

We will start
at 2 p.m.

Producing a Policy Brief: Why and How?

Webinar | June 19, 2019

Teleconference:

1-866-827-6872
Code: 2566408 #

Florence Morestin
National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy



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for Healthy Public Policy

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Presenter

Florence Morestin

Scientific Advisor

NCCHPP



With the assistance of **Mylène Maguire** (NCCHPP):
organization and technical support



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To ask questions during the presentation

Please use the chatbox at any time.

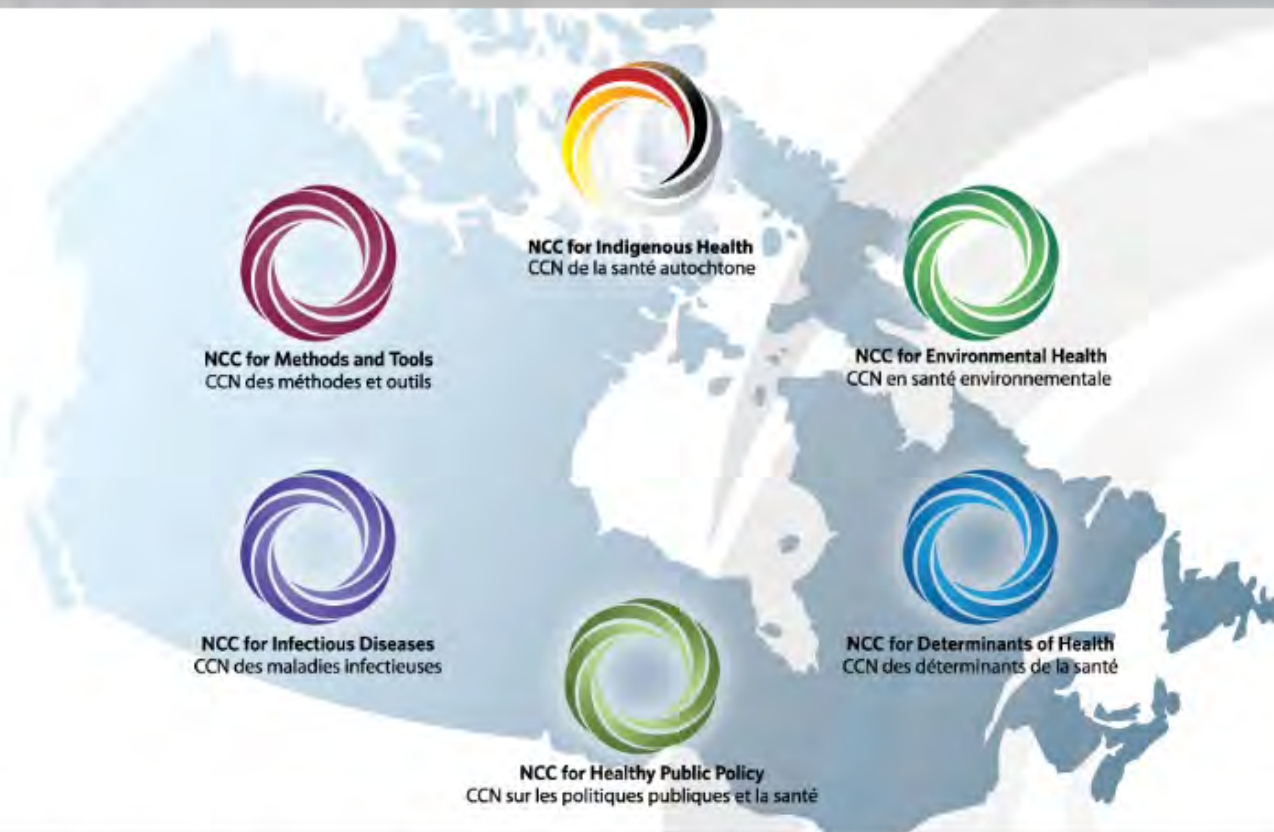




National Collaborating Centres for Public Health



Centres de collaboration nationale en santé publique



National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP)

Our mandate

- Support public health actors in their efforts to promote healthy public policies.

Our areas of expertise

- The effects of public policies on health
- Methods for contextualizing evidence on policies
- Actors and mechanisms for intersectoral collaboration
- Strategies for influencing policy making



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Declaration of real or potential conflicts of interest

Presenter: Florence Morestin



I have no real or potential conflict of interest related to the material that is being presented today



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Why policy briefs?

Popular as a way to share knowledge with policy makers



**Evidence
drawn from research**

Effectiveness?



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Why policy briefs?

Literature review by Caroline Tessier (INSPQ)

Criteria for writing effective policy briefs?



46 documents identified

Relevant guides to support writing?



26 resources identified

This webinar:

- Overview of the literature review
- And other tips on how to produce a PB



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Objectives of the webinar

After the webinar, you will be able to:

- Understand the **potential** and the **limits** of policy briefs for sharing knowledge
- **Plan the production** of a policy brief in a way that maximizes its relevance for the intended audience
- Make an **informed choice** from among possible **content elements** and **formats** for a policy brief



What exactly is our focus here?



Policy paths for tackling climate change

STRONGER ACTION NEEDED TO MEET MITIGATION GOALS

- More needs to be done to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions if the goal is to below 2°C.
- Stronger action at the global, national and local levels is needed, but progress and highlight shortcomings.
- Carbon markets need continued reforms to make them work more effectively.
- Investment and other policy approaches can do more to promote investment in low-carbon technologies.
- Non-energy emissions must also be increasingly targeted, for example, aviation and shipping.

What's the issue?

The world is now almost certainly facing a rise in global temperatures due to human activities. To limit this increase to 2°C or less above pre-industrial levels, stronger action is needed now to cut emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), with the aim of reaching zero net emissions by 2100. The long-term nature of this challenge may tempt countries to delay – or continue to delay – taking action. That would be a mistake. Because CO₂ lingers in the atmosphere for centuries or even longer, the sooner we curb emissions, the better our chances of limiting the temperature rise.

"Countries are running out of time to make the policy adjustments needed to meet their targets and keep alive the long-term goal of limiting the temperature rise to 2°C," according to OECD Environment Director Simon Upton. "Governments need to construct a policy pathway that will lead to zero net carbon emissions by the end of the century."

Energy – which includes power generation and transport – typically accounts for more than 70% of emissions in OECD countries. That makes it a priority area for action. But other areas, too, must contribute to reducing emissions, including agriculture, forestry, industry, transport and waste. In particular, protecting forests not only reduces emissions but also helps to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.



Fighting climate change will require political will and lifestyle changes.

www.oecd.org/policy-briefs

Why is this important?

