standards.

State House of Assembly

The State House of Assembly (SHoA) is not responsible for making policy per se but gets involved in scrutinising the policy during its development. SHoA members, however, have been known to also sponsor bills that may have implications on the development of policy. The SHoA is largely responsible for passing laws that are important instruments for implementing or protecting policy. They are also responsible for monitoring, at constituency level, the implementation of policy passed at ExCo. They hold ExCo accountable to the people.

State Executive Council

Civil Service

Civil Society

State House of Assembly

Civil Service

The civil service acts as advisers on policy formulation and implement political decisions. They are crucial in gathering data that will support the policy-making process, for example, giving evidence to justify a policy choice from the various options provided.

From time to time the roles of civil servants will appear to overlap or conflict with those of members of the ExCo or the House of Assembly. Some Commissioners are experts in their fields, but this is not the case with every one, and it is not always to be expected that they should be. Whether or not a Commissioner is an expert in the field, he/she should rely upon the advice provided by his/her Permanent Secretary who in turn is assisted by other technical experts in the sector.

Civil Society

Civil society is a key player and is crucial in the policy- making process, particularly as government and its policies are ultimately responsible to the people. The general public are beneficiaries or targets of policy once it is implemented and will be required to adhere to any legal requirements included. It will be important that policy builds in methods for complaint about policy and related service delivery. As outlined in the previous sections, representatives of the public, including marginalised groups, should be involved in development of policy through a range of mechanisms. Apart from the engagement processes described, the general public – often through the media or advocacy by CSOs or NGOs – should also get their views discussed at ExCo (see Section 5 for further consideration of civil society involvement).
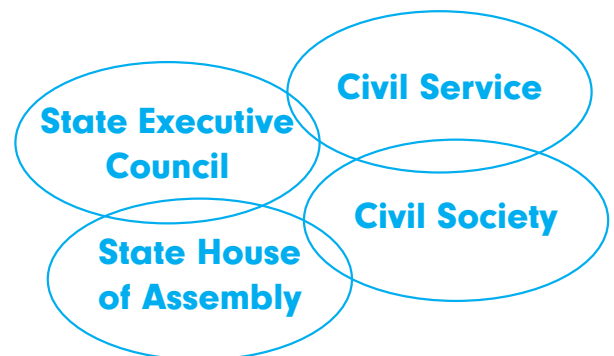
Section 4:
Process of State Policy Making

Making policy is not a quick or easy process. It is a continuous process that has many feedback loops. The process may be full of vigorous opposing opinions, concessions and unanticipated complications. Verification and evaluation are essential throughout the process.

Building blocks for policy-making success

Vision: A unifying State Vision is needed to bring together the different motivations for developing forward looking, innovative, inclusive and realistic policies. A clear statement of core values (e.g. transparency, effectiveness, equity) can strengthen the policy approach.
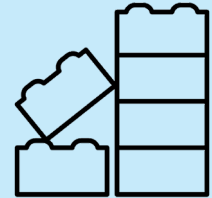
Politics: Political leadership is a precondition of effective policy making. Politicians such as the Governor should provide the critical leadership needed, be a source of building coalitions, persuading colleagues and participating in marketing and promotional campaigns to keep the public focused on policy making.

Institutional design and governance: Committees and working groups are needed to drive the policy-making process. They must have clear roles and responsibilities and structures that foster problem solving, not blame shifting.

People and skills: Getting the right people working on the policy is likely to be a decisive factor in policy-making success. The strategy should be to select the best people with established track records.

Partnership and engagement: Engaging effectively with key stakeholders and members of the public (including representatives of socially excluded groups), and identifying key partnerships for delivery are critical.

Information and evidence: Use of reliable information and evidence of effectiveness including on gender, inclusion and equalities issues, will help ensure an effective and accurate policy. Referring to related policy drivers either federally or in the state (e.g. the constitution, Sustainable Development Goals-type agreements, Child Rights Act[6], etc.) can strengthen the position taken in the policy.

The budget: The team must be supported by a budget to meet the costs of transportation, communication and holding stakeholder meetings. There must be transparency and accountability in the way the money is used.

Programme and policy delivery: Policy making needs to be delivered on time and to specification. There is a need for a time frame for the proposed planned activities and to allow the process to go in a systematic way.

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[6] For a guide to Nigeria's commitments in relation to rights-related international and regional accords and federal laws, see SPARC Report (2014) Gender and Social Inclusion-related treaties and laws in Nigeria.

Making policy is usually expressed through a Policy-making Cycle. The Policy-making Cycle starts with identifying an issue or setting an agenda and passes through many stages until a final position is agreed and implemented. The suggested Policy-making Cycle with its different stages is shown in the diagram below.

