

A knowledge synthesis method to effectively inform decision makers about public policies

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Centre de collaboration nationale
sur les politiques publiques et la santé
National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy

Institut national
de santé publique
Québec 

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

- Health impacts of policies
- Methods for analyzing policies
- Intersectoral actors and mechanisms
- Strategies to influence policy making



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Imagine the following scenario...

The government wants to act to combat obesity
and is asking the following question:

**What are the most effective policies for
addressing obesity?**

You have been asked to produce a knowledge
synthesis to inform their decision...

In 2005, the NCCHPP was given a dual mandate

1. Produce a **knowledge synthesis** aimed at identifying **public policies that seem to be effective** at addressing obesity
2. Document **the methodological issues** associated with this exercise

But what exactly is a
“public policy”?

The quest for a definition



- No agreed upon definition
- NCCHPP: “A **strategic action** led by a **public authority** in order to limit or increase the presence of certain **phenomena within the population**”

➤ Definition focused on action

But a public policy can also be a **statement** that defines a public problem and formulates a response in terms of objectives and actions

➤ Public authority:

Any government at the federal, provincial, regional or municipal level

But what exactly is a
"knowledge synthesis"?

Definition by CIHR (2010)

“The contextualization and integration of research findings of individual research studies within the larger body of knowledge on the topic. A synthesis must be reproducible and transparent in its methods, using quantitative and/or qualitative methods”

Different types of syntheses (CIHR, 2010)

- Systematic reviews (e.g., Cochrane Collaboration)
- Meta-analyses
- Narrative syntheses
- Scoping reviews
- Realist syntheses
- Etc.

Why a specific method applicable to public policies?

- **A policy is not a simple intervention**
 - Applied at the population level
 - The decision maker is a public authority who is accountable
- **Beyond effectiveness**
 - Policy makers are interested in implementation issues
- **Beyond the literature**
 - Sometimes few studies have been published
 - Need to contextualize the data

Five principles guiding our reflection

1. Methodological rigour
2. Political relevance
3. Broadened conception of evidence
4. Flexibility – The best is the enemy of the good
5. “Honest broker” (Pielke, 2007)

Some sources of inspiration



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**METHOD FOR SYNTHESIZING KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT PUBLIC POLICIES**

REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2010



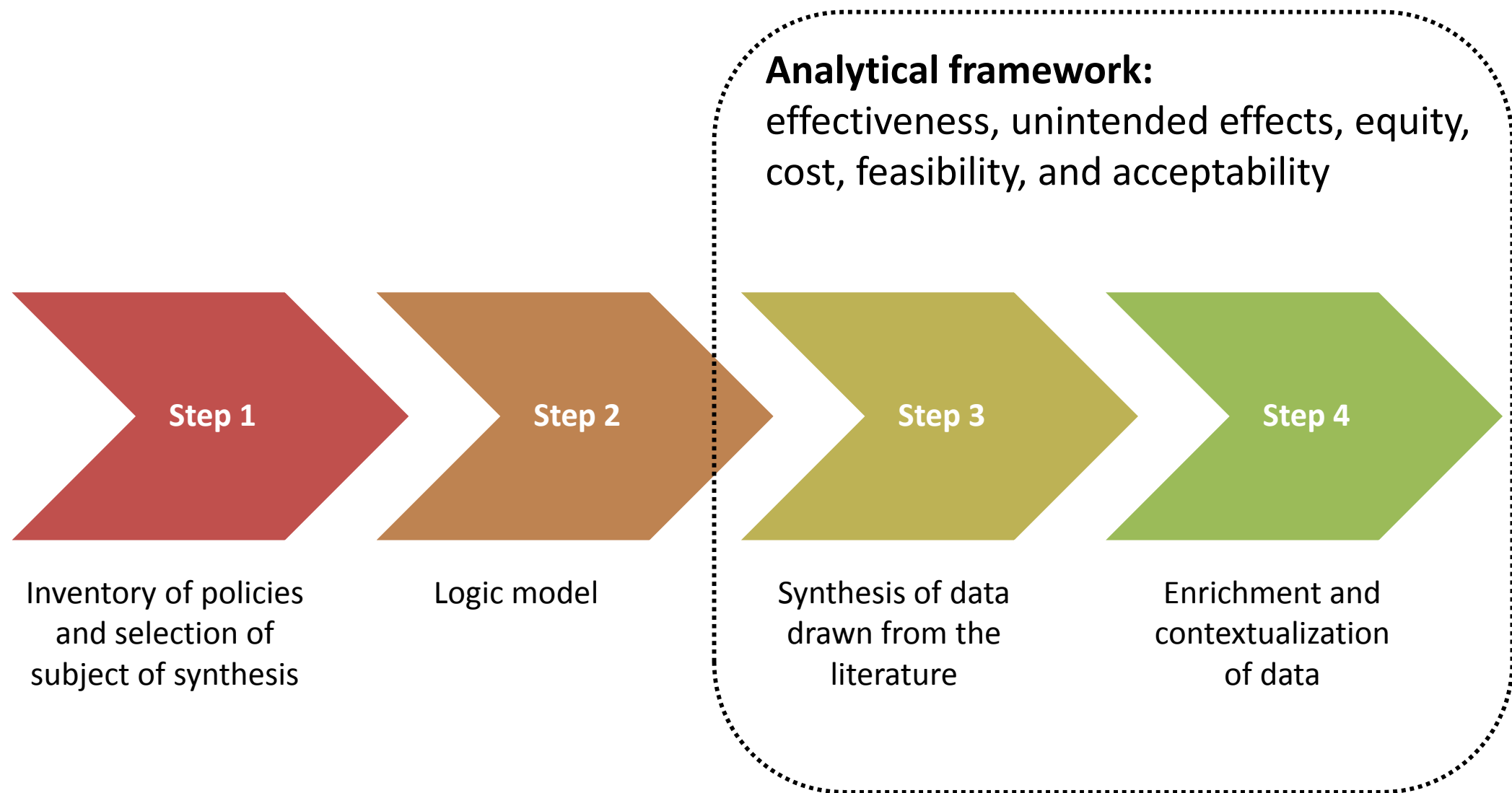
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Available at:

http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/MethodPP_EN.pdf

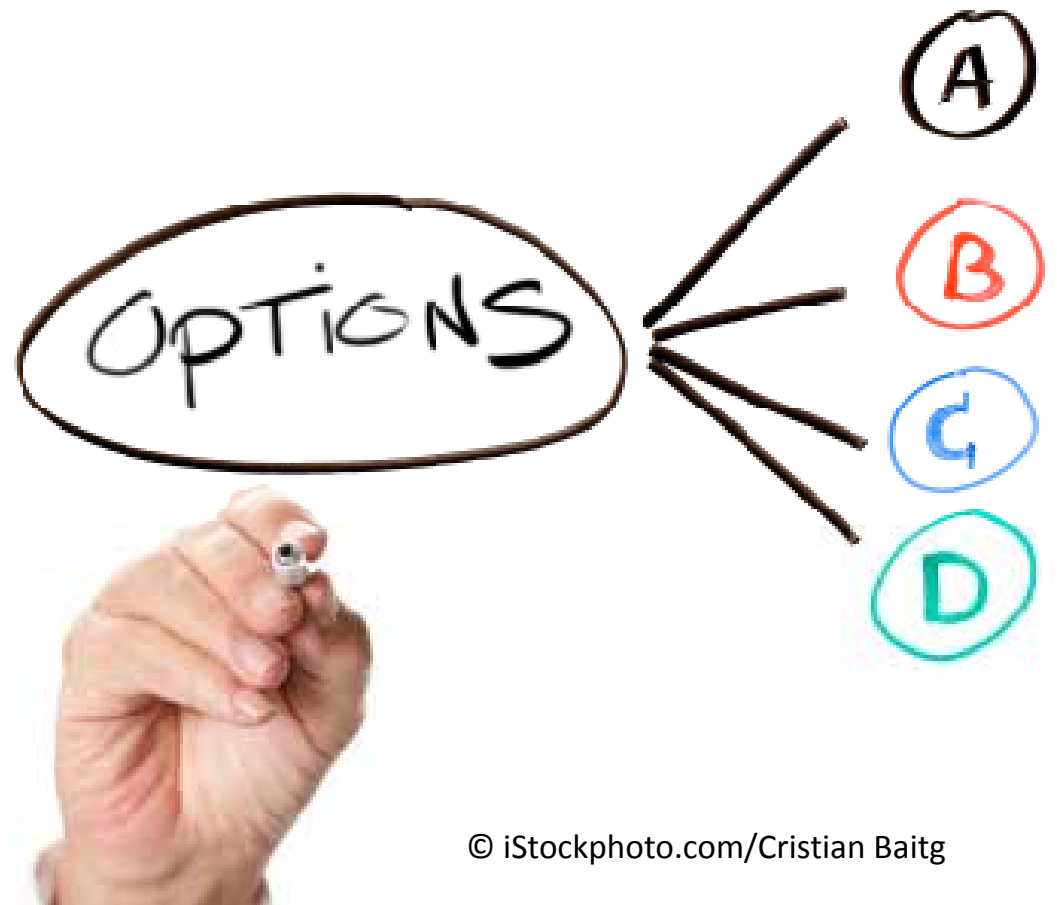
A synthesis in four steps



Each element can also be used by itself

Step 1.

Inventory of options and choice of policy



Instead of deciding in advance that the synthesis will focus on this or that public policy...

... start with the targeted health problem and identify the range of policies proposed for addressing it

E.g.: “What can the government do in the area of nutrition to prevent obesity?”

- Regulation of advertising that targets children
- Nutrition labelling
- Taxing junk food
- Setting up public markets
- ...

How to compile the inventory?

Preliminary exploration of the literature

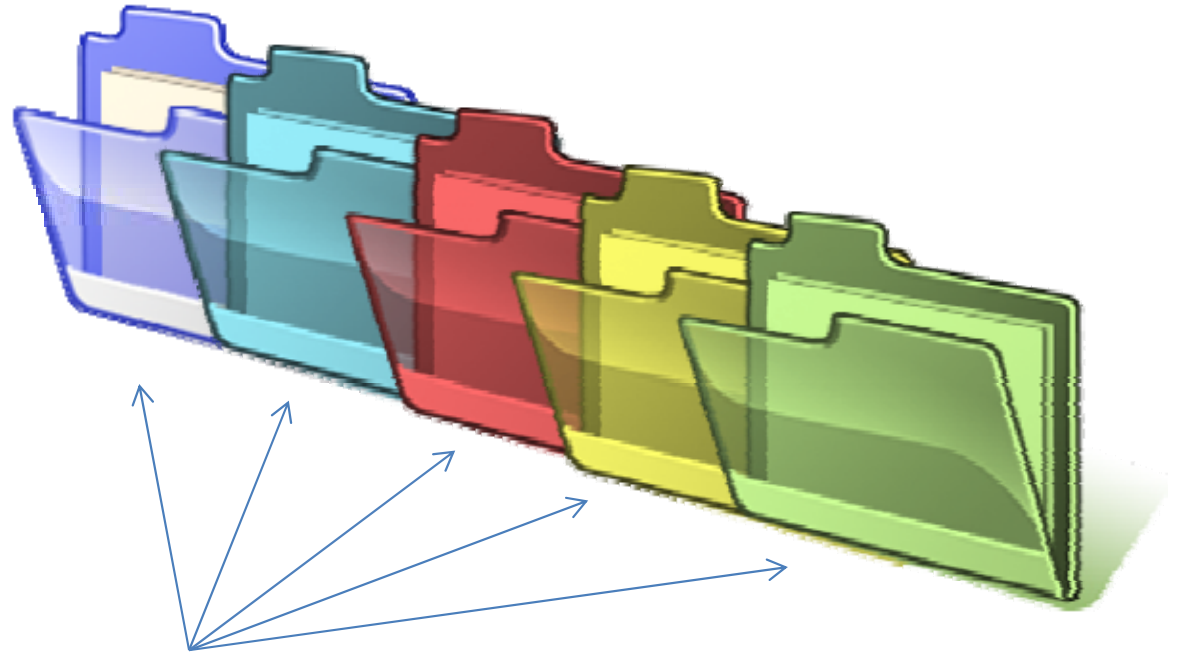
Grey literature

- Websites of organizations interested in the targeted health problem:
 - Governments and NGOs
 - Public health and other concerned sectors
 - Your province, Canada, international

Scientific literature

- Websites that inventory systematic reviews
- Optional: preliminary exploration of databases

If resources are available: study **several** of the policies proposed to address the health problem



Knowledge synthese_S

But often, it is only possible to explore **one** option

From among all the proposed options, how do you choose the one that will be the subject of the knowledge synthesis?

Who chooses?

The decision
maker/
commissioner of
the synthesis

Negotiation
between the
decision maker
and yourself

Yourself:
complete
autonomy

Selection criteria

Advantages

Limitations

Convenience

Ease of producing the synthesis
(including: accessibility of data)

Saves time, money
and energy



Lack of rigour

Predetermined criteria

E.g.: the policy should be low-cost, or
socially acceptable, or equity-focused,
etc.

Prioritizes a criterion
that is of interest

Neglects promising
options that do not
fit the criterion

Political importance

The public policy is on the discussion
agenda

Relevance of the
synthesis to
stakeholders

Neglects promising
options that are
not already on the
political agenda

A policy that has been successful in another jurisdiction

Promising option

Must be
contextualized +++

SEVERAL SYNTHESSES

Maximum variation

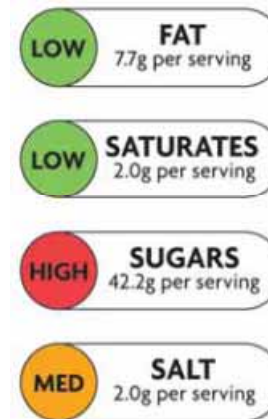
E.g.: from the least to the most
coercive policy

Informative for policy
makers

Cost of producing
several syntheses

E.g.: “What can the government do in the area of nutrition to prevent obesity?”

- Regulation of advertising that targets children
- Nutrition labelling
- Taxing junk food
- Setting up public markets
- ...