There are reasons cutting emissions made in delinking each unit of GDP from emissions. This proves that it is not irreconcilable. Lowering carbon emissions can still account across OECD and other countries. However, aggressive action is needed to curb the rise in temperature. If we do not act, it will not be possible to reach the 1.5°C target.

What should be done?

There is no single magic bullet. Many of the current groups under joint action at the global level – and robust second is carbon price. The third is the development of energy efficient in regulate emission.

Take action globally. COP21 climate change. More than 150 countries reducing GHG emissions to meet their targets.

PROJET HERBE À POUX 2007-2010

Le succès d'une communauté mobilisée



Réduire le pollen de l'herbe à poux : mission réaliste

Le pollen de l'herbe à poux est très allergène. Il est la cause de la moitié de tous les cas d'allergies aux pollens rapportés en Amérique du Nord. Près de 18 % de la population québécoise âgée de 5 ans et plus souffre d'allergie au pollen de l'herbe à poux (rhinite, conjonctivite, aggravation de l'asthme, fatigue, perte de productivité, etc.). En 2005, les coûts de cette allergie pour notre société étaient de 156 à 240 millions de dollars par année. L'augmentation des gaz à effet de serre et les nouvelles conditions climatiques entraînent l'allongement des saisons polliniques et l'accroissement des concentrations de pollen d'herbe à poux. Ces répercussions laissent croire que la population allergique sera en augmentation au cours des prochaines décennies.

LE PROJET HERBE À POUX 2007-2010

Des mesures de contrôle de l'herbe à poux et de son pollen existent depuis un bon moment. Ce qui n'était pas connu avant aujourd'hui, c'est l'impact sur la qualité de vie des personnes allergiques de la gestion concertée de l'herbe à poux appliquée à l'échelle d'une municipalité.

En 2007, la Table québécoise sur l'herbe à poux (TQHP) a mis en place le Projet Herbe à poux 2007-2010 dans la Ville de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. Le projet a pris la forme d'un plan d'actions concertées dont l'hypothèse était que la mise en place de mesures de contrôle par une mobilisation d'acteurs ciblés entraînerait une diminution de la densité des plants, une baisse de la concentration de pollen et ainsi une réduction des symptômes de l'allergie.

La Ville de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, le Centre de santé et de services sociaux du Surbit ainsi que Crivert, un organisme environnemental, se sont associés pour former un comité de mobilisation de la communauté à l'égard de plans d'actions concertées. D'importants partenaires visés par la gestion de l'herbe à poux se sont également joints à ce trio, dont le ministère des Transports du Québec, l'Union des producteurs agricoles, Hydro-Québec, la Société Vélo Berga ainsi que la Commission scolaire de la Vallée-des-Tisserands.

UNE ÉVALUATION RIGOREUSE

Pour évaluer l'impact de cette lutte sur la qualité de vie des personnes allergiques, une équipe de recherche composée de la Direction de santé publique de la Montérégie et d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada a collecté des données sur l'application des mesures de contrôle de l'herbe à poux par les acteurs locaux, mobilisés pendant trois étés à Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. De plus, des données sur les densités de plants, les concentrations de pollen et les symptômes d'allergie chez plus de 400 adultes allergiques ont été collectées, de 2007 à 2010, à Salaberry-de-Valleyfield et dans une ville témoin (intervention minimale pour le contrôle de l'herbe à poux).



THE DATA

Drug use and drug overdoses continue to be a critical public health issue across the United States. Drug overdose is now the leading cause of injury death.¹ While the rate of drug use is lower in rural areas than in urban areas, the fatal overdose rate in rural areas continues to rise. In 2015, the rural overdose death rate has been higher than the urban rate since 2006.²

This policy brief is a companion to CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, *Illicit Drug Use, Illicit Drug Use Disorders, and Drug Overdose Deaths in Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan areas* — United States but will focus on opioid use and overdose in rural America. The brief will explore policy options and other strategies that may help prevent opioid overdoses and reduce overdose death in rural areas. The brief also includes three case studies that present examples from the field.

ISSUE OVERVIEW

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While there is promising evidence on the effectiveness of these types of policies and strategies in preventing and treating opioid use disorder and opioid overdoses,^{5,6} more information is needed to understand how to effectively target rural populations and reduce rural opioid overdose deaths.

Policy options and other strategies for addressing factors affecting opioid overdoses in rural areas include:

- Increasing adherence to evidence-based prescribing practices
- Expanding access to medication-assisted treatment
- Increasing the availability of overdose reversing drugs such as naloxone



Internal PB = working document



What exactly is our focus here?

Some names for this kind of document

"A rose is a rose is a rose"
(Gertrude Stein)

faits saillants
note de politique
résumé de recherche
note de breffage
note technique
note d'information

summary of findings
briefing note
research summary
policy brief
research snapshot
evidence brief
briefing paper
evidence summary



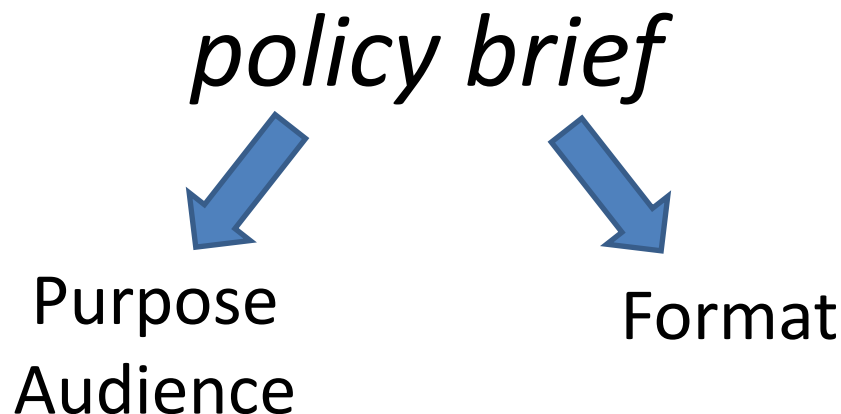
What exactly is our focus here?

