Writing the Policy Options Section

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- **Summarize effective interventions, accounting for all aspects of feasibility**
- **Visually display the options in a way that clearly makes the case for one option over others**
- **Evaluate policy option sections within briefs**

Elements of the Policy Options Section

Review – Policy Analysis Table

Criteria	Public Health Impact	Feasibility (Political)	Feasibility (Operational)	Budgetary Impact	Economic Impact
Scoring Definition	**Low:** small reach, effect size, and impact on disparate populations **Medium:** small reach with large effect size or large reach with small effect size **High:** large reach, effect size, and impact on disparate populations	**Low:** No/small likelihood of being enacted **Medium:** Moderate likelihood of being enacted **High:** High likelihood of being enacted	**Low:** No/small likelihood of being enacted **Medium:** Moderate likelihood of being enacted **High:** High likelihood of being enacted	**Less favorable:** High costs to implement **Favorable:** Moderate costs to implement **More favorable:** Low costs to implement	**Less favorable:** costs are high relative to benefits **Favorable:** costs are moderate relative to benefits (benefits justify costs) **More favorable:** costs are low relative to benefits
Policy 1	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Policy 2	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Policy 3	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High

Policy Options – Key Elements

- **Reframe the public health problem to be addressed**
- **Demonstrate impact of suggested interventions**
  - Public health, economic, and budgetary
- **Discuss their operational and political feasibility**
- **Utilize stakeholder analysis and country context to determine relative importance of the criteria from the policy analysis table**

Policy Options – Outline

- **Summarize the overall objective of the policy options**
- **Review the options**
  - Describe the interventions
  - Mention why each intervention is being considered
  - The budgetary, economic, and public health impact
    - Number/proportion reached (e.g. who receive intervention)
    - Number/proportion affected (e.g. lives saved, cases averted)
    - Costs (e.g. programmatic implementation costs)
    - Economic impact (e.g. cost to government per life saved)
  - The operational and political feasibility

Case Study Example

Helmet Law Case Study: Policy Options

Motorcycle Helmets Not Hats 2

What are the options?

In order to reduce ongoing deaths and serious head injuries, we must increase the use of certified motorcycle helmets, meeting crash testing standards and labeled with a certificate of authenticity. Policy options include increased enforcement, government subsidies to offset the increased cost of certified helmets, and public education campaigns.

1. **Increased police enforcement:**
   - **What:** Implement random police check points for certified helmets. Levy fines of $10 USD (equivalent of those levied for not wearing a helmet and ~80% of monthly income) on passengers who do not wear certified helmets.
   - **Why:** The existing helmet law has relied heavily on police enforcement and high fines for its success in ensuring that >90% of riders wear helmets.
   - **Feasibility:** Medium. This would be a new type of enforcement and would require additional training for officers and potentially more manpower. However, it builds on the existing infrastructure of random police check points for drunk driving.
2. **Government subsidy for certified helmets:**
   - **What:** Ministry of Transport provides a $4 mail-in rebate for the purchase of a certified helmet.
   - **Why:** Certified helmets currently costs $10-15 compared to $2-3 for uncertified helmets. This would bring the costs closer, reducing the incentive to purchase uncertified helmets.
   - **Feasibility:** Low. The Government of Vietnam has no prior experience running similar types of programs, potentially leading to delayed payments and compromising the success of the policy.
3. **Public education campaign for certified helmets:**
   - **What:** Create a campaign to educate the public on the dangers of wearing non-certified helmets that will play on TV, radio and in newspapers.
   - **Why:** Dangers of certified helmets not currently understood by the public.
   - **Feasibility:** High. This builds on the MOH's significant experience conducting campaigns around the original passage of the law.

Police enforcement is the most cost-effective option

*Results from Cu Chi District**

	Enforcement	Subsidy	Campaign
Expected number of motorcycle riders who switch to certified helmets	8,740,813	14,568,021	2,913,604
Estimated lives saved annually	629	1,049	210
Estimated cost to the VN Government	$10,400,000	$116,480,000	$13,000,000
Cost / life saved	$16,525	$111,050	$61,970

**National data extrapolated from a study in Cu Chi district (population ~333,822), assuming Vietnam population of 92,500,000*

Motorcycle Helmets Not Hats 3

Both police enforcement and an education campaign are feasible

	Enforcement	Subsidy	Campaign
Political feasibility*			
Operational feasibility			

Highly feasible | Somewhat feasible | Not very feasible

*Feasibility determined by standardized policy review, stakeholder interviews, and budgetary analysis led by the Institute of Public Health.

