

## Verbal Description of Policy Analysis/Assessment Chart

### Prelude:

Throughout this whole process you must keep a few things in mind, and any of these may need to be revisited at any point, depending on when you figure out something is not clear. Do not get stuck with details and do not be afraid to stop everything and pull out the focus on these items. You will save time and energy in the long run.

These items are depicted in the circle in the middle:

- a. Is there a clear holistic goal/vision/mission/desired outcome?
- b. Is the Whole defined, is it manageable? Can you even identify it? Do you need to break it down into smaller sections for these purposes and reform as a larger Whole at some point in the future?
- c. Are there multiple layers of decision-makers that need to be defined and included at different points?

Also, you will need support of various people at various points in time, especially if you are changing policy. How will you begin the campaign of support and education, at what point do you bring in which stakeholders/policymakers/kingmakers/general masses?

### Now, the chart...

1. What is the policy that is proposed? Keep in mind that the word “policy” means, according to Miriam-Webster:

*1 a : prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs b : management or procedure based primarily on material interest*

*2 a : a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions b : a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body*

With that definition, we often think of 2.b. as policy relates to government, and larger operations with land and natural resource policy. The other elements to consider are the ‘policies’ of a business, of a ranch or farm, organization, school board, even family unit. Be aware of the multiple applications of this procedure.

You can apply this format to basic decisions as well, since most things are done as if (a) preventing a problem or (b) addressing an existing problem (‘proactive’ or ‘reactive’). *Very* few decisions are made outside of these scenarios.

So, be clear on the proposed or existing policy. However, you may only know that you have a problem and have no policy in place/proposed yet. Go to Number 2.

2. Since we are either (a) preventing a problem or (b) addressing an existing problem – what is that problem/‘issue’?

You will put on a different thought pattern depending on whether this is a direct natural resource issue or not. If the issue is *directly* related to natural resources, go to the right. If

it is *not directly* natural resources, or if it is a mixture of social, economic and natural resources, go to the left.

3. To the right... Go through the Structured Natural Resource Diagnosis, as presented by the holistic management processes and Allan Savory.

If you go through the Diagnosis and you can see that you are not addressing the underlying cause, then the policy is probably not sound. It may be necessary to enact given the current situation, however, in which case you act, but look for alternatives down the road. Continue down the chart.

4. To the left... What is the intent of the policy? Use Root Cause Analysis exercises. There are a number of RCA tools. I find that if you are struggling with finding the underlying cause using one tool, then switch tools. Do this as much as you need to. Other tools include: Drill Down, Simple Appreciation, Cause and Effect/Fishbone Diagrams, Mind Maps, others. The “Root Cause” will tend to be one’s decision-making processes, so identify the *underlying cause* in this situation.

If there are any natural resource elements and it makes sense under the given situation, use the Structured Diagnosis.

If you go through these diagnoses and you can see that you are not addressing the underlying cause, then the policy is probably not sound. It may be necessary to enact given the current situation, however. Continue down the chart.

5. You are at the box in the chart that says, Deep Reflection - Sound Policy? Spend time alone. An hour to a few hours. Take the approach that the buck stops with you. Reflect. If you decide that the policy is sound, then continue to the right – create a skeletal structure of the policy as if you were the only one responsible.

Remember, It is still not a given that the policy is sound, for you have only looked through a couple of windows. Go through the rest of the testing questions listed: Biological weak link, marginal reaction, logjam and financial weak link, Energy/Money Source and Use, Society and Culture.

If it passes, then you may have a sound policy. You must Strategize how to continue your educational campaign, generate support and awareness, and most critically – define how you will monitor progress/deviation and discuss how you will control for deviations.

*If it doesn't pass, or if you decided it was not sound after the Root Cause Analysis/Structured Natural Resource Diagnosis, then you must head to the left of the chart.*

6. The block of questions and things to think about on the left are fairly self-explanatory. You have to revisit many of the things in the circle at the top of the chart. I suggest elements with the Whole Under Management are particularly critical, as well as the Root Cause Analysis/intent of the policy.

Be creative, Double check everything. How will you monitor?