The characteristics

(Tessier, in press)

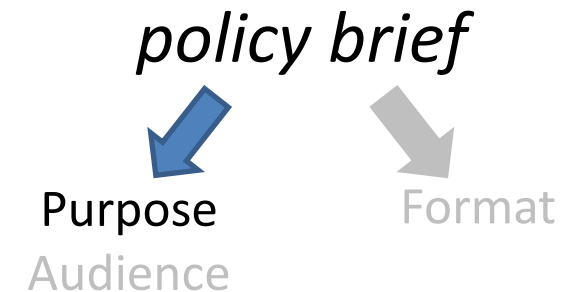
Diversity of content and format

Revisiting the term:



Purpose of the policy brief

Variable: its content



Common: its purpose

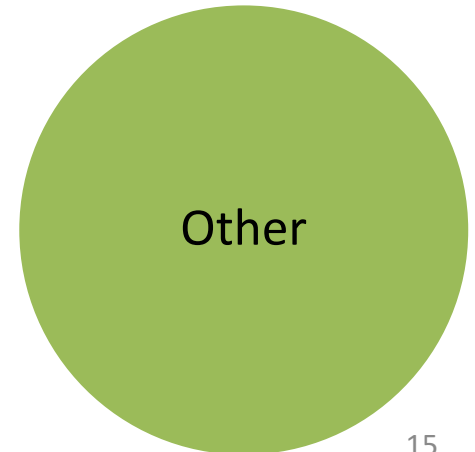
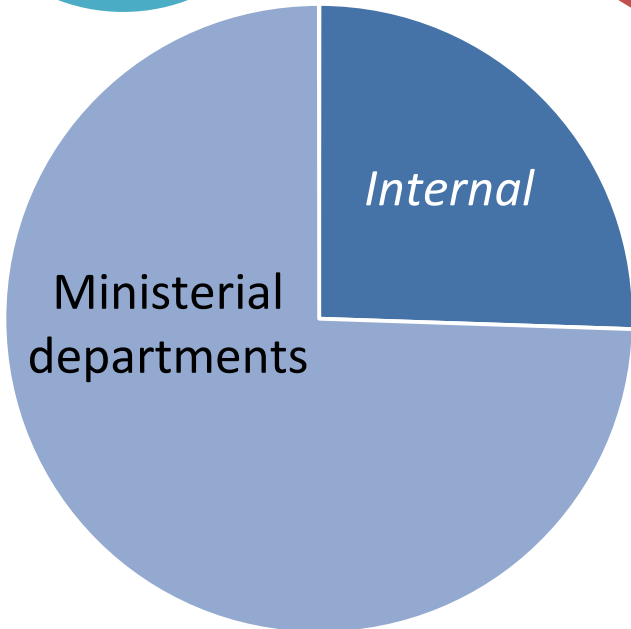
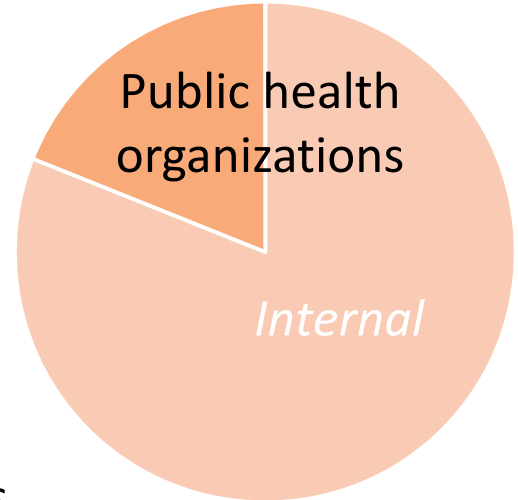
- **Concretely** orient policy action
- **Inform decision making** related to the selection, development, adoption or implementation of a public policy



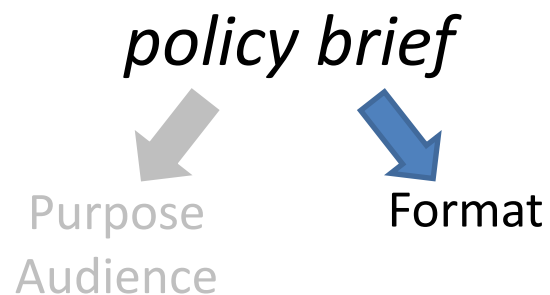
policy brief



Intended audience of **your** policy briefs



Format



Poll

In your opinion, what is the **ideal length** of a policy brief?



Image: © 123rf.com/profile_melpomen

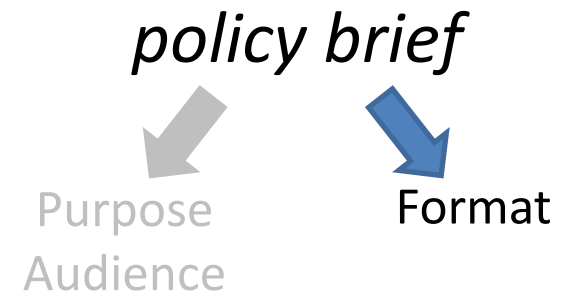


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Format

Lack of time = major barrier



Suggested norms depending on target audience:

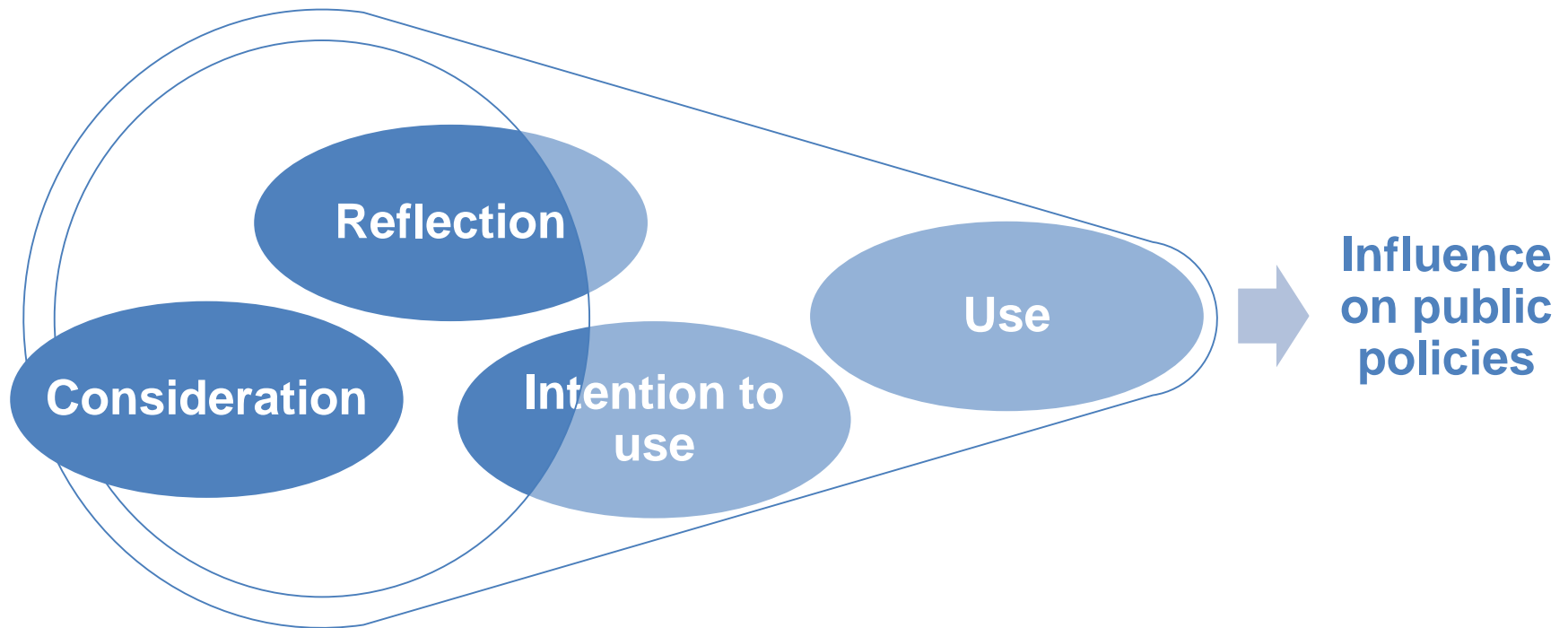
Subject matter or information processing specialists	Non-specialists
< 6 pages	2 to 4 pages

