Making Sense of Policy Processes
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Related resources:
See the Training Path Policy Learning Programme 2009 for other related resources. Download the Programme Summary for background information and the Overview of the Programme Modules and Sessions for a complete list of resources developed for the Policy Learning Programme 2009. FAO Policy Learning Website: http://www.fao.org/tc/tca/policy-learning/en/

About EASYPol
The EASYPol home page is available at: www.fao.org/easypol
EASYPol is a multilingual repository of freely downloadable resources for policy making in agriculture, rural development and food security. The resources are the results of research and field work by policy experts at FAO. The site is maintained by FAO’s Policy Assistance Support Service, Policy and Programme Development Support Division, FAO.
Learning objectives

To provide ways and means to better make sense of policy processes, through:

- a road map: different stages and elements that influence policy processes
- a discussion on policy analysis
- examples of good and bad practice in policy processes
Outline

- The frequent looks of policy processes
- Making sense of policy processes – A road map
  - Main stages
  - Ex-ante analysis
  - Policy context
  - Policy actors
  - Policy content
  - Policy impact
1. Defining policy process/es

- Working definition:
  “The way policy reforms are planned, designed, implemented and evaluated”

- Many theoretical models to explain policy processes
Professional group of policy makers

Wish it was like this!
The reality of policy processes

In practice *policy processes are complex and messy*
Policy Processes often look like an « amoeba»!

- External Pressures
- STATE
- Interest Group
- Interest Group
- Policy Spaces
- Time
Why are policy processes complex & messy

Because they

- Involve different types of actors
- Are influenced by practice/experimentation, events, learning from mistakes, actors’ networks, etc
- Are shaped by discourses and “narratives”
- Have a highly political character
Making sense of policy processes – Need to

1. Focus on the pathways that lead to decision making, i.e. actors’
   - Political interests
   - Competing discourses
   - Capacities and willingness to articulate and defend their interests
Making sense of policy processes – Need to

2. Define a road map / entry points

* Different stages

- Agenda Setting
- Decision making
  (Defining objectives & options)
- Implementation
- Monitoring & Evaluation
Making sense of policy processes – Need to

* Know the elements that influence policy processes

1. Livelihood/Socio-economic assessment
2. Context
3. Actors
4. Content
5. Impacts
Making sense of policy processes – A road map

**Main elements**

1. Livelihood/Socio-economic assessment
2. Context
3. Actors
4. Content
5. Impacts

**Main Stages**

- Agenda setting
- Decision making
- Implementation
- M&E
It is important to ensure “do-no-harm” policies concerning the poor
Livelihood/socio-economic assessment [2/3]

- Opportunity
- Actual beneficiaries
- Constraints
- Groups of potential beneficiaries
Livelihood/socio-economic assessment [3/3]
2. Policy context

- What are the main policies in the relevant sector(s) and sub-sector(s)

- What is the governance context

- What are the main issues, problems, causes and lines of causalities

- What are the opportunities
Example of external ‘bombardment’

**International obligations**
- Biodiversity Convention
- Climate Change Convention
- CITES
- World Heritage Convention
- Phytosanitary Laws
- Intellectual Property Rights
- ILO Convention
- Reporting to CBD, FAO, ITTO

**International targets**
- National Strategy for sustainable development by 2000 (CBD)
- Target 2000 for sustainable forestry (ITTO)
- Implement NFPs applying all relevant IPF proposals for Action (IPF)

**Market conditions**
- WTO/GATT rules
- WWF Buyers Groups
- Carbon offset markets

**Money flows**
- $ Aid programmes
- $ Timber markets
- $ Carbon markets
- $ New markets
- $ Foreign direct investment
- $ Multi national corporation conditions

Source: Mayers and Bass, 1999
3. Policy actors

- Who they are – Stakeholder analysis
- Their Networks
3. Actors – Policy spaces

Three types of policy spaces

- Closed spaces
- Invited Spaces
- Claimed/Created Spaces

At local, national and international levels
3. Actors - Dealing with Power Issues

Three Forms of Power

- Visible / Formal
- Hidden / Set the agenda
- Invisible / shapes ideologies and attitudes
3. Actors: The Power Cube

![Power Cube Diagram]

**PLACES**
- Global
- National
- Local

**SPACES**
- Closed/uninvited
- Invited
- Claimed/created

**POWER**
- Invisible
- Hidden
- Visible
Two very important types of actors

- ‘Communities of practice’
- ‘Street level bureaucrats’
4. Policy Content

- *Policy discourses* (crisis, business as usual, breakthrough)
- *Policy Narratives* = Conventional wisdom stories
- Importance of *evidence-based policy through*
  - Research
  - Projects
  - *Space for exchange of experience*
5. Policy impacts – « What »

- Environment
- Economy
- Social

Implications for livelihood / socio economic conditions

Back to where we started
5. Policy impacts – « How »

Impact on Processes such as

- Performance
- Capacities
5. Impact - Use

Linking policy lessons and policy action requires institutional incentives:

- Downward accountability
- Learning process

Participatory M&E is a good way to achieve this
Conclusion

- Processes affect policy outputs, outcomes and impact
- Policy processes are complex and messy
- Therefore, need a road map to address policy processes: i.e. the main stages of and elements that influence policy processes
- Professional, evidence-based and multi-stakeholder policy analysis is important to define sound policy objectives and instruments