Noting that most 'policy making' is incremental development of existing policy rather than a brand new exercise, the following guidelines are offered to help navigate through stages in the cycle.
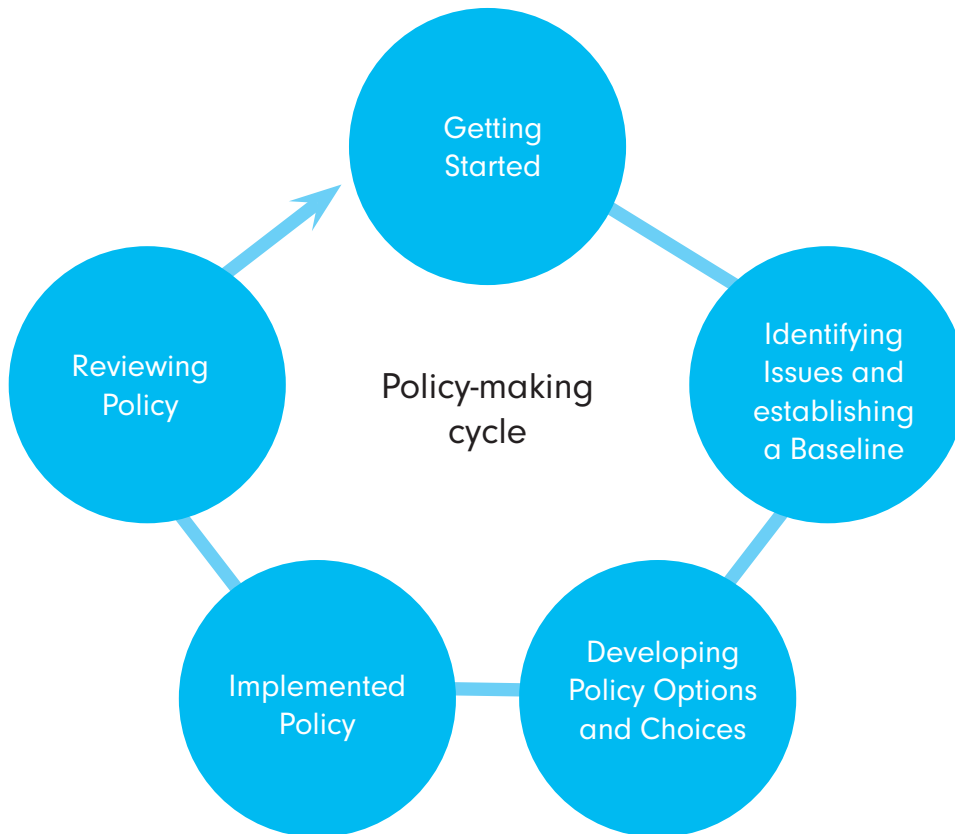
Getting Started

Agenda setting

- Identify the origin of the intention or decision to review or formulate new policy. Avoid a situation whereby those with stakes in the policy are excluded and you end up embarking on an academic exercise: 'doing the wrong things correctly' scenario. Those who frame the issue to be addressed by policy often exert an enormous amount of influence over the entire process through their personalities, personal interests, political affiliations, and so on;
- Identify other policies existing or in the making that may complement, be in conflict with or be duplicated by the intended policy;
- Policies will come from various sources: party manifestos, the state ExCos, individual Commissioners, House of Assembly, Federal Government, international agreements, pressure for change from professionals within a particular part of the civil service, research evidence, public opinion and lobbying from the voluntary and community sector as well as planned review of existing policies. It is rare that policy making starts from a completely blank sheet.

Actors

- Get organised – set up oversight, management and technical teams. Prepare clear Terms of Reference for each of these teams, including expertise required;
- Identify the other important actors who will become crucial as the policy develops, especially those who will be involved in its approval. Practically, this means identifying the critical ExCo members and Permanent Secretaries;
- Announce that intention to other relevant stakeholders.

Approach and methodology

- Define a clear path or process with a budget. There is need for a time frame for the proposed policy-making activities. This is very important because the process needs to be controlled as it is very easy for policy making to go on and on. The success of the policy-making process depends on the input of others; therefore it is important that the other actors are aware of the expected timing of their inputs;
- Summarise your understanding and plan of operation and discuss it with those who will be responsible for approving the policy. This generates a high level of preparedness for the policy-making exercise. It also leaves them expectant of a product at a future date.

Start-up questions

- What is our vision?
- Who are the stakeholders and how do we involve them?
- What outcomes do the priority stakeholders want?
- What is the scope of this initiative? What are we prepared to do?
- What are the success criteria?
- What are the pre-conditions for success?
- What are we going to produce?
- Do we have the data and information we need?
- What resources do we have available?
- What assumptions are we making?
- What constraints do we anticipate?
- What are the barriers to success?
- What are the likely consequences and side effects of our success?
- Who/what is likely to be disadvantaged by our success?
- What are they likely to do that would cause problems?
- What is the likely probability and impact of each risk?
- What is our time frame?
- What should we do to reduce the probability and/or impact of the risk?
- What contingency arrangements do we need?
- What is our final plan for making the policy?

Identifying Issues and Establishing a Baseline

> **Note:**
>
> Identifying the issues and baselines is an important step in the technical policy-making process. Baselines are information on existing circumstances that help us to understand the problem or challenge the policy will be addressing and later the baseline will provide very useful information in the monitoring of policy implementation.

- Study the problem and establish its causes in detail. Identifying causes helps to understand the problem or challenge the policy will be addressing;
- In the process of studying the problem, construct a baseline. The baseline will provide very useful information in future in the monitoring of policy implementation. If you are dealing with many policies at the same time (e.g. in preparing a State Development Plan), it is important that, as much as possible, one date is used for the baseline;
- Establish trends and projections of what would happen if current trends continued – i.e. if there were going to be no state or policy intervention. This helps to determine whether the issue is very important or a priority. Use available state and LGA information to identify where outcomes are best and worst to inform planning and targeting of resources, as well as comparing with similar information from federal level and other states;
- Engage stakeholders from government, private sector, academic institutions and the public. This is a critical component of identifying issues (see Section 5 for details). Stakeholders are the people or institutions who will benefit from the development of that policy or whose interest may be affected. Inadequate stakeholder involvement is one of the most common reasons policies do not make as much progress/impact or fail. Stakeholders will be useful in helping to establish causes of the problem and identify solutions. Some stakeholders may be partners in delivering the solution.

Developing Policy Options and Choices

Options

Generating, policy alternatives are closely linked to the objectives of policy makers. The policy-making process typically involves complex decision points that are riddled with competing and sometimes incompatible objectives. A useful way to think about the nature of policy alternatives is to start from the status quo. Most policy alternatives are incremental as opposed to being fundamental in nature; that is, only marginally different.