The PB does **not** contain **everything**;
it is intended to spark a **dialogue**



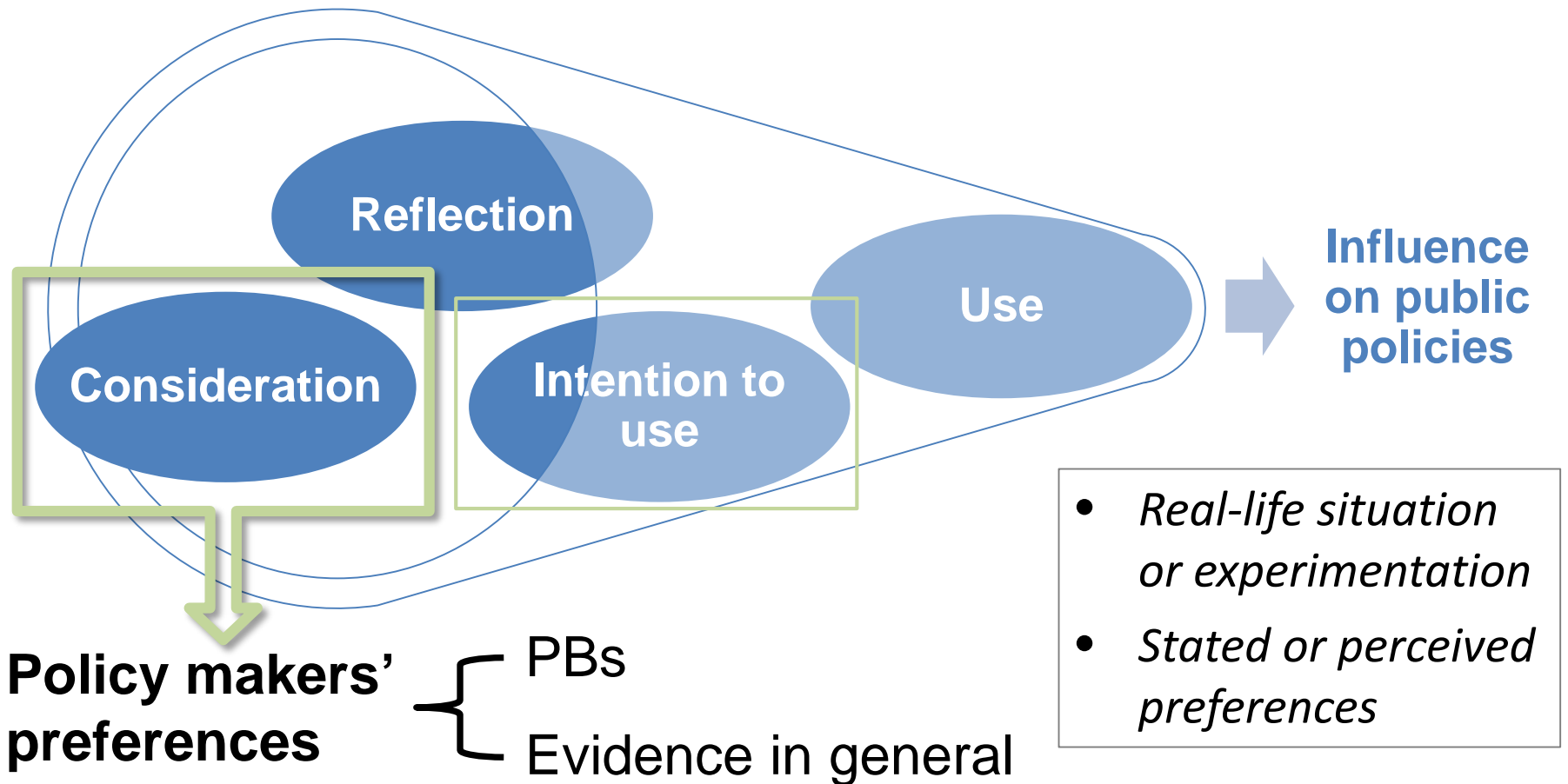
Are policy briefs effective?

What do we mean by "effective"?



Are policy briefs effective?

- Frequently used, rarely evaluated
- Tessier (in press), studies found:



Are policy briefs effective?

Are these data **generalizable**?

- Influence of context and subject (Moat et al., 2013)
- PB = a **tool** within a knowledge-sharing **strategy**
⇒ Effectiveness of the strategy?



Should we produce policy briefs?