Source: Food Standards Agency
© Crown copyright

| Nutrition Facts | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Per 125 mL (87 g) | |
| Amount | % Daily Value |
| Calories 80 | |
| Fat 0.5 g | 1 % |
| Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g | |
| Cholesterol 0 mg | 0 % |
| Sodium 0 mg | 0 % |
| Carbohydrate 18 g | 6 % |
| Fibre 2 g | |
| Sugars 2 g | |
| Protein 3 g | |
| Vitamin A 2 % | Vitamin C 10 % |
| Calcium 0 % | Iron 2 % |

Source: Health Canada

- Predetermined criteria:
 - Marginally effective, but low-cost?
 - Minimally coercive
- Political importance: is on the discussion agenda

Step 2.

The logic model

A synthesis in four steps



Inventory of policies
and selection of
subject of synthesis

Logic model

Synthesis of data
drawn from the
literature

Enrichment and
contextualization
of data



Logic Model



How many of you have heard of logic models?
How many have used one?

- Many terms...
 - logic model, theoretical model, theory of change, conceptual framework, logical framework, etc.
- ...and they are assigned different meanings
e.g., logic models for Ontario Public Health Standards
- We do not wish to enter into these debates
What is important = understanding the proposed way of proceeding

Usually:

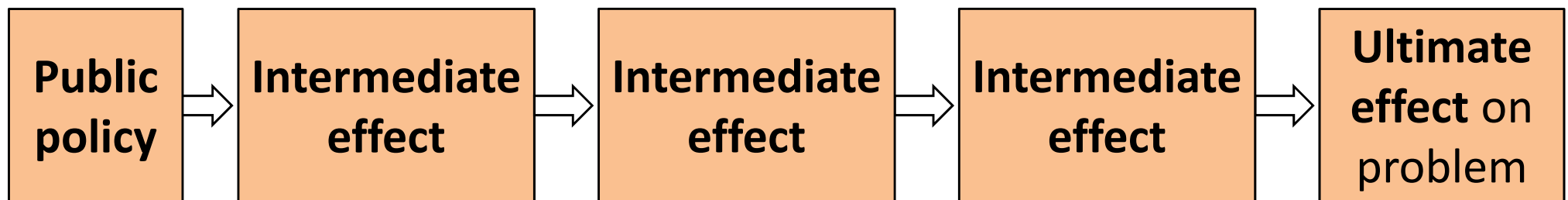
- A public policy is proposed as a means of obtaining a desired effect
- But the intervention logic (mechanism of action) is not made explicit



Detail the intervention logic

Deconstruct the chain of expected effects between the public policy and the problem targeted

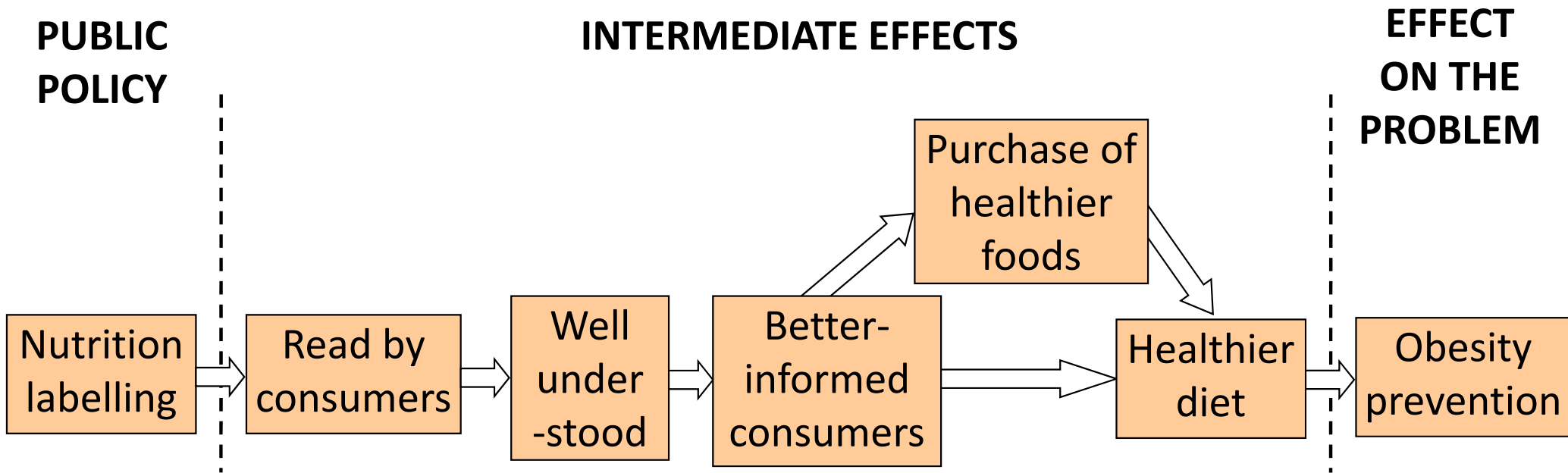
(Champagne et al., 2009; Weiss, 1998)



Champagne, F., Brousselle, A., Hartz, Z., & Contandriopoulos, A.-P. (2009). Modéliser les interventions. In A. Brousselle, F. Champagne, A.-P. Contandriopoulos, & Z. Hartz (Eds.), *L'évaluation : concepts et méthodes* (pp. 57-70). Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies (Second edition)*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Example: Nutrition labelling

