

**Policy options** should address a key, modifiable driver or **root cause** of an identified policy problem. You should start with a broad range of policy options, and narrow these down to two or three options that you will analyze thoroughly. From your initial list of options, you can eliminate any that are clearly inferior to other options across the relevant decision criteria.

## Describing options

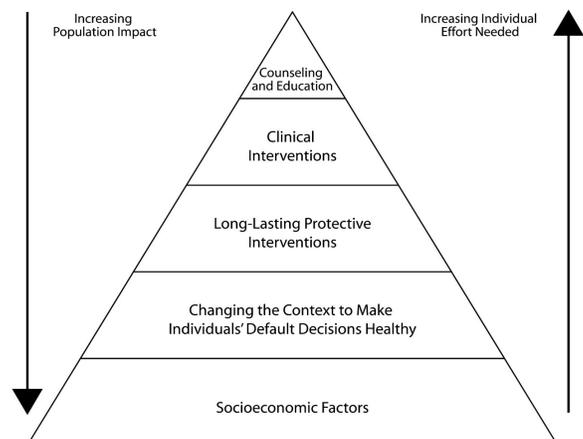
For each of the options you will analyze, you should first describe the key characteristics of the policy, including:

- **Type of policy:** Are you proposing to pass a law, issue new regulations or guidelines, allocate resources to a new program or activity, create a new incentive, or change a process/procedure? All of these are types of policies you can consider.
- **Authority:** What organization has the authority to decide and enact the policy?
- **Implementation:** How will the policy be implemented and operationalized? Who will be responsible?
- **History:** What is the history behind this policy that you need to be aware of?

## Policy analysis

After describing your policy options, you will analyze them across five dimensions: health impact, budgetary impact, economic impact, political feasibility and operational feasibility.

1. **Health impact:** You can use the CDC Health Impact Pyramid to guide your thinking about health impact. Interventions at the top of the pyramid, such as behavior change campaigns, tend to be easier to implement, but have less population impact because they depend on individuals changing their behavior. Interventions lower on the pyramid, such as those that alter the context (for example by taxing unhealthy products), are likely to have more population impact, but are harder to implement.<sup>1</sup> You should identify causal evidence of the impact of your proposed policy, ideally from rigorous impact evaluation studies in relevant contexts. In the economic evaluation component of the program, you will also estimate the potential health impact of each option through modeling.



2. **Budgetary impact** considers the costs of the policy, as well as any revenue or cost savings that could be generated. For example, a vaccination program could have upfront costs, but could be cost-saving in the long run due to illnesses averted. On the other hand, a program could be cost-effective, but still be unaffordable to the government due to its high cost. You will analyze costs in depth during the economic evaluation component of the program.
3. **Economic impact** brings together health impact and budgetary impact to assess the value of the policy option relative to the status quo and other options. In addition to analyzing overall costs and benefits, it is important to consider how costs and benefits will be distributed, and assess implications for equity. You should also consider the timeline for costs and benefits. Assessing economic impact will be the focus of the economic evaluation component of the program.
4. **Political feasibility** refers to the degree of public and organizational support (or opposition) you can expect for each policy option. Consider current political forces, alignment with the overall policy agenda, stakeholder positions and influence, and potential social or cultural perspectives that could be important in shaping support or opposition.
5. **Operational feasibility** refers to the ease of policy implementation. You should consider the resources and time needed to implement the policy, transferability and scalability, the incentives of those responsible for implementation, and the steps you would need to take to operationalize the policy.

<sup>1</sup>Frieden T. R. (2010). A framework for public health action: the health impact pyramid. American journal of public health, 100(4), 590–595. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2009.185652>

## Identifying evidence for policy options

When identifying evidence on the impact of policies or programs, you should look for high-quality evidence from similar or relevant contexts. Ideally, look for evidence from systematic reviews or randomized controlled trials. For each study, you should assess:

- **Internal validity:** Was the study designed and executed in a way that ensures high-quality causal evidence?
- **External validity:** Can the results be generalized to your context?

Potential resources for identifying and assessing policy options:

- [Cochrane Reviews](#)
- [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation Repository](#)
- [Health Evidence](#)
- [Health Systems Evidence](#)
- [Disease Control Priorities \(DCP3\)](#)
- [WHO Package of Essential NCD Interventions](#)
- [WHO NCD Tools](#)
- [The Center for Global Development](#)
- [Global Health Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Registry](#)