Mainly **YES** according to the evidence,
which also indicates **trends**
in policy makers' preferences



Image:

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BUT:

- Realistic expectations about outcomes
- Essential to **analyze your context**

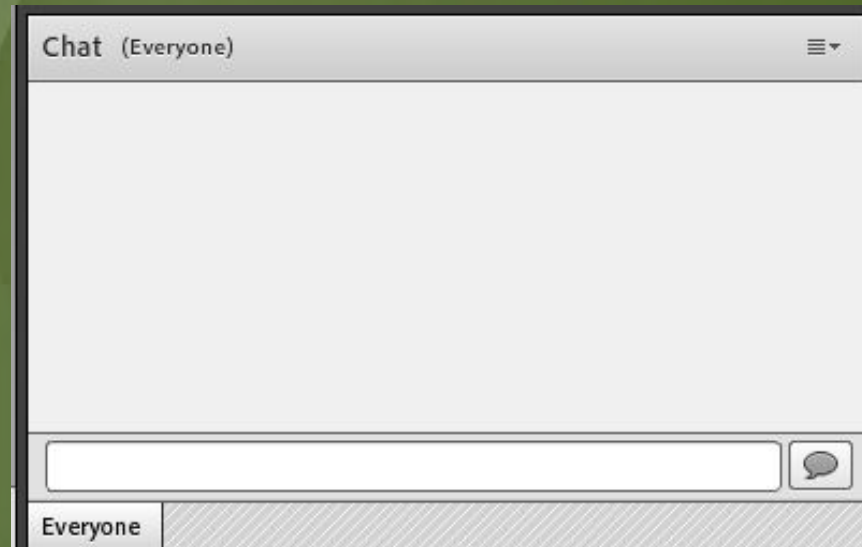


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Questions?

Please use the chatbox

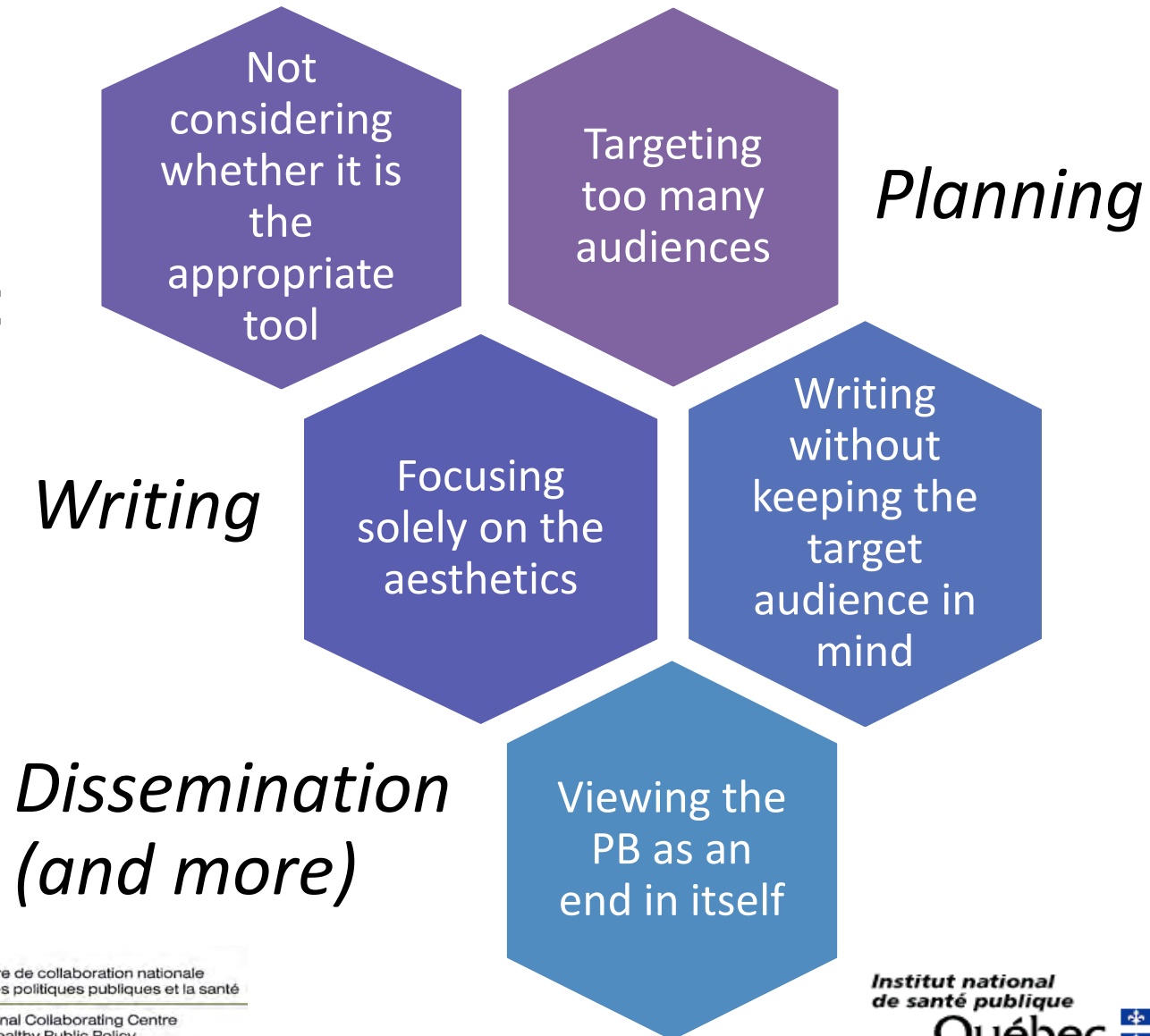


Next:
Producing
a PB



Producing a policy brief

While avoiding common mistakes:



Planning

Consider how the PB fits into the overall context of your **knowledge-sharing strategy**

Who is your intended audience?