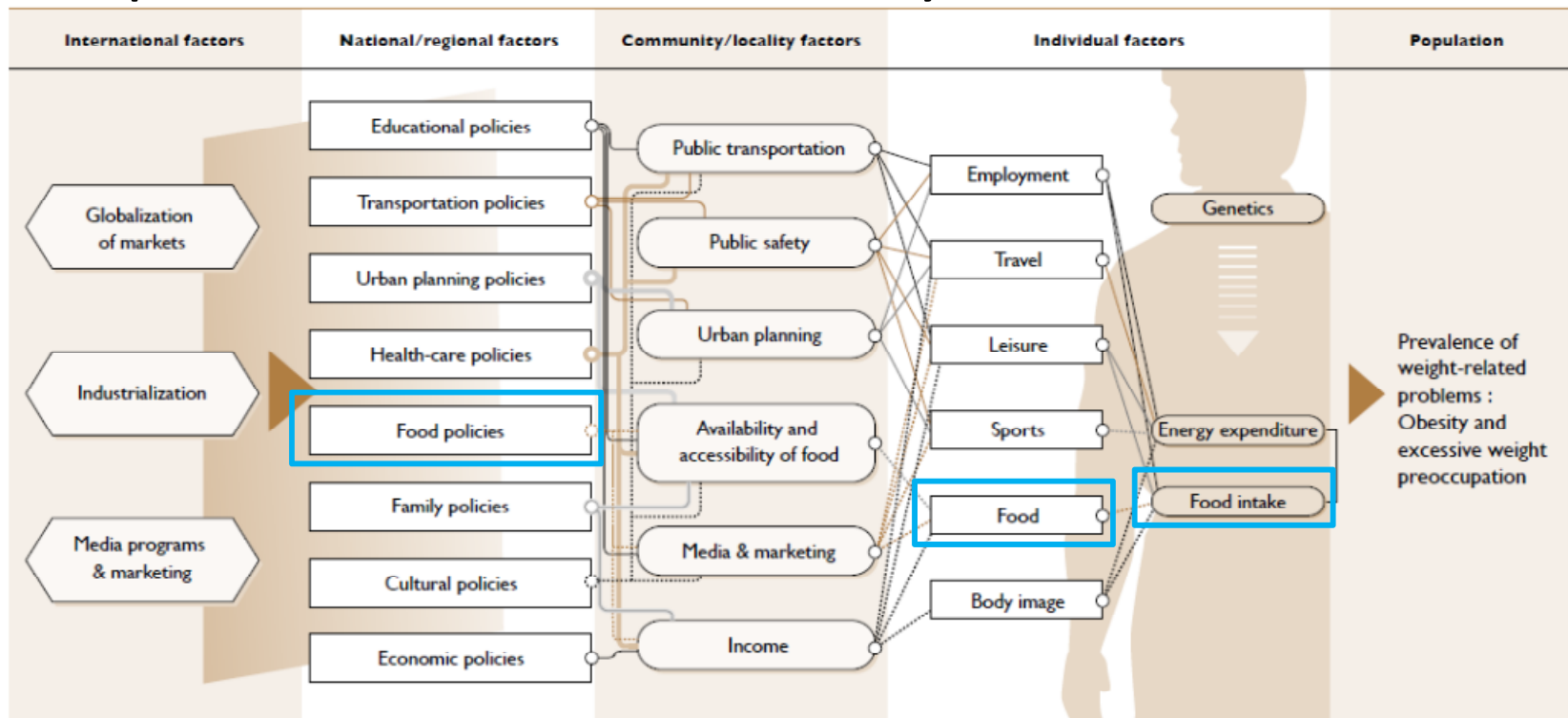


The logic model is not...

... *a causal model*:

- Does not represent *all* the causes of the targeted problem, only those targeted by the policy under study

Example: Causal web for obesity



Source: Groupe de travail provincial sur la problématique du poids (inspired by work carried out by the International Obesity Task Force), 2004, p. 12.

The logic model is not...

... *proof of causality*:

- It represents the *theory* of how the public policy should produce its intended effects
- Data collection will indicate whether this proves true in reality

Contribution of logic model

1. Define the subject of the knowledge synthesis



Too complex a model = confusion among several policies?

To be able to manage the data gathered:

Narrow down the subject of study until there is a single mechanism of action

2. Plausibility of the intervention logic?



If plausibility is weak: not worth pursuing

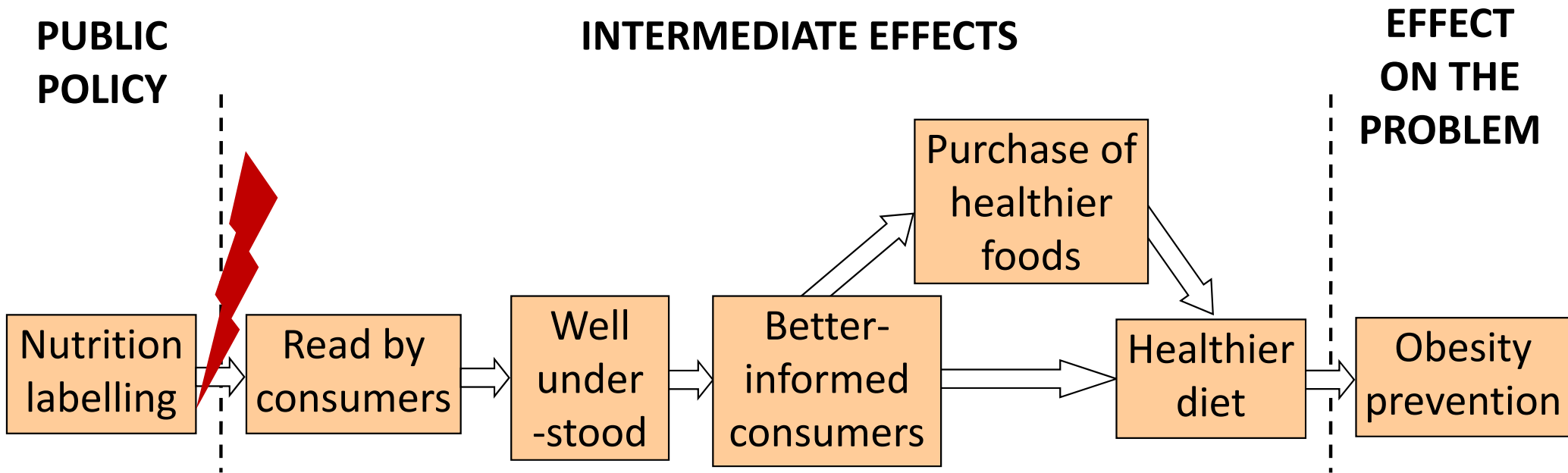
3. Examine effectiveness step by step



Identify what is more or less likely to succeed (effectiveness gaps), to be verified during data collection

If there is a significant gap upstream: not worth pursuing

Example: Nutrition labelling



In a population whose majority is of low literacy or illiterate, this public policy would be ineffective from the start.

Contribution of logic model (cont'd.)

4. Guide data collection

- Relevant intermediate effects to document
- Interesting, because data on ultimate effects of public policies are scarce

5. Strengthen the assumption of causality

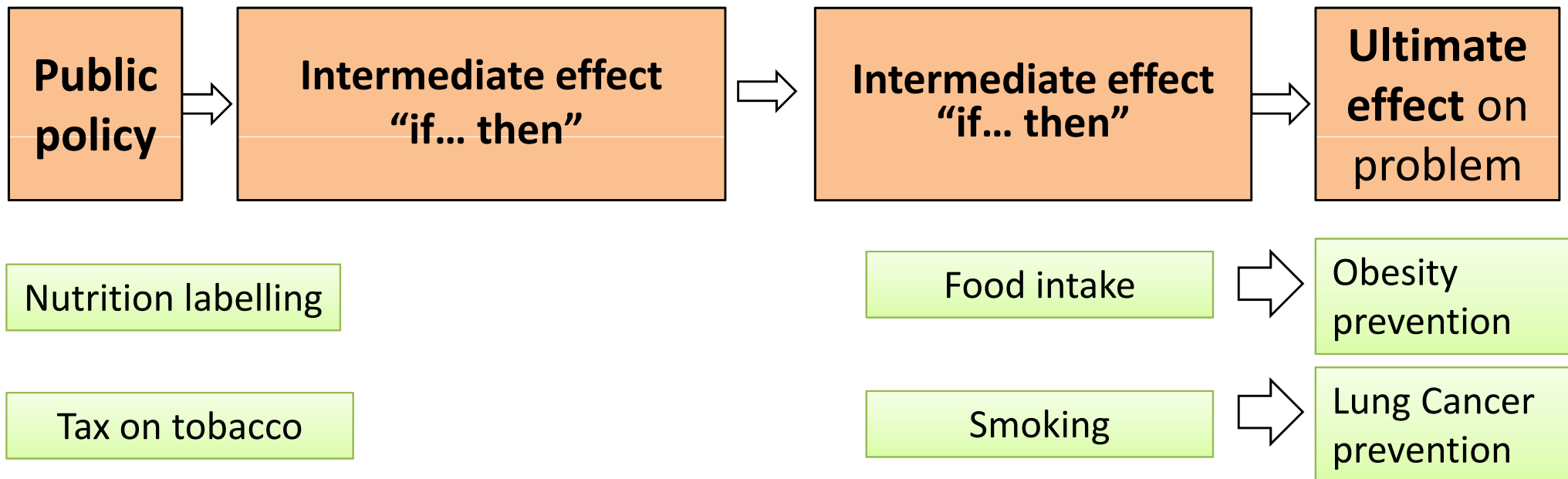
As opposed to simply correlating policy and ultimate effect

