POLICY BRIEF

Presented by: Denis Kioko, Policy & Advocacy Adviser
Venue: Panari Hotel
Date: 29th January 2020
Types of Policy Briefs

It is a document produced with the intention to engage and influence informed, non-specialist policy makers towards a certain policy agenda.

**Advocacy Policy Brief**
- Argues in favour of a particular course of action

**Objective Policy Brief**
- Gives balanced information for policy maker to make up his or her mind
Policy Briefs seeks to address

1. **Absence of policies**, laws or budgets;
2. **Harmful or inadequate policies**, laws and budgets;
3. **Inadequate implementation** of existing policies, laws and budgets;
4. **Incoherent policies and laws,**
What a Policy brief should contain

- **Be short and to the point.** It should focus on a particular problem or issue. Do not go into all the details. Instead, provide enough information for the reader to understand the issue and come to a decision.

- **Be based on firm evidence,** not just one or two experiments or a single year’s experience. It should draw evidence from various sources – preferably from several different areas or organizations.

- **Focus on meanings, not methods.** Readers are interested in what you found and what you recommend. They do not need to know the details of your methodology.

- **Relate to the big picture.** The policy brief may build on context-specific findings, but it should draw conclusions that are more generally applicable.
# Policy Brief Agreed Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layout</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Title</td>
<td>keep it snappy, short and informative</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Executive Summary</td>
<td>Two to three sentences summing up the entire brief. Use recognisable buzzwords and emphasise the relevance of the research to policy to draw the policy actor’s attention to read on. Ask yourself, “What are the main points you want policymakers to get – even if they read nothing else?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Context and framing</td>
<td>Explain the policy issue and why it is particularly important or current. Put the research into context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Methods, Approaches and Results/Body</td>
<td>Present the research/project findings in an accessible way for a non-specialist. A policy actor wants to see robust results that are repeatable or corroborated by others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Policy Implications</td>
<td>Write strategic policy alternatives you have identified to fix the Identified issues.</td>
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<td>5. Gaps</td>
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Use the Right Language

Make the language clear, simple and easy to understand. Avoid Academic or Development jargons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original report</th>
<th>Policy Brief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The project distinguished between agronomic, vegetative, structural and management measures.”</td>
<td>There are four ways to conserve soil and water:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <strong>By changing cropping practices:</strong> For example, by planting crops along the contour.</td>
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<td>- <strong>By planting trees and grass:</strong> For example, by planting grass strips to slow down runoff.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <strong>By building earth or stone barriers</strong> such as terraces or drains to divert water.</td>
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<td>- <strong>By improved management</strong> – such as ploughing at different times of year.</td>
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Framing and Context

It does four things:
- It grabs the reader’s attention
- It introduces the topic
- It says why it is important
- It tells the reader why he/she should do something about it

Here is one way to structure the introduction:

- **The problem** (What is the problem? Why is it important?)
- **Background, context** (What happens, where, who is involved?)
- **Causes of current situation** (Why? Give evidence or examples.)
- **Effects of current situation** (What effects does it have? Give evidence or examples.)
Policy implications

Here is where you focus on the policy options and implications. Some items to consider including:

- **Suggested revisions in policy.** What are the various options?
- **Effects of the revised policy or policies.** How will the policy changes improve the situation? Give evidence or examples if possible.
- **Advantages and disadvantages of each policy option.** What are the potential benefits? What will it cost? What side-effects might there be?
- If you have not given the recommendations at the beginning of the policy brief, you can put them here.
The Masthead

- The masthead goes at the top of the first page. It shows the title of the policy brief series, the issue number and date, and perhaps the organization’s logo.
- If you are writing for an established series, you do not need to worry about this: the publications manager will put your text into the right format and add design elements such as the masthead.
- If your policy brief is a one-off, or the start of a new series, you should design an attractive masthead.
Turning a big report into a Policy Brief

Probably the hardest job is to edit a 300-page report down to 700 words. If you try to edit the text, you may run into two problems:

- It is hard to throw things away
- What remains has no natural flow

When you need to condense a big report into a small policy brief, try to:

- Think of the **big picture**
- Then, write **from scratch**.
Finding the Big Picture

Take a step back and look at the report from a distance, as if through a telescope. Ask yourself:

☐ What problem did the project address?
☐ What did the study try to find out?
☐ What did it find out?

Then, think of your audience:

☐ Who is your policy audience?
☐ What aspects are of interest to policymakers?
☐ What do you want them to do differently?
Progress towards change

Shaping the debate: Issue is introduced to stakeholders/duty bearers

Decision makers have increased knowledge of the problem and the changes proposed (CHANGE IN LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE)

Decision makers express their support for proposed changes (CHANGE IN ATTITUDE)

Decision makers have taken action to bring about proposed changes (CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR)

Objective achieved!
MERCI!

Working for a just world.