Recommendations and next steps

Increasing police enforcement of wearing certified helmets is both feasible and cost-effective. In order to implement this strategy, a compromise on the exact number and required salary for policy hires must be reached with the Ministry of the Interior. The police officer training guide and implementation plan must also be reviewed and approved by the Ministries of Interior, Health, and Transport.

The Institute of Public will work closely with all stakeholders (Ministries of Transport, Health, and Interior, and Transport; the World Health Organization, and the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation) to develop evidence-based training materials for police enforcement of a standardized motorcycle helmet law, the implementation plan for enforcement, and public relations materials to inform the public.

Fines for police enforcements will have the highest public health impact per dollar invested. A supported implementation plan and agreed upon budget will be essential for success.

Summarize Overall Objectives

In order to reduce ongoing deaths and serious head injuries, we must increase the use of certified motorcycle helmets, meeting crash testing standards and labeled with a certificate of authenticity. Policy options include increased enforcement, government subsidies to offset the increased cost of certified helmets, and public education campaigns.

Review Policy Options
Option 1: Increased Police Enforcement

- **What:** Implement random police check points for certified helmets. Levy fines of $10 USD (equivalent of those levied for not wearing a helmet and ~80% of monthly income) on passengers who do not wear certified helmets.
- **Why:** The existing helmet law has relied heavily on police enforcement and high fines for its success in ensuring that >90% of riders wear helmets.
- **Feasibility:** Medium. This would be a new type of enforcement and would require additional training for officers and potentially more manpower. However, it builds on the existing infrastructure of random police check points for drunk driving.

Review Policy Options

Option 2: Government subsidy for certified helmets

- **What:** Ministry of Transport provides a $4 mail-in rebate for the purchase of a certified helmet.
- **Why:** Certified helmets currently costs $10-15 compared to $2-3 for uncertified helmets. This would bring the costs closer, reducing the incentive to purchase uncertified helmets.
- **Feasibility:** Low. The Government of Vietnam has no prior experience running similar types of programs, potentially leading to delayed payments and compromising the success of the policy.

Review Policy Options

Option 3: Public education campaign for certified helmets

- **What:** Create a campaign to educate the public on the dangers of wearing non-certified helmets that will play on TV, radio and in newspapers.
- **Why:** Benefits of certified helmets not currently understood by the public.
- **Feasibility:** High. This builds on the MOH's significant experience conducting campaigns around the original passage of the law.

Economic Evaluation

Police enforcement is the most cost-effective option

*Results from Cu Chi District**

	Enforcement	Subsidy	Campaign
Expected number of motorcycle riders who switch to certified helmets	8,740,813	14,568,021	2,913,604
Estimated lives saved annually	629	1,049	210
Estimated cost to the VN Government	$10,400,000	$116,480,000	$13,000,000
Cost / life saved	$16,525	$111,050	$61,970

*National data extrapolated from a study in Cu Chi district (population ~355,822), assuming Vietnam population of 92,500,000

Feasibility Evaluation

Both police enforcement and an education campaign are feasible

	Enforcement	Subsidy	Campaign
Political feasibility*			
Operational feasibility			

Highly feasible Somewhat feasible Not very feasible

*Feasibility determined by standardized policy review, stakeholder interviews, and budgetary analysis led by the Institute of Public Health.

Policy Options Criteria

Both police enforcement and an education campaign are feasible

	Enforcement	Subsidy	Campaign
Political feasibility*			
Operational feasibility			

Policy Options	• Potential solutions presented and supported by data • No more than three options offered • Policy options clearly described • Options thoroughly evaluated	
	Will the reader be convinced that one or more solutions represent the best path forward?	

Group Exercise

Activity: Read/Review Sample Policy Briefs

- **Refer to the "Policy Briefs" on your flash drive.**
- **Read and discuss the policy options in each of the following:**
  - The Price of Smoking: The Case for Increasing KY's Cigarette Tax
  - Policy brief on improving access to artemisinin-based combination therapies for malaria in Burkina Faso
  - Water and Safe Clinics Policy Brief – Sierra Leone (If time permits)
- **One at a time, please read each brief listed. As you read, think about these questions:**
  - Does the presentation of the policy options meet the criteria listed in the Policy Brief Checklist?
  - Is this a format or approach that might work for your policy options?

Your Work Group Assignment

- **Break into your mentor groups and work on your Policy Options section using the Policy Brief template.**

END