6. Structure the synthesis (the report)

- In the chapter synthesizing the effectiveness data: a sub-section for each intermediate effect
- Useful as a guide to decision making and action



Constructing a logic model



- Suggestion: Start by noting the “last” intermediate effect
 - Generally the most well-known in the field of public health



Constructing a logic model

- Reflection based on:
 - knowledge gathered during preliminary exploration of the literature
 - (as needed) consultation with experts
 - simple reasoning
- Variable number of steps
- One path or many
- == **Simplicity** ==
 - Key to establishing an appropriate level of precision: will additional detail be helpful to you when you plan your data collection?



Constructing a logic model (cont'd.)

- **No "right answer"**
- Tool to guide reflection
- **Iterative construction**
 - Prior to data collection
 - During: rework model based on data found

Exercise

The logic model

Imagine the following scenario...

You are called to a meeting.

You are informed that the Minister of Health is concerned about the consumption of energy drinks by young people.



Energy drinks

(Dubé et al., 2010; Plamondon, 2011)

- Consumption observed among young people in high school or college
- Health risks:
 - **Caffeine** (main active ingredient):
 - Excessive consumption => undesirable effects ranging from nausea to heart arrhythmia
 - Addiction / Withdrawal symptoms => depleted energy, drowsiness, depressive mood, difficulty concentrating, headache, irritability, etc.
 - Children and adolescents: group sensitive to the effects of caffeine
 - **Association with alcohol**: masks feelings of drunkenness => may lead to greater consumption of alcohol and risky behaviour
 - **Sugar** (regular consumption): negative impact on dental health and body weight

Energy drinks

(Dubé et al., 2010; Plamondon, 2011)

Marketing practices:

- Sold along with other sugary drinks
- "beneficial" effects over-emphasized / undesirable effects eclipsed
- Themes that attract young people

The government is weighing the idea of **banning the sale of energy drinks to those under 18 years old**

Your mission

Produce a **knowledge synthesis** to inform the government about this option



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Exercise: Construct the logic model for the banning of energy drink sales to minors

Public policy

Ban on sale to minors

Intermediate effects

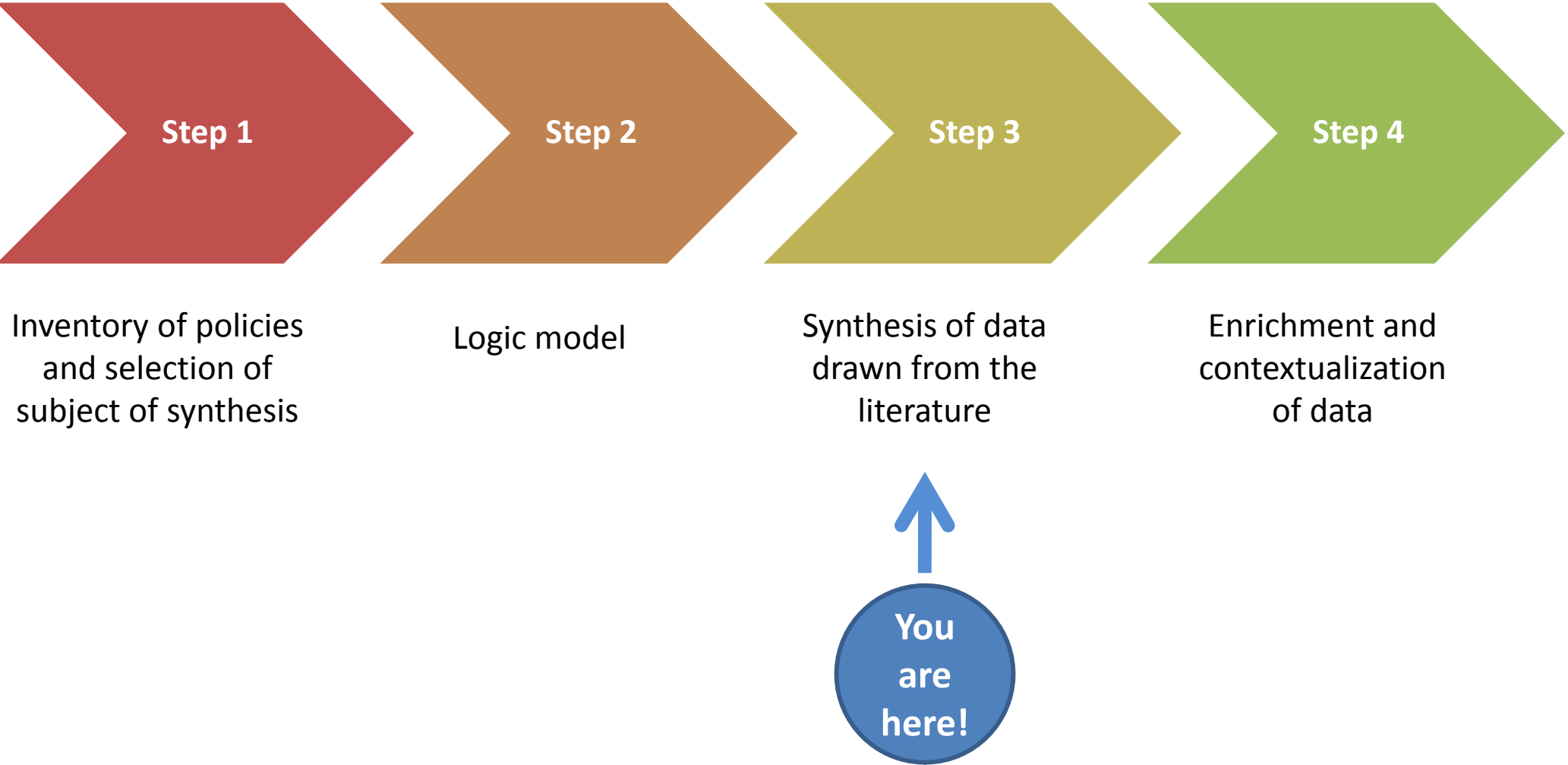
Effect on the problem

Prevention of associated health problems

Step 3.

