



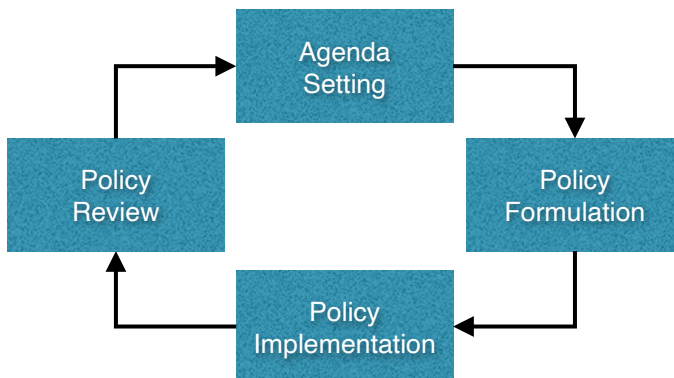
## Evidence-Based Policymaking

### Definition

Evidence-based policymaking (EBP) is a systematic approach that places evidence from research at the center of policy development and implementation. It advocates a more rational and rigorous method to ensure policymakers make well-informed decisions about policies.

### Policy Cycle

The policymaking cycle consists of 4 stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy review:



1. The problem is identified, research is reviewed or conducted, and the agenda is set
2. Options and strategies are developed and negotiated, and policies developed
3. Policies are enforced
4. Policies are reported, monitored, and evaluated

### Evidence

The evidence used to inform policies should be research-based collected through systematic processes, from a wide variety of sources, bringing together global and local evidence. Using global evidence, such as studies and systematic reviews, provides insight from settings around the world and is the best starting point to evaluate the different ways to approach and address problems. Including local evidence allows the policy process to become more relevant and consider local factors and conditions. Examples include local routine data, survey data, and data from one-off studies.

### Evidence and Policy Cycle

At each stage of the policy cycle evidence can play an important role in influencing the policymaking process, as follows:

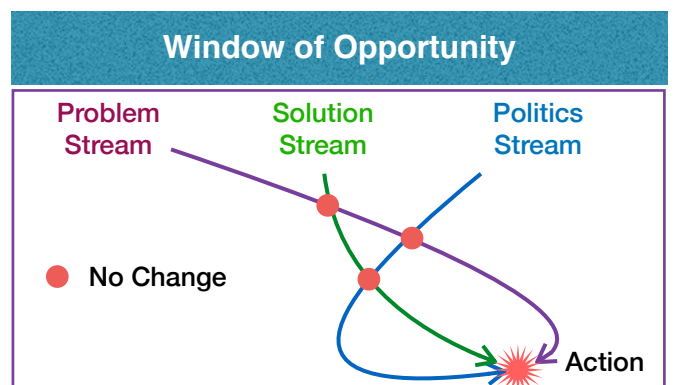
1. **Agenda setting:** evidence is used to identify new problems and to convey their severity. The evidence must be credible
2. **Policy formulation:** the evidence is used so policymakers acquire an understanding of the situation and options for solving the problem
3. **Policy implementation:** operational and practical evidence is provided to demonstrate the applicability and effectiveness of the policy
4. **Policy review:** to ensure an effective monitoring and evaluation process, the evidence used should be objective, thorough, relevant, communicated

### Narrowing the Gap

Researchers and policymakers think in different ways; researchers are analytic and take their time to reach conclusions while policymakers are pragmatic and keen to take timely decisions. Researchers know little about policymaking and so do policymakers about research; a result attributed to the scare communication between them. Policymakers should appreciate that research evidence can contribute to policies with a dramatic impact on people's lives. Similarly, researchers should be able to identify and take advantage of windows of opportunity related to policymaking.

### Windows of Opportunity

Policy processes rarely follow a linear or logical path. They are influenced by external factors such as context, available resources, and the interests of the parties involved. Therefore, researchers must take advantage of windows of opportunity which are short periods in which a problem is recognized, a solution is available, and the political climate for policy change is positive. If researchers adopt a long-term vision to help guide the policy process they will be able to take advantage of these policy windows.



## Reading Material

- Sutcliffe S. and Court J. A *Toolkit for Progressive Policymakers in Developing Countries*. ODI. 2006
- *Helping researchers become policy entrepreneurs*. ODI. 2009
- *Health in all policies*. WHO. 2015
- Jones H. *A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy preference*. ODI. 2011

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### ABC of Governance

aims at

creating an awareness of issues related to health governance;

providing a core of knowledge that is practice-based;

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## Influencing Policymaking

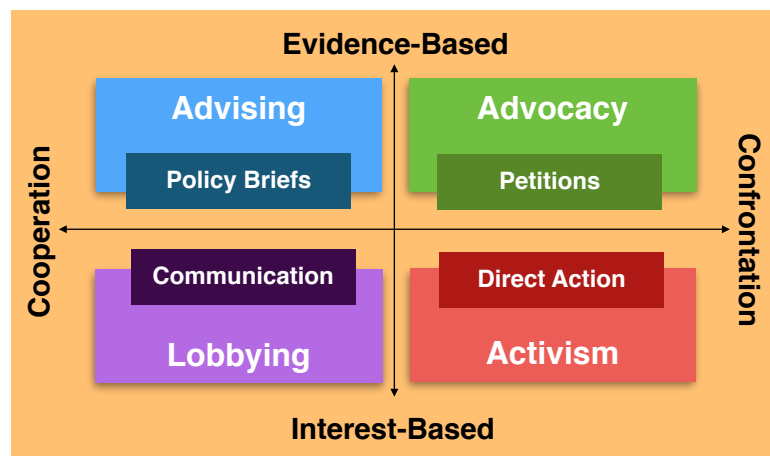
### Influencing Objectives

There are five main objectives that researchers can pursue when trying to influence the EBP process and outcome:

1. **Raising awareness** and **changing perceptions** of issues among stakeholders
2. Encouraging states and policy actors to **acknowledge** specific issues or **endorse** local and international declarations
3. **Changing the processes** where policy decisions are made at the domestic or international level
4. **Affecting** policy content which, in turn, might lead to legislative change
5. **Changing behaviors** in key actors at various levels to ensure meaningful and sustainable policy implementation

### Strategies

There are various methods available to researchers to influence the EBP process. This should encourage researchers to become policy champions who are willing and able to lead and manage policy issues. These individuals or teams proactively promote policy reform, publicly support the policies, and generate the support of others. In addition, they frame discussions about the issue, attract resources, and seize and create opportunities to move reform forward, as shown in the figure below:



These strategies can be categorized depending on whether they are based on evidence or interests, and whether they work within or outside the system. Each has various methods available to policy champions and policy advocates.

The evidence-based approach includes advising and advocacy using evidence and research. Advising means working closely with policymakers using research, analysis, and evidence-based argument during both public debates and formal and informal meetings. Advocacy is more confrontation-based and exists outside the system using public campaigns, education, debates, and meetings.

The interest-based approach is mainly guided by the values and interests of the participants rather than the evidence. Lobbying consists of formal and informal meetings and channels, as well as participation in boards and committees, using relationships, incentives, and diplomacy. Activism exists outside the system and emphasizes pressure and confrontation through direct action, protest, and civic engagement.