> **Advantages of incremental policy alternatives**
>
> - Many conflicting objectives and interests tend to create a bias towards the preservation of the status quo;
> - Incremental alternatives consume fewer resources;
> - Fundamental alternatives involve higher risks to policy makers;
> - Information to generate fundamental overhauls is more difficult to obtain and as such the alternatives could be labelled as 'unproven' or lacking in evidence.

Generating policy alternatives is not merely listing all the possible permutations and combinations but a creative act to arrive at a robust position. Alternatives can be generated from taking some practical actions, addressing the causes of problems or from policy instruments available. The box below gives examples of these methods.

Examples of generating policy alternatives

From practical actions
- Malaria may be reduced by buying nets and ensuring they are properly used, better treatment of patients/making drugs more available, or reducing the number of mosquitoes.

From causes of problem
Problem of deforestation may be caused by:
- Poor governance;
- Insufficient attention to local community issues;
- Poor consultation process;
- Limited information;
- Conflicts with existing laws and regulation.

From policy instruments
Alternatives for freeing markets where there is too much government control may be:
- Deregulation;
- Legislation;
- Privatisation.

Once the alternatives are generated, they should then be consolidated and screened to determine the best combination of approaches.

- Realign alternatives based on whether or not alternatives are mutually exclusive;
- Screen alternatives based on their feasibility in the existing policy environment (e.g. political acceptability).

Policy choices

- From the chosen policy alternatives, formulate outcomes for each policy area. Each outcome should have the following four features: indicate from the start the desired results of the policy; determine baselines and set targets that are SMART[7]; emphasise what is to be achieved instead of what is to be done (what is to be done is the subject of strategies); and be realistic based on resource availability.

Note:

In formulating outcomes, do not focus on how the situation will be improved or what needs to be done to change the current situation. Focus instead on what the future would look like: what is different in the state? How have people's lives changed? How have things improved for men? For women? For marginalised groups? Have inequality gaps been reduced – e.g. between rural and urban access to services?

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[7] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound

- Identify outcomes that relate to gaps in institutional capacities and inequalities such as the provision of skilled women teachers and health care staff to rural areas, addressing relevant cultural and social norms, improving the condition of men, women and marginalised groups, and addressing the rights of different groups in society. There is more detailed treatment of this topic in Section 8;
- Produce an overall Outcome/Results Map or Table that shows where action will be needed. The Results Map or Table provides a picture of the broad range of actions that will be needed and does not focus on projects or tangible outputs. For a State Development Plan, the Results Map or Table will be complex as it may deal with both overarching policies (affecting more than one sector) and specific sectoral policies;
- Identify unintended outcomes or effects and risks and assumptions, for example, increasing inequalities (such as providing educational incentives only for girls potentially resulting in boys being taken out of school to work) or contributing to the risk of conflict. It should be noted that sometimes well-intentioned actions may lead to negative results. Additionally there may be risks that could prevent the planned results from being achieved. Therefore it is necessary to devote time to thinking through the various assumptions, risks and possible unintended effects or outcomes;
- Prepare a draft Results Framework for the policy. The Results Framework confirms the Baseline, spells out Targets for those policy areas within given time frames (e.g. five year periods,) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be used for monitoring
progress of policy implementation. It also identifies the organisations or agencies that will be responsible for implementing the outcome;
- Recommend the financing options and mechanisms for the policy;
- Submit and defend the policy proposal at ExCo.

Policy Implementation

A new policy must be put into effect, which typically requires determining which organisations or agencies will be responsible for carrying it out and what resources will be available for the purpose. It is a difficult stage if the people who are tasked with carrying out the policy are not committed to complying with it. During the policy options and outcome stage, compromises may have been made to get the policy passed; those who are ultimately required to carry out the policy may not agree with those compromises and are unlikely to enforce it effectively. Thus, clear communication and coordination, as well as sufficient funding, are also needed to make this step a success.

Guidance

- Motivate organisations or agencies that will be responsible for policy implementation;
- Open clear lines of communication and confirm coordination arrangements;
- Identify outputs appropriate for that outcome.

Policy Review

Note:

This stage involves a study of how effective the new policy has been in addressing the original problem, which often leads to additional public policy changes. It also includes reviewing funds and resources available to ensure that the policy can be maintained.

- Collect data, on a regular basis, on the performance of policy implementation. Improve systems for data collection (e.g. data disaggregated by a range of social factors) and analysis skills if these were found to be areas for improvement during the plan development period;
- Study how effective the new policy has been in addressing the original problem;
- Review availability of funds and resources to ensure that the policy can be maintained;
- Make additional public policy changes if necessary (i.e. go back to Stage 1).

Section 5:
Engagement of Stakeholders

Inadequate stakeholder involvement can be a common reason why policies fail. Therefore, every effort should be made to encourage broad, meaningful and active stakeholder engagement in policy-making processes. As noted in the previous section, stakeholders are the people and institutions who will benefit from the development activity or whose interest may be affected by that activity.

Stakeholders could include:

- Politicians;
- Public sector staff; Sector service providers;
- Other government sectors with an interest in the sector policy;
- Relevant professional bodies; Relevant trade unions; Private sector;
- Civil society – including marginalised communities relevant to the sector, and including male and female representation;
- Media;
- Development partners;
- Religious bodies.

These stakeholders will have a range of different interests and roles in relation to the policy. For example, some will be partners, either directly or indirectly, in delivering outcomes, such as other transport and infrastructure working in partnership with agriculture or commerce to ensure delivery to markets, or NGOs or the private sector delivering elements of the policy. Public service staff and providers will be responsible for managing and delivering the policy. Civil society will be concerned with access to quality services. It is helpful to identify the roles of stakeholders and how they should be involved – some, for example, on an ongoing basis in oversight committees, others in focus groups or consultations (see 'stakeholder analysis').