Collection and analysis
of data drawn from the literature

A synthesis in four steps

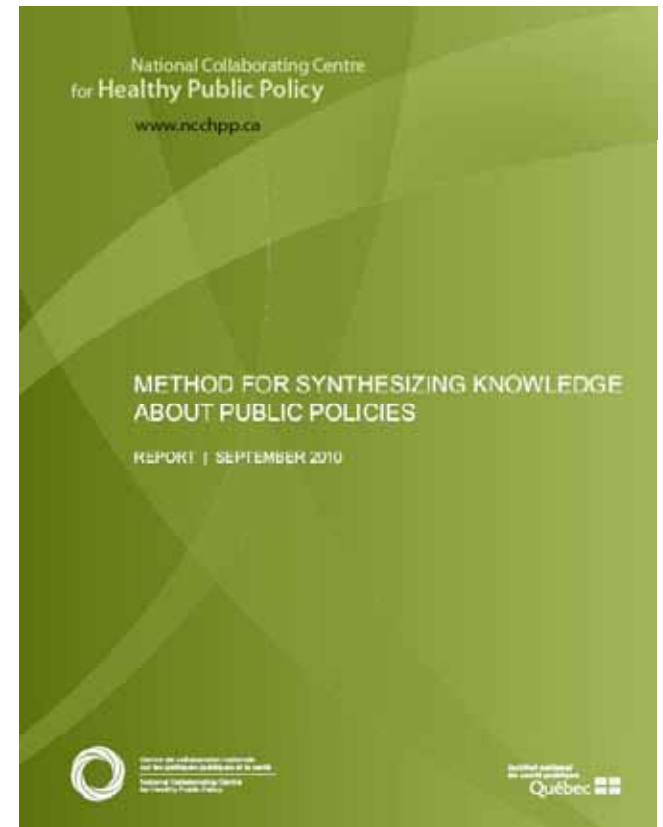


Dual challenge:

A literature review that is **rigorous** and **adapted to public policies**

= *SIMPLE OVERVIEW* =

- Documentary search
- Appraisal of the quality of data
- Data extraction
- Data synthesis



Details: consult the document

What are your usual sources of data?

- Scientific literature

- Including qualitative data?

- Grey literature

E.g.: Research reports, documents produced by governments or NGOs, statements by professional associations, opinion polls, theses, etc.

Documentary search

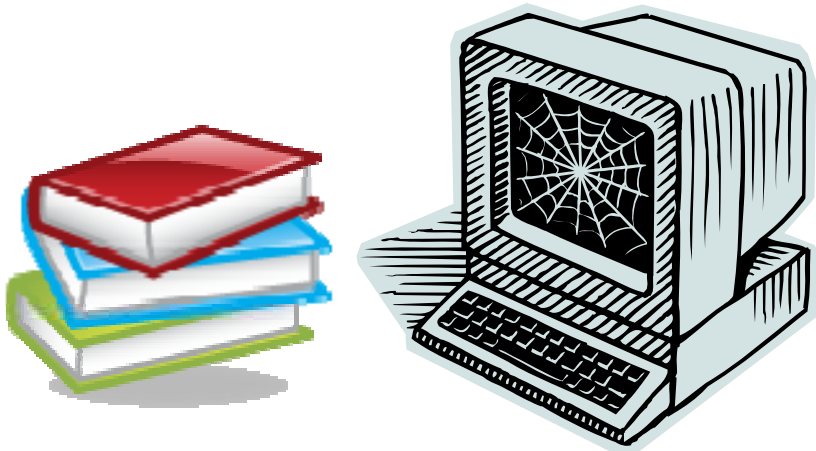
RIGOROUSNESS

Describe the process
(record): transparency
and reproducibility

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

E.g.: content, countries, period,
language

No convenience sampling



ADAPTATION for public policies (PPs)

Openness: Do not document only
effectiveness, decision makers need
more
=> 6-dimension analytical framework

Scientific literature : several disciplines
E.g.: public health, political science,
sociology, anthropology, economics,
ethics, law...

List of databases

AND grey literature

Websites of organizations interested in
the targeted health problem

Refer to Step 1 - Inventory

Appraisal of the quality of data



RIGOROUSNESS

- Describe the principal **characteristics** of the documents selected
E.g.: type, source, design, authors' affiliations, potential sources of bias
- Data from the scientific literature / the grey literature are **treated the same way, but separately**

ADAPTATION for PPs

- The hierarchy of evidence excludes relevant evidence regarding PPs
- Sort documents according to their **relevance** (contribution to the knowledge synthesis)

Data extraction



RIGOROUSNESS

Extraction tables

- One for scientific lit.
- One for grey lit.

ADAPTATION for PPs

Type of **data to extract**

Refer to analytical framework: Effectiveness + 5 other dimensions

| Reference | Characteristics of document | Status | Effectiveness | Unintended effects | Equity | Cost | Feasibility | Acceptability |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|--------------------|--------|------|-------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Data synthesis

RIGOROUSNESS

- Use **all** the data extracted
No cherry picking
 - **Distinguish** data from scientific lit. / grey lit.
- ⇒ A rough criterion for classification, but helps orient readers re.: “quality” of data

ADAPTATION for PPs

Narrative synthesis

Thematic:

themes = dimensions of the analytical framework



Limited resources? A few shortcuts


Automatic documentary searches in PubMed, by topic.

Ontario Public Health Standards website:

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/
program/pubhealth/oph_standards/ophs/litss.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/pubhealth/oph_standards/ophs/litss.html)



 PubMed = one database among others...

Limit the number of documents to be analyzed

- Existing literature reviews + documents published subsequently
 - *See list of alternative resources*
-  – An existing review will never cover *all* the aspects that interest us
 - Can be complemented by deliberative processes

Limited resources? A few shortcuts (cont'd.)

Limit the number of documents to be analyzed (continued)

- Narrow the **inclusion criteria**
 - In particular, by country, time period
- Begin reading + **saturation** criterion
 -  – To avoid bias: Read documents in a neutral order, e.g., reverse chronological order and, alphabetically, by author
- **Ignore the grey literature (Warning !!!)**
 - Suggested in rapid review methods
 -  – But results in loss of much relevant data
 - Can deliberative processes compensate for this?

Shortcuts - Warnings

- The result is always **less optimal** than with a full literature review
- Remain **transparent** about the process followed
- Indicate the **limitations** and **biases** introduced

A framework for analyzing public policies

A synthesis in four steps

You are here!



Analytical framework

Step 1

Inventory of policies and selection of subject of synthesis

Step 2

Logic model

Step 3

Synthesis of data drawn from the literature

Step 4

Enrichment and contextualization of data

A framework for guiding data collection

What do we want to know about the policy under study?

- Whether it is **effective** => Classic focus in public health
- Policy makers also want to know about the **implementation issues**
- In short: Gather all the data required to make an informed decision and to plan an implementation strategy

The NCCHPP's analytical framework

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Major sources of inspiration: Salamon, 2002; Swinburn et al., 2005

List of elements to consider for each dimension

Salamon, M. L. (2002). The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction. In L.M. Salamon (Ed.), *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance* (pp. 1-47). New York: Oxford University Press.

Swinburn, B., Gill, T., & Kumanyika, S. (2005). Obesity prevention: A proposed framework for translating evidence into action. *Obesity Reviews*, 6, 23-33.

Effectiveness

Remains the most important dimension of the analysis

- Effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the policy under study at addressing the targeted problem
- Intermediate effects [refer to logic model]
- Plausibility of the intervention logic [refer to logic model]
- Impact of context on effectiveness
- Distribution of effects over time

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| | Effectiveness |
| Effects | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Unintended effects

- Unrelated to the objective pursued
- Effects in all sorts of areas
Health (aspects other than the targeted problem), economic, political, environmental, tied to social relations, etc.

- Positive or negative

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

- Measures to mitigate negative effects?

Equity

Watch out for policies that improve the overall average but increase inequalities

- Differential effects of the policy under study on various groups

Groups defined by age, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, residence in certain zones, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc.

- Effects on social inequalities in health

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

The government is weighing the idea of **banning the sale of energy drinks to those under 18 years old**

Produce a **policy analysis** to inform the government about this option

Part one: Effects



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| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Cost

- Costs related to implementation and gains
 - for the government
 - for other actors
- Distribution over time
 - One-time or recurrent costs
 - Immediate or deferred costs
 - Short or long-term investments
- Visibility
- Cost compared to that of other potential policies
 - Cost-effectiveness

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Feasibility

- Availability of resources (human, material, "technological" ...)
- Conformity with all relevant legislation
 - Including: Levels of government
 - Mandate of sectors involved
- Existence of pilot programs
- Can the policy be administered by pre-existing mechanisms?

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Feasibility (cont'd.)

- Is the authority promoting the policy also the one applying it?
- Number of actors involved in implementing the policy
- To what extent are their activities being guided by the policy's promoters?
 - System of incentives and sanctions
- Quality of the cooperation among actors...
- ... and ability of opponents to interfere

Not necessary to document ALL these elements!

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Acceptability

- How stakeholders view the policy under study
- Influenced by their knowledge, beliefs, values, interests, etc.
- Acceptability influences the adoption, implementation and potential for success of a policy
- Policy makers are subject to various forms of pressure that they wish to anticipate

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Acceptability (cont'd.)

First: identify relevant stakeholders / actors:

Groups directly targeted by the policy, the wider public, gov't. ministries, municipalities, other policy makers, professionals from the relevant public sectors, funding agencies, industry, the media, political organizations, etc.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Second: For each actor concerned, as much as possible:

- Acceptability of acting on the problem—and how
- Acceptability of the policy under study:
 - Assessment of its effectiveness, unintended effects, equity, cost, and feasibility
 - Assessment of the degree of coercion involved (information vs. incentives vs. regulation)

Acceptability (cont'd.)

Second: (Continued) For each actor concerned:

- Acceptability of the conditions for adoption and implementation of a policy
Sometimes the *content* of a policy is accepted, but the *process* surrounding it is not
- Possible evolution of acceptability over time?

Low acceptability does not necessarily mean the policy should be discarded

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Using the analytical framework

- To guide data collection (literature & deliberative processes)
 - List of key questions
 - List is indicative; answers to everything rarely found
- Structuring
 - Extraction table & structure of report

| Reference | Characteristics of document | Status | Effectiveness | Unintended effects | Equity | Cost | Feasibility | Acceptability |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|--------------------|--------|------|-------------|---------------|
| | | | | | | | | |
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Using the analytical framework (cont'd.)

- Outside the context of a knowledge synthesis:
summarize informal or expert knowledge
possessed about a policy
=> Assists reflection (individual or group)

The government is weighing the idea of **banning the sale of energy drinks to those under 18 years old**

Produce a **policy analysis** to inform the government about this option

Part two: Implementation



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| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

Step 4.

Enrichment and contextualization

(Thanks to François-Pierre Gauvin who helped to develop previous version of this presentation, and this section in particular)

A synthesis in four steps

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Inventory of policies and selection of subject of synthesis

Logic model

Synthesis of data drawn from the literature

Enrichment and contextualization of data

Certain issues are not identified or addressed in the literature...

Transferability to your own context...

You are here!

A deliberative process can **enrich** and **contextualize** your literature review

Deliberation:

Act of reflecting, of examining a question, discussion



How does it work in practice?

A **half-day meeting** (by invitation) of a group of **10-20 key informants**

- Able to bring forward **knowledge**
 - about the **expected effects** or
 - the issues surrounding the potential **application** of the public policy under study in their own context
- Balanced group representing many perspectives
 - experts, professionals, decision makers, civil society actors
 - From public health and other relevant sectors
 - From the relevant geographical zone

How does it work in practice? (cont'd.)

- Send participants a **summary of the literature review** a few weeks prior to the meeting
- The objective is to **identify and clarify issues** on anticipated effects and implementation issues.
- The day of the meeting: the facilitator ensures that the **discussion is organized around the six dimensions** of the analytical framework

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

List of key questions for each dimension

How does it work in practice? (cont'd.)

- Finding a balance between transparency and confidentiality:

Neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant may be revealed.

- Ideally, exchanges are **recorded**
 - To facilitate analysis
 - To ensure proper transcription of the exchanges
- Recordings are transcribed, a **thematic analysis and synthesis** is produced and transmitted to the participants

The benefits expected from deliberation

Better document
certain issues

Increase the relevance
of the synthesis to
policy makers

Knowledge
translation*

What are the risks (real or perceived)?

Scientific

Scientific
objectivity

Political

Creation of a
space for
deliberation on
certain
politically
sensitive issues

Project management

Time and
resources

Deliberation

Diven by
complex group
dynamics

Example: Our knowledge synthesis of nutrition labelling

- 3 deliberative processes, in British Columbia and in Ontario
- Participants involved in the fight against obesity, from the public, non-profit and academic sectors (public health, agri-food, education, physical activity, children's services)

Advantages

- Literature included little Canadian data
- Deliberation brought to light knowledge that was not found in the literature, including:
 - Suggested avenues for the implementation of new labelling policies in Canada
 - Overview of the standpoint of concerned actors in Canada (those addressing obesity, population, industry)

Practical Exercise

Deliberative process

Imagine the following scenario...

You have produced a literature review on **the banning of energy drink sales to those under 18 years old.**

You want to organize a deliberative process to enrich and contextualize the review.



Deliberative Process

« The banning of energy drink sales to those under 18 years old »

Which aspects
would be better
documented ?

- ...

Who would you
invite, and why?

- ...

What issues are
raised by this?


- ...

After the 4 steps...



Integrating the different kinds of
knowledge gathered

Structure of the knowledge synthesis document

- Transparent description of the process
 - Logic model of the policy under study
 - Synthesis of data drawn from the:
 - Scientific literature
 - Grey literature
 - Deliberative processes
- On the 6 dimensions of the analytical framework
- 

Example: Nutrition labelling Synthesis

http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/Synthesis_nutrition_labelling_highlights_EN.pdf