Internal /external audience / multiple audiences



Mapping of actors



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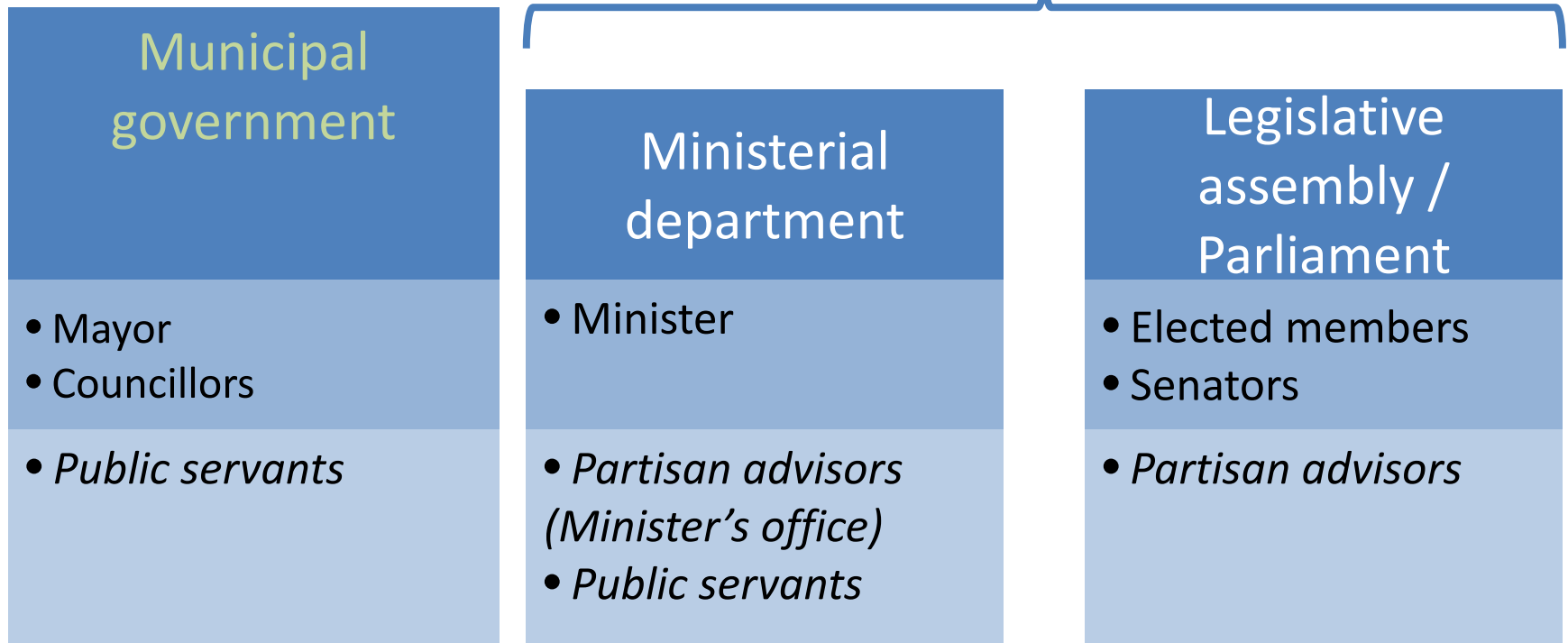
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Identify the relevant policy makers

Levels of government:

Federal

Provincial - territorial



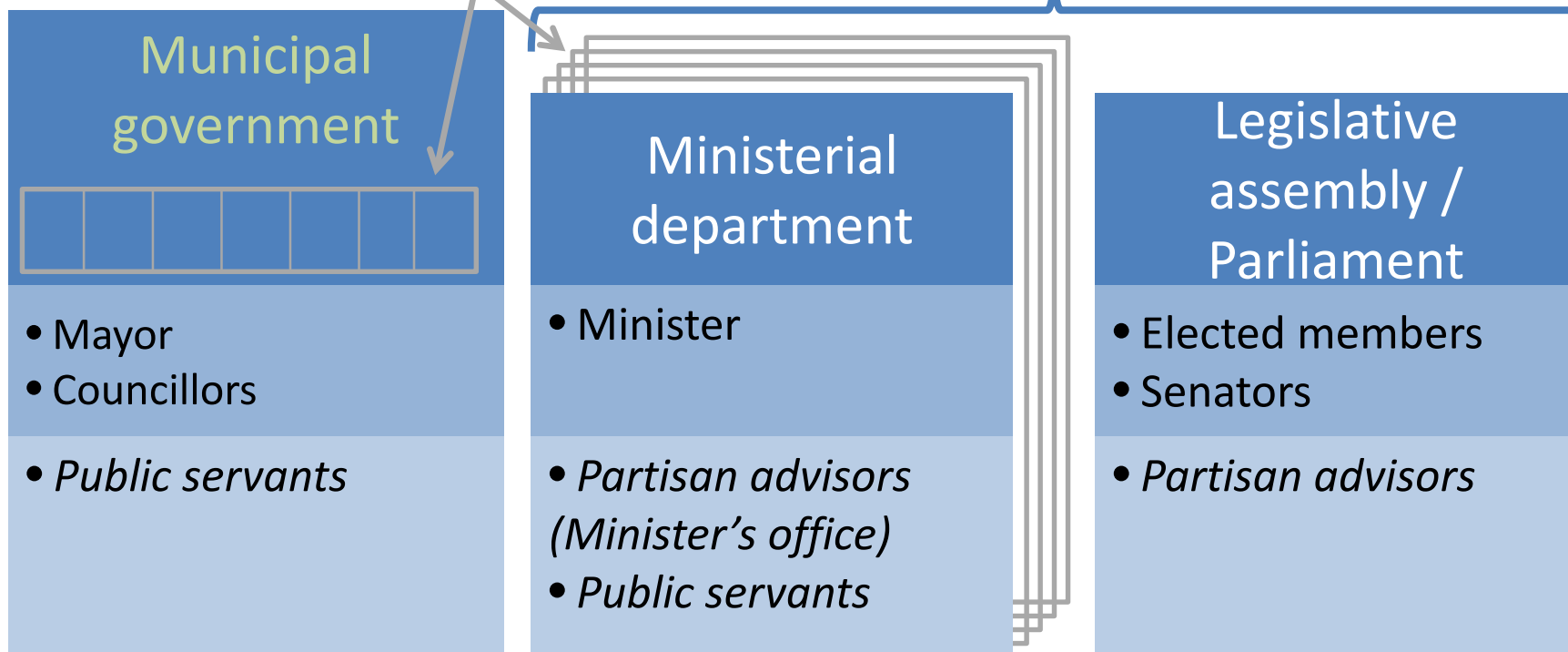
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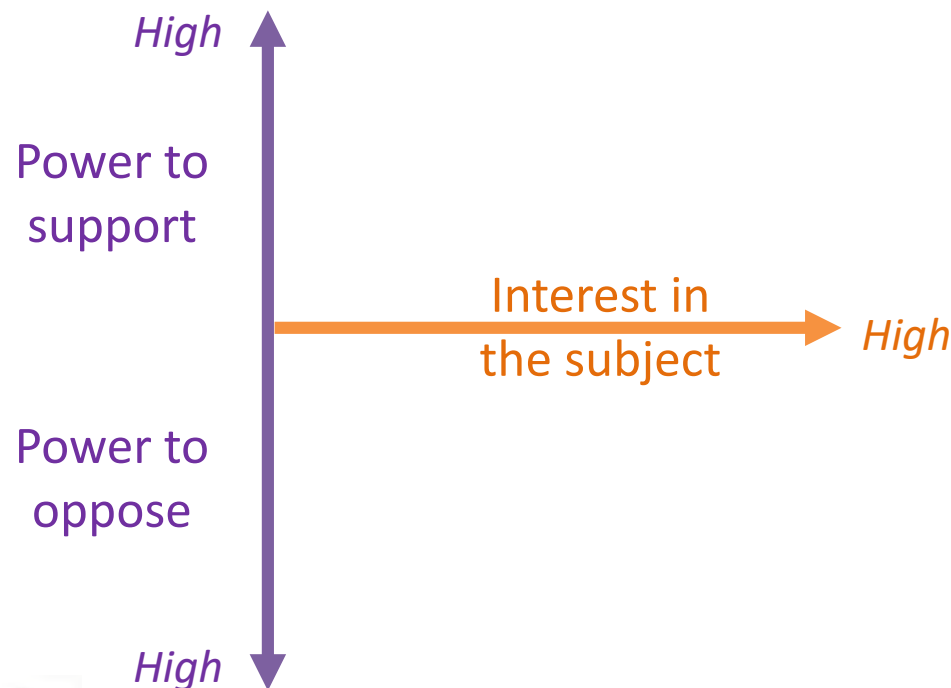
Government sectors