A range of different engagement activities may be needed to inform the development of a policy. The following set of procedures is recommended for stakeholder engagement:

Getting Started

- Specify clear objectives for stakeholder engagement to inform development of the policy;
- Gather a team with the necessary skills to conduct the consultation;
- Stakeholder analysis: Define and analyse the stakeholders for the consultation exercise and consider how to involve them. Stakeholders need to be specifically categorised. There will be those of high importance and high influence and combinations of these;
- Review any previous consultation and research activity on this topic;
- Seek advice from internal and external experts at the earliest opportunity;
- Use external stakeholders to assist at the earliest stage in the exercise of establishing the broader picture and in identifying the issues.

Planning the Processes of Engagement

- Be clear about the target audience from the categories previously listed. Some consultations involve a mix of participants to allow them to hear and understand each other's views and further develop thinking;
- Consider how to ensure adequate representation of the views of both men and women across various stakeholders;
- Ensure mechanisms are in place to allow meaningful input from socially excluded groups relevant to the sector. This could be by community consultations, needs assessments or focus groups (e.g. in isolated rural areas) or by engaging with NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that represent the interests of relevant groups (see also Section 8). Keep in mind that marginalised groups do not necessarily have a common viewpoint, for example community or religious leaders might have a different perspective on the needs of women, older people or young people from that held by those groups themselves;
- Establish appropriate consultation method(s) based on consultation objectives and audience;
- Consider and budget for alternative formats and community languages;
- Consider the use of face-to-face or research methods of consultation as an additional or alternative way of capturing views. Take into account different access needs – e.g. for people with disabilities, or women with parenting responsibilities;
- Identify the outputs that are needed for policy development and feedback to the audiences;
- Ensure that realistic timescales for planning and conducting consultation, including sufficient time for responses to the consultation paper are set;
- Ensure that the resources the consultation exercise will require are in place (both in terms of staff time and additional costs).

Consultation

There are generally multitudes of methods for doing consultation – workshops, meetings, focus groups, committees, etc. involving a wide range of representatives – with generally very useful results. The following guidance is suggested for consultation:

- Be clear about the audience and purpose;
- Be clear about how input will be used, and that it will not necessarily all influence the policy direction, but is part of a wider process of engagement with all stakeholders;
- Provide background information on the consultation/policy process;
- Ask questions that will elicit the views and information required;
- Consider the needs of socially excluded groups and the need to produce the information (or make it available on request) verbally, in alternative formats or community languages;
- Publish a summary and full report of the analysis in 'hard' and 'soft' copies;
- Provide feedback as soon as possible to all respondents and other stakeholders.

Concluding a Consultation

- Produce a consultation report;
- Provide an explicit statement on what has changed as a result of the consultation;
- Publish and disseminate the report; Receive feedback;
- Update report as necessary.

Section 6:
Policy Presentation and Packaging

Presentation

Policies are drafted for policy makers for their consideration and the public for their consumption. Policy makers are busy people and are probably not specialists in the subject addressed by the policy. Members of the public are probably looking for specific issues within the policy that affect their lives.

It is thus important that the Policy Statement should:

- Look attractive;
- Appear interesting;
- Be short and easy to read, avoiding jargon;
- Provide enough background for the policy makers and members of the public to understand the problem being addressed;
- Convince the policy makers and members of the public that the problem must be and will be addressed urgently;
- Provide information about alternatives; Provide evidence to support one alternative;
- Stimulate the policy makers to make a decision and the members of the public to feel they need to support or reject it.

Proposed format for the policy

Title: short, catchy and to the point.

Executive summary: should present the main points the policy makers and members of the public should get even if they read nothing else thereafter. Recommendations must come clearly in the summary. A policy is not a detective story where the answer comes on the last page.

Table of contents: This should include main chapters and one or two levels of subheadings. It is helpful if it is an 'active' table of contents that allows readers to click to the relevant section.

Acronyms and abbreviations: There should be a table in alphabetical order of all the acronyms and abbreviations in the text.

Main text
1. Introduction – it should grab the reader and introduce the subject. It should highlight the problem, background and context of the problem, causes and effects of the current situation with all evidence provided. There should be a focus on addressing the needs of relevant populations, including marginalised groups.
2. Situational Analysis, Baselines and Trends – the emphasis should be on evidence that led to the conclusions and recommendations. Baseline data – including data disaggregated by G&SI-related factors relevant to the sector – is needed for future monitoring. Trend analysis is important to show what will happen if there   is no intervention or to identify issues where there has been success and either require maintenance or stopping the action.

3. Policy Options and Choices – what are the options for revising or introducing the policy, how will the policy changes improve the situation, where is the evidence, what are the costs and benefits of introducing that policy, risks and their mitigation, are there any side effects, what is the final choice with justification and evidence?

4. Results Framework – confirming baselines, spelling out targets for that policy area within given time frames (e.g. five year periods) and, Key Performance Indicators that will be used for monitoring progress of policy implementation.

5. Implementation Arrangements – what are the organisations or agencies that will be responsible for policy implementation, what lines of communication and coordination arrangements are being proposed, what policy instruments will be put to use, what financing arrangements are available, what institutional capacities or restructuring need to be made to ensure smooth implementation?

6. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) – how will the Results Framework be used for monitoring progress of the policy, who will be responsible for M&E, how will the M&E results be used?

Packaging

At the beginning of this Guide, it was indicated that there is not one policy but many policy types. Some will feed into each other. The different types of policy will be packaged in different ways. The most common packaging methods are as follows:

- Policy may be pronounced in election platforms
describing a political party's intentions and generally packaged as election manifestos. Some of these manifestos will be presented in written form but in a number of cases they will be disjointed statements quoted in newspapers. These need to be collected, collated and then synthesised to distil the main party message;

- Policy is presented in State Vision or State Development Plans. These are approved public documents that outline a state's overarching policy position and the outcomes that the state government expects these policies will deliver. The documents allow the state to express its strategic direction and think about policy in a broader sense. Thinking about policy in a broader sense also creates the basis for coordination. The documents also describe how this will be done within the limitations of resource constraints, so that they remain realistic;

- Policy is also presented at sector level. There will be an Education Policy, a Gender Policy, a Transport Policy, etc. Sector policies allow for more in-depth analysis and presentation of issues.