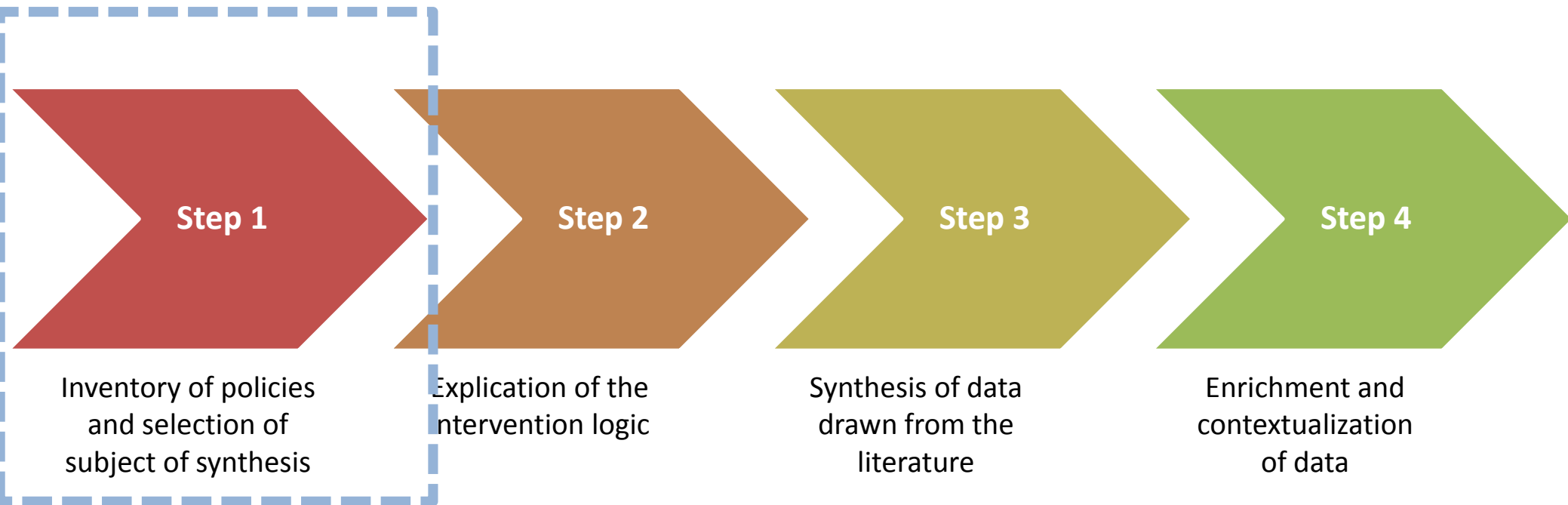
Use of the method

- The whole is more than the sum of its parts
- But sometimes you may want to use only parts of the method



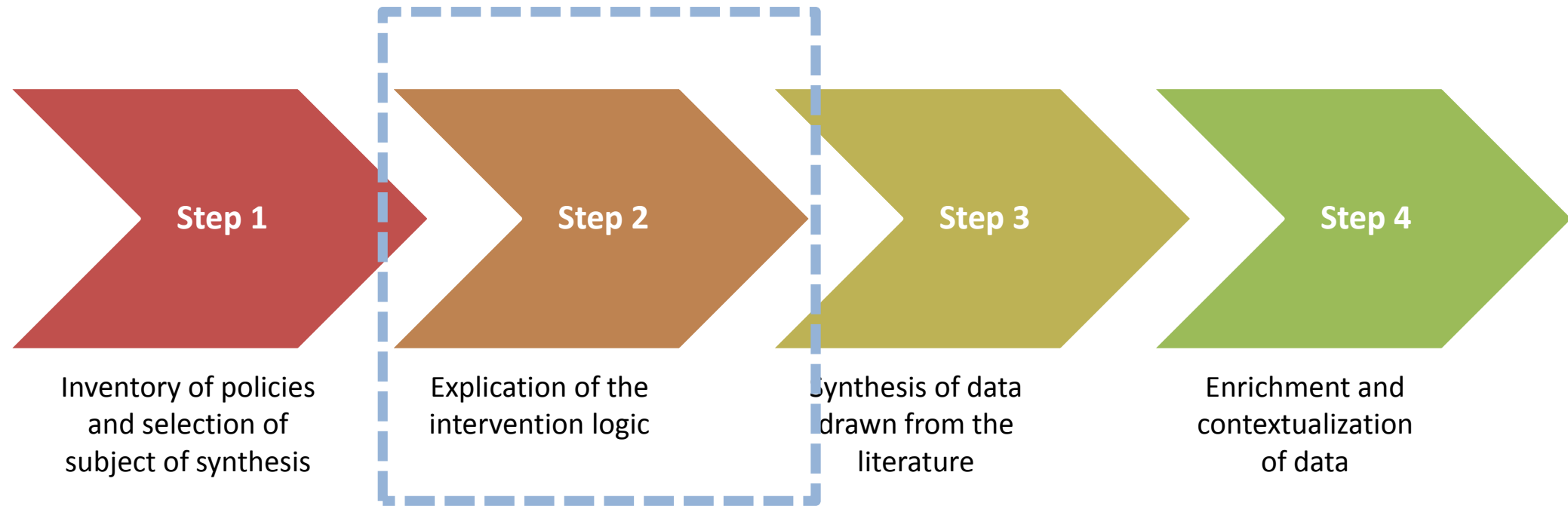
Scenario
1

You want to do a quick scan of potential policy options to address a problem.



Scenario
2

You want to reflect on the potential effectiveness of a policy option.

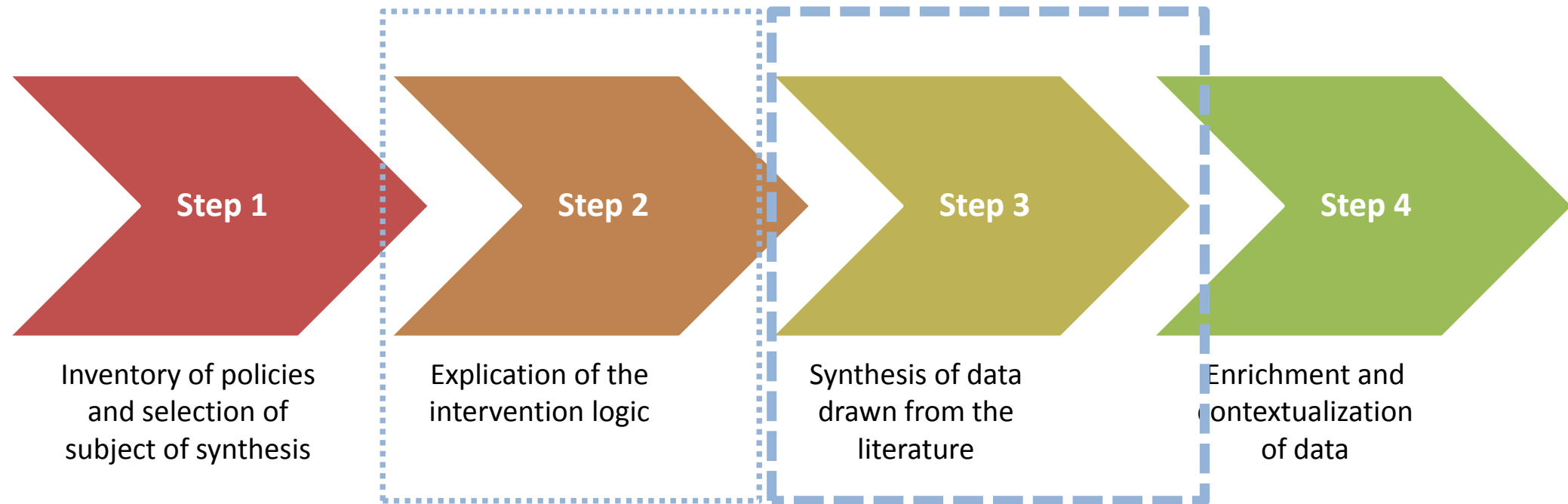


More scenarios – Logic model

- For communication purposes, you seek to represent simply the way a public policy works
- You wish to facilitate a discussion among various stakeholders about a public policy
 - Joint construction of the logic model