Complete the mapping

See the NCCHPP's Guide for developing a knowledge-sharing plan (Morestin & working group, 2013)

- Checklist for categories of actors
- Interest /power matrix (adapted from Start & Hovland, 2004)



Planning – Choose the target audience(s)

- From among all the actors
- Distinguish between **primary** and secondary audiences
- Criteria:

Relevance, power, accessibility...

Including: to
your objective



Planning – Identify the best way to address your primary audience(s)

- Analyze their information needs / preferences
(see Morestin & working group, 2013)

- **Is a PB the right tool?**

Different tools
for different
audiences?

“I need a short summary so that I can understand the gist of the report and explain it to my boss. I need the long version so that I can fully understand the research and verify its accuracy based on my own knowledge.”

Legislative advisor, United States
(Soriano & Baugh, 2002, p. 267)

- **Different versions of the PB** for different audiences?



Planning - With whom?

A collective process is more efficient

- Your **team**
- Consult the **primary audiences**



Image:

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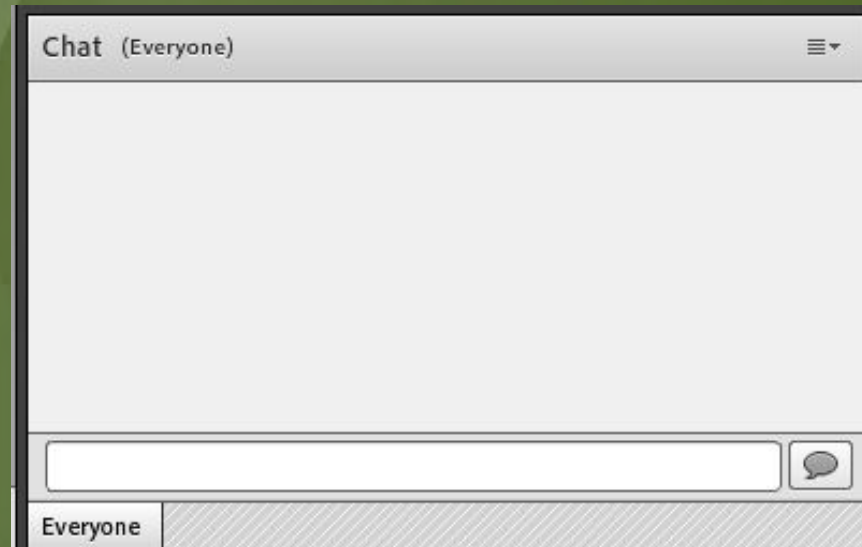


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Questions?

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Next:
Writing
choices



“Writing” – The visual aspect

Bulleted lists



- More needs to be done to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions if the goal is to limit global warming to below 2°C.
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Fighting climate change will require political will and lifestyle changes.

www.oecd.org/policy-briefs

Illustrations

Uncluttered layout

PROJET HERBE À POUX 2007-2010

Le succès d'une communauté mobilisée

Réduire le pollen de l'herbe à poux : mission réaliste

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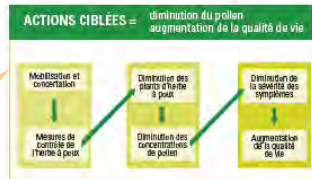
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Tables and/or graphics



Numerous subtitles

THE DATA

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- Expanding access to medication-assisted treatment
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Text boxes

Communication professionals?

Writing – The main components

(Tessier, in press)

The written **content** is what matters most

S
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- Title
- Highlights or summary
- Context
- Results and implications
 - Summary of the evidence
 - Policy options or recommendations
- References



Writing – Summary of the evidence

Not just a short version of your report

- Focus on **one** aspect of the subject under study?

*Reminder: the PB does **not** contain **everything**; it is intended to spark a **dialogue***

- Adopt the **reader's** perspective:
What does the evidence mean for someone in that position?
⇒ Analysis of the intended audience



Writing – Summary of the evidence

Should we describe **research methods**?

Poll



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Writing – Summary of the evidence

Should we describe **research methods**?

- It depends on the **intended audience**
 - on how much they **trust** you
 - on the **subject**
- } (Moat et al., 2013)
- Limit details
 - Focus on **implications for the evidence presented**: +/- certainty, contradictory evidence, etc.
 - Facilitate **interpretation**



Writing – Policy options / recommendations

- **Based on the evidence**
- Specific and concrete
- Formulated with the context and the reader in mind
- Ideally, summarize the advantages and disadvantages of the policy options:
 - Known / potential **effects**
 - **Applicability**: costs, acceptability (divergences?)...

Complementary data?



Writing – The debates

Neutral
PBs

Interventionist PBs

(Dagenais & Ridde, 2018)

- Should we put forward **one** favoured policy option?
- How far to go to persuade?
 - Stories
 - Framing (Cairney, 2019)