The location of policies in various plans and statements is a source of coordination challenges in many states. It has thus become important that these different plans and documents should talk to each other.

Section 7:
Policy Implementation

Policy implementation begins during the policy analysis phase, and is the most integral component to ensuring the policy achieves its intended goals. Clearly defined roles for jurisdiction over policy implementation and for dealing with non-compliance are necessary to execute the actions decreed in any policy.

Considerations for policy implementation

(Who) (What) (Where) (When)   and   (How?)

Once a policy has been adopted, the policy moves to the implementation phase. Stakeholders are informed of the policy choice and thereafter policy instruments are created and put in place, staff instructed on what to do, money spent, where necessary, bills prepared for SHoA and policy outcomes/ services eventually delivered.

Factors for effective policy implementation

- A limited number and consistent with State Vision;
- Widely shared and understood vision;
- Policy design that took into account implementation issues and knowledge of what works;
- Intensive support and training for managers and front-line staff if required;
- Sufficient freedom for those on the ground to innovate and adapt policy to local conditions;
- Clear leadership;
- Clear lines of accountability;
- Quick learning;
- Ongoing engagement with civil society – for example through service charters or membership on management committees.

Policy Instruments

Policy instruments are means used to translate policies into implementable programmes:

- Advocacy – arguing a case to convince people to behave differently;
- Money – using spending and taxation powers to get actions delivered;
- Law – using legislative power to effect change; Direct power – using MDAs to deliver policy outcomes or services.

Good policy advice relies on choosing the right policy mix of instruments for the policy at hand. It is important to understand how policy instruments work for different types of development challenges. Will tax credits for every Naira saved incentivise enough behavioural changes to make a dent in reducing the list of people looking for houses? Will people save and build their own houses? Will a carbon tax introduced to control air pollution lead to behavioural change? Will increased funding for education guarantee that every child has access to school? Understanding the workings of different policy instruments will provide the skills needed to make grounded decisions about effective and practical policy programmes.

Coordination

Policies are based on shared goals. In a joined-up government, programmes should work together and not at cross-purposes. Priorities must be assigned between competing needs.

The State Government MDAs should strive to work
together in a coordinated way so that parts pull   together. This should be more evident in the preparation of Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs), which aim to achieve the following in terms of co-ordination:

- Sense of coherence – in overall state development direction;
- Sense of consistency – in the specific sector objectives that always relate to the State Plan;
- Reflection of ideas of efficient interaction between MDAs to achieve common goals;
- Need to consult – to allow input that will ensure that an approved policy is a workable proposition.

Financing

Ensuring necessary resources are available is key to making policy happen. When developing a policy, advisers must always be aware of the cost implications of policy implementation and the need to achieve best value for money. Where policies do not involve significant public expenditure, there may still be implementation costs for the administration and compliance costs for individuals and organisations, which need to be considered and justified.

The majority of the policy will be implemented from the budget. The budget provides the means through which the state can raise revenue for implementing its programmes. Successful policy implementation requires that budgets must be credible and realistic. Budget credibility means the budget is achievable, robust and well prepared. Budget realism means the budget is fundable.

Sources of funding in the budget

Federal transfers based on a laid down formula as stipulated by the National Assembly. Oil price stability has and will always affect the value of federal transfers. For example, the oil price dropped from slightly above US$100 per barrel in 2013 to below US$60 in 2015. This invariably heightens the reduction of oil revenue receipts for the Federal Government and by extension the sub-national units of government who derive their allocation from the same;

Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), which is the amount of resources that can be raised domestically by the state through taxes and by other state-owned agencies through non-tax sources such as fees and fines and dividends from state-owned enterprises. Most states are introducing incentives and implementing administrative improvement in revenue collection in order to increase the size of their IGR;

Donor assistance (grants) which is the level of donor assistance in the form of grants identified as programmes and projects grants. Early negotiation with donors is important before the policy is finalised.

Section 8:
Gender, Social Inclusion and Conflict Resolution

In Section 2, it was pointed out that one of the characteristics of good policy is that it must be inclusive – and, in line with Nigerian policy commitments, take into account issues such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, poverty, religion, HIV status and other socioeconomic factors.

Key areas where policy needs to take these issues into account are in considering relevant data and information, setting priorities to tackle any inequalities identified, and ensuring meaningful engagement with civil society – particularly socially excluded or marginalised groups – in planning and review of policy.   It is important that the views of women, men, boys and girls generally, and in the marginalised groups relevant to the policy under development, are taken into account.

Another important area is ensuring that policy is developed in such a way that it is conflict-sensitive; that it does not include elements that will contribute to conflict and that it makes efforts to address issues that may contribute to conflict, such as poverty and limited access to education, employment opportunities and health care.

Mainstreaming G&SI Issues

The following steps are recommended as guidance to ensure that G&SI issues are included in the policy.

Situation analysis: Ensure there has been a thorough analysis of the current situation in terms of needs of the population including socially excluded groups. It is important to look at data and information, as well as engaging with diverse stakeholders to do this. Data should be disaggregated by a range of social factors where possible and appropriate for the policy – for example, education information by sex, age, and LGEA; or health information by sex, age and local LGA. As noted in Section 2 on sources of information/evidence, it is important not to rely on state-level average outcomes. Using information by LGA or LGEA whenever it is available will help policy makers identify where need is most acute so they can be targeted with additional resources and possibly targets until they improve.