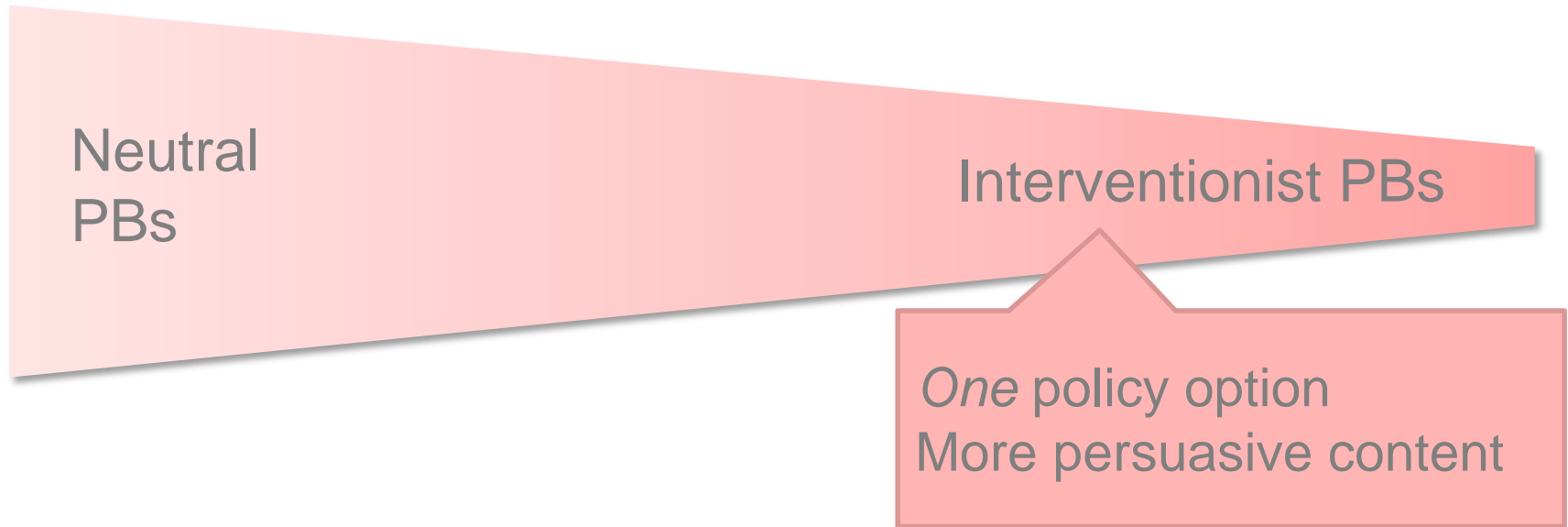
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Saving Women's Lives
Using what works to increase mammograms in Missouri

SITEMAN CANCER CENTER
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES
The Forum for America's Ideas

"I felt a small lump on my left breast and hoped it would go away. But it didn't. It was easy to put off having a mammogram. I worked for a small, family-owned business that didn't provide health insurance. I made too much money to qualify for 'low-income' programs, but not enough to pay for a mammogram."

Writing – The debates



Debate

Interventionist PBs:
arguments for and against



Writing – Ways to move beyond the debates

The **policy makers'** perspective

Areas of consensus (Tessier, in press):

Draw attention to a specific problem

Provide a clear interpretation of the results

Describe the actions to be taken

Do not make recommendations based on mixed results

Limit the number of policy options proposed

- **Trust** in the producers of the PB increases the desire to receive explicit recommendations (Moat et al., 2013)



Writing – Ways to move beyond the debates

Your perspective

- Case by case:
 - Strength of the evidence
 - The situation within your context; expectations of your target audience
- Are you comfortable with your choice and its potential consequences?
- Generally: **organizational** decision



Life after the policy brief

- For broad dissemination or a limited readership?
- Starting point for dialogue
- **If** the evidence is taken up: transformation by political circles into a brief according to **their** definition (format, language, etc.) of one (Morestin, 2017)
 - Participate in this process?
- Long term: re-disseminate PB when windows of opportunity occur, when the actors change, etc. (Tessier, in press)



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Selected resources

Young & Quinn
(2017)



28 pages

- **(Planning)**
- **Writing**
- **(Dissemination)**

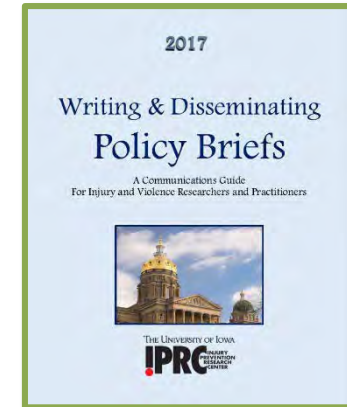
FAO (2011)



29 pages (Chapter 4.1)

- **Writing**

Injury Prevention
Research Center
(2017)



32 pages

- **Planning**
- **Writing**
- **Dissemination**

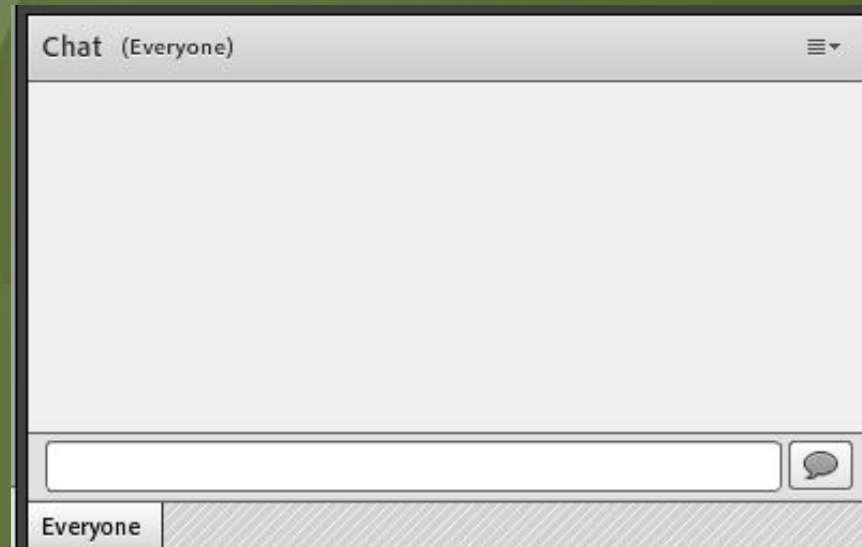


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Questions?

Please use the chatbox



Links to the PBs presented

- **Climate change:**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015). *Policy paths for tackling climate change – Stronger action needed to meet mitigation goals*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.oecd.org/policy-briefs/policy-paths-for-tackling-climate-change.pdf>

- **Ragweed:**

Direction de santé publique de la Montérégie, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec (2011). *Réduire le pollen de l'herbe à poux : mission réaliste - Le succès d'une communauté mobilisée*. Retrieved from:

<http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2011/11-244-01.pdf>

- **Opioids:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n. d.). *Preventing opioid overdoses in rural America*.

Retrieved from:

https://www.cdc.gov/ruralhealth/drug-overdose/pdf/Policy-Brief_Opioid-Overdoses-H.pdf

- **Mammography:**

See the *Supplementary data* section of the article below

Brownson, R. C., Dodson, E. A., Stamatakis, K. A., Casey, C. M., Elliott, M. B. & Luke, D. A. (2011). Communicating evidence-based information on cancer prevention to state-level policymakers. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 103(4), 306-316. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djq529>



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- Dagenais, C. & Ridde, V. (2018). *Les notes de politiques : retour sur notre expérience autour d'un outil de transfert des connaissances pour les décideurs et intervenants*. Retrieved from: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01681939>
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