Policy formulation/design: Make efforts to ensure the representation and active participation of both women and men from the range of stakeholders described in Section 5 in the policy formulation process. When consulting with representatives of communities, it is important to be aware that they do not generally have a single viewpoint on policy issues. Consultations and participatory needs assessment should provide opportunities (sometimes in separate sessions for men and women) for different groups to express their views, as local political or religious leaders, mothers, fathers, children and young people may all have different views, for example about the quality or content of education in   a local area or the opportunities for young people or women to access employment, grants or education. It is also important to consider wider diversity and need, which may be different depending on the state or area in relation to factors such as religion or ethnicity. Ensure policy objectives and KPIs address the G&SI issues identified in the situation analysis and consultation processes.

Evaluation: As part of more in-depth evaluation processes, it is important both to consider the impact the policy has had on inequalities in relation to gender and other issues such as age, ethnicity and poverty, and also to meaningfully involve members of socially excluded communities in evaluation. Ensure a gender balance of staff on evaluation teams and that the team includes skills to assess equalities issues. Ensure that assessing the impact on equalities issues is included in the evaluation Terms of Reference. Evaluation should consider improvements in relation to gender issues such as

changes in the balance of women's and men's   access to resources and decision making, discriminatory attitudes against women, women's empowerment and sensitisation of men to the need to strengthen gender equality. Evaluation should also explore wider social inclusion issues such as inequalities based on ethnicity, religion, poverty and rural isolation.

Appraisal: Identify whether policy implementation MDAs and organisations have G&SI-sensitive policies and practices, e.g. staff training, human resources and leadership on equalities. Explore whether the strategies or action plans developed from the policies will be G&SI-sensitive in line with policy objectives.

Monitoring: Identify, monitor, analyse and report on G&SI-sensitive outputs and outcomes. These will depend on the policy area but could include, for example:

- Gender-related issues, such as sex disaggregated indicators for workforce issues; service/ programme uptake such as education rates at all levels; infrastructure development (e.g. toilets for girls and boys in schools; women's prayer rooms in government offices); gender-based violence (e.g. incidence and prosecution); and agriculture grants for women;
- Wider social inclusion issues, including, for example, whether there are improved outcomes across a range of indicators in the LGAs with the worst outcomes (and if it is not currently possible to assess this, make plans to put in place improved data systems); improved access to education and health services for slums, rural areas or migrant populations; roads built to isolated rural areas and resulting improved local economies.

Ensure that representatives of socially excluded communities have input through a range of approaches for M&E of policies, programmes and services, through mechanisms such as service charters, complaints procedures and consultation.

Criteria for G&SI-sensitive policies[8]

Content

- **Context and justification:** G&SI issues are highlighted in introduction/situation analysis; rights-based international agreements and federal and state policies are referred to; relevant key equalities-related indicators are analysed (e.g. population, education, health, poverty – disaggregated by sex, LGA, other social factors);
- **Goals, objectives, indicators, activities:** These reflect G&SI inequalities issues identified in the introduction/situation analysis and address the needs of men, women, girls, boys and other priority groups as required;
- **Target beneficiaries:** Socially excluded groups Male/Female (M/F), LGAs with poor outcomes are targeted based on need and evidence of effectiveness; infrastructure needs of priority groups (e.g. girls in school, people who are physically challenged) are taken into account;
- **Implementation:** Implementers have the skills to deliver G&SI-sensitive services; socially excluded groups are involved in implementation;
- **M&E:** M&E includes a focus on equalities issues;
- **Risks:** G&SI issues are taken into account in risk assessment and mitigations identified;
- **Budget:** Where there is a budget, financial inputs reflect G&SI-related indicators.

[8] A full self-assessment for stakeholders to use to determine whether policies and plans are G&SI sensitive is available.

Process

- **Data and evidence:** Data disaggregated by sex and other social factors (e.g. LGA), participatory needs assessment and evidence of effectiveness inform planning;
- **Partnership and engagement:** Partnerships are in place with MDAs, professional bodies, representatives of civil society, development partners, etc. to contribute to reductions in inequalities; M/F representatives of socially excluded groups are meaningfully involved in needs assessment, planning and M&E;
- **Leadership:** Champions for G&SI equalities issues are identified in the plan;
- **Resources and capability:** Planners and reviewers have capacity to input on G&SI issues;
- **Communication:** Plans are in place for effective communication with partners on G&SI; there is a plan for documentation and dissemination of results to a range of audiences;
- **M&E:** Members of socially excluded groups are meaningfully involved in M&E.

Implementation: Ensure appropriate participation of both sexes as well as marginalised or socially excluded groups in programme implementation. Ensure that the participation of women does not merely increase their workload, but means their active involvement in decision making. Ensure (e.g. through advocacy and community awareness-raising) that men understand the reason for this and support it.

Conflict Resolution/Sensitivity

Policy needs to be sensitive to past, current and potential future conflict dynamics. There should be clear identification of the relationship between policy provision and the context in which the policy interventions are to be delivered. For example, what is the potential for the intervention to exacerbate conflict tensions in the community where it is being implemented? What are the conflict dynamics that may negatively impact the implementation of the intervention? How can measures to reduce inequalities based on factors such as poverty, rural isolation, religion or ethnicity most effectively contribute to longer term prevention of conflict?

Guide to ensure that policy is sensitive to conflict areas and issues

1. Does the policy align with the wider commitments to sustainable development and 'do no harm' principles enshrined in the national constitution and international conventions to which Nigeria is a signatory?
2. Is information available on existing and potential future conflicts: for example, causes; when conflict could get worse or better such as time of day, season, during elections, or during religious festivals; and is this relevant to the policy and, if so, has it been catered for in the policy?
3. Does the policy seek to transform social and other institutions that perpetuate inequality (both gender-based and other socially excluded groups)?
4. Have socially excluded groups (e.g. women, rural people, older people, people living with HIV/AIDS, people who are physically challenged) been involved in the consultation process during the policy-making process?
5. Have local representatives been consulted to ensure greater local community buy-in?
6. Are there opportunities for information-sharing and feedback for aggrieved communities?

Section 9:
Policy Review

It was suggested in Section 5 that policy making was best understood not as a linear process, from identification of issues through policy options to changes on the ground, but as a more circular process involving continuous learning, adaptation and improvement with policy changing in response to implementation and vice versa. It is therefore important to establish effective policy review processes. Policy review is a complex process and a separate manual has been prepared for this. What follows are highlights of key areas that should be kept on the radar for successful policy implementation.

Policy review consists of two separate but interdependent processes of Monitoring and Evaluation – abbreviated as M&E. The outputs of monitoring are a direct input to evaluation. It is difficult to evaluate projects for which basic monitoring aspects such as input, cost and output recording are not available or inadequate.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a simple and continuous process. It is about collecting accurate and timely information to help manage an activity, project or programme effectively. Monitoring enables management to identify and assess potential problems and success of a programme or project. It provides the basis for corrective actions to improve policy implementation and obtain quality results. As noted in previous sections (e.g. Section 5) it will be important to ensure that there are adequate indicators to allow for an assessment of whether inequalities issues are being addressed. Most states will have a fully-fledged M&E Department. All requirements for policy monitoring should be referred to these departments.

Evaluation

Evaluation generates data for improved policy analysis and suggestions for making the policy programmes more effective. Evaluation has a crucial role in assessing whether policies have actually met their intended objectives. To be effective, policy making must be a learning process which involves finding out from experience what is working and what is not working and making the necessary adjustments thereafter. Good evaluation should be systematic, analytical, study actual effects and judge success. The following 10 steps are suggested as a guide to undertaking evaluation:

Step 1: Planning an evaluation – policies to be evaluated must be prioritised on the basis of importance, openness to influence and adequacy of information. It is important to decide what questions the evaluation will address and who should undertake it.

Step 2: Scope and purpose – establish whether the evaluation is to both identify successes (for replication) and to address weaknesses that need to be strengthened or assess the overall success of the policy with a view to continuing, expanding or abandoning it.

Step 3: Revisit the rationale, aims and objectives – go back to original policy to determine what was intended through objectives, targets, KPIs.

Step 4: Measures and indicators – use the measures and KPIs in the policy design to assess efficiency and effectiveness of policy in order to arrive at the value for money of the policy.

Step 5: Comparison to baseline – compare existing achievements with baseline data to establish what would have happened if the policy had not been implemented. Do the 'before' and 'after' comparisons.

Step 6: Assumptions – extract these from the policy design or formulate based on comparing policy objectives and outcomes, policy outcomes and public expectations.

Step 7: Side effects and distribution effects – identify effects beyond those originally envisaged for the policy outcome.

Step 8: Analysis – both quantitative and qualitative processes will be important. The chief measure is net additional value. A cost/benefit analysis will be an important tool to use. It is important both to integrate assessment of equalities achievements and challenges throughout the report, and also to pull out a specific section that looks at G&SI issues.

Step 9: Evaluation outcome – prepare recommendations such as continuation, modification, succession or termination of approaches and KPIs. Some form of sensitivity analysis, i.e. who will gain or lose, will be important.

Step 10: Presentation and dissemination of results – document and submit report to senior managers as well as in different formats to a range of other audiences, including the public.

Annex 1:
Glossary

Activity: Activities are the things that have to be done in order to bring inputs together to make outputs. In some contexts these are referred to as 'projects'. Examples of 'activities' could include: development of a data base; building a school; recruiting staff; providing training; and procuring equipment.

Arrow and pillar approach: A method of policy development where the arrow is a high-level goal and the pillars are the supporting programmes needed to achieve that goal.

Budget Call Circular: The Circular sent out by the central planning or budget Ministry each year, ideally around July, giving guidance on the annual budget process, and providing MDA budget ceilings based upon fiscal projections and policy direction.

Capital-recurrent ratio: The ratio of capital expenditure to recurrent expenditure.

Conflict sensitivity: Conflict sensitivity means the ability to understand the context in which the plan operates; understanding the interaction between plan intervention and the context and acting upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

Cost/benefit analysis: The process of comparing the costs involved in doing something to the advantage or profit that it may bring.

Economic code: The code in the budget document and Chart of Accounts referring to a separate type of expenditure by input.

Equality: Ensuring equality of opportunity between women and men, or socially excluded groups and the rest of society, so that all have equal rights and entitlements to human, social, economic and cultural development and an equal voice in civic and political life.

Equity: The exercise of rights and entitlements leading to outcomes that are fair and just (for example, ramps for buildings so that people with mobility problems can enter; pictorial signs for people who are unable to read; maternity leave for pregnant women).

Executive: That part of a government that is responsible for making certain that laws and decisions are put into action.

Fiscal projection: This is a projection over a defined medium-term period of the expected financial resources that will be available to a government unit (state government for example). It will normally be based upon assumptions and estimates of key fiscal elements, including the assumed oil price and production volume, the level of taxation, the level of inflation and projection of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Gender: Socially defined roles for men and women, girls and boys. This can vary widely based on differences in social norms, from area to area, region to region and country to country. Examples: women should/should not be able to choose paid employment; men can/cannot change a baby's diaper.

Gross Domestic Product: The total value of goods and services produced in a country (or part of a country) in a year.

High-level goal: A high-level objective or goal that exists at the level of the parent organisation, in this case for the state government. It describes a key result over the longer term towards which all combined activities and efforts should be aiming.

Inputs: These are what are needed to create outputs. If a road is an output, it needs the inputs of labour, planning, finance, materials and equipment to build it.

Legislature: The group of people in a country or part of a country who have the power to make and change laws.

Medium-Term Sector Strategy (MTSS): This sets out specific inputs and activities for a particular vote or small cluster of vote heads, to deliver specific outputs in the medium term (three years) and within the limitations of resource constraints so that it is realistic.

Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs): This is a collective term covering ministries, non-ministerial agencies, and the departments within them. Each will normally have a separate budget vote functional code.

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF): This describes the outline division of planned expenditures over a medium term, all within the confines of projected known financial resource constraints.

Outcome: An outcome is a result that contributes to the achievement of a goal. It must contain reference to a measure of improvement in some aspect of business related to the goals of government. For example, fewer people suffering from diseases is an outcome. The result or effect of an activity, particularly insofar as it affects people.

Output: Something tangible and measurable produced by an activity or project, particularly a physical object or a physical measure of some activity (e.g. the number of training courses carried out).

Policy: A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual. Policy making is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver 'Outcomes' – desired change in the real world. Policy can take a range of different forms, including non-intervention, regulation, for instance by licensing, or the encouragement of voluntary change, as well as direct public service provision.

Programme: A defined collection of inputs and activities, resulting in one or more outputs. It will normally include inputs under all of the three major budget groupings of personnel, overheads and capital.

Project: A piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a set period and intended to achieve a particular aim.

Sector: A sector describes a discrete area of government business under which key outcomes are defined, normally at the Vote Head Ministry level, but it may include the work and outputs of more than one vote head category. So for example, education outcomes might be contributed to by Ministries of Education, Science and Technology, and perhaps even Women Affairs.

Social exclusion: A process whereby certain individuals or groups are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating in economic, social and cultural life, because of factors such as poverty, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, location (e.g. slum or rural dweller), HIV status, marital status, mental health, physical or mental disability.

Social inclusion: Process to ensure that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion have the resources to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live.

Stakeholders: People such as employees, customers or citizens or bodies such as NGOs, CBOs, MDAs, private sector organisations, development partners, unions or academic institutions, with an investment, share or interest in something such as an organisation, project, or society, who therefore have responsibilities towards it, and benefit from it.

State Plan: An approved public document outlining a state's overarching policy position and the outcomes that the government expects these policies will deliver. The document describes how this will be done within the limitations of resource constraints, so that it is realistic. Also called a State Development Plan.

Strategy: A detailed plan for achieving objectives in situations such as politics, business, industry, war or sport, or the skill of planning for such situations. A statement about how policy outcomes and goals are to be achieved.

Vision: An aspirational description of what an organisation, in this case the state, would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. It is intended to serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action.

Vote Head: Ministries and agencies that are designated a main budget code number under which other MDAs are listed.

Annex 2:
Checklist for Assessing the Process Followed in Preparing the Policy and the Quality of the Content of the Policy

Policy Process Standards

☑ **Objectives and outcomes:** The key issues have been adequately defined and properly framed. It is clear how the high-level policy goals of the state government as a whole will be achieved.

☑ **Ideas and evidence:** The policy process has been informed by evidence that is high quality, reliable, disaggregated by sex and a range of other social factors and up to date. An account has been taken of evaluations of previous policies. There has been an opportunity for thinking. Policy makers have sought out and analysed ideas and experience from other states and regions with similar characteristics.

☑ **Design:** Policy makers have rigorously tested or assessed whether the policy is realistic in terms of service delivery involving implementers and/or end users. Have policy makers addressed common implementation problems? Is the design resilient to adaptation by implementers?

☑ **External engagement:** Those affected by the policy – particularly women and other socially excluded groups – have been meaningfully engaged in the process. Policy makers have identified and responded reasonably to their views.

☑ **Appraisal:** Have the policy options been robustly assessed? They are cost-effective over the policy time period. They are resilient to changes in the external environment. The risks have been identified and weighed fairly against potential benefits as well as mitigation outlined.

☑ **Roles and accountabilities:** The policy makers have judged the appropriate level of ExCo, SHoA and MDA involvement. It is clear who is responsible for what, who will hold who to account, by when and how.

☑ **Feedback and evaluation:** There is a realistic plan for obtaining timely feedback on how the policy is being realised in practice. The policy allows for regular, systematic effective evaluation, even if state government is not doing it.

Policy Content Standards

☑ **Forward looking:** takes a long-term view, based on statistical trends and informed predictions, of the likely impact of policy. It sets out SMART objectives and includes realistic approaches to achieving them.

☑ **Outward looking:** takes account of factors in the national and regional situation and communicates policy effectively.

☑ **Innovative and creative:** where necessary, it questions established ways of dealing with things and encourages new ideas; open to comments and the suggestions of others.

☑ **Evidence-based:** uses best available evidence from a wide range of sources and involves key stakeholders at an early stage.

☑ **Inclusive/equitable/conflict-sensitive:** takes account of the needs of all those directly or indirectly affected by the policy, including men and women, girls and boys including among marginalised groups. The policy aims to reduce inequalities and avoid and prevent conflict.

☑ **Joined up:** takes a holistic view – looking beyond organisational boundaries to the state's strategic objectives and seeks to establish legitimacy for the policy.

☑ **Realistic and feasible:** stakeholders believe that it will be implemented as intended and is within the state's capability in terms of budgets.

☑ **Evaluates:** builds systemic M&E of outcomes into the policy process.

☑ **Reviews:** sets out a regular schedule of review to ensure it continues to deal with the problems it was designed to tackle, taking account of associated effects elsewhere.

☑ **Learns lessons:** learns from experience of what works and what does not work.

For more detailed criteria dealing specifically with G&SI content and process issues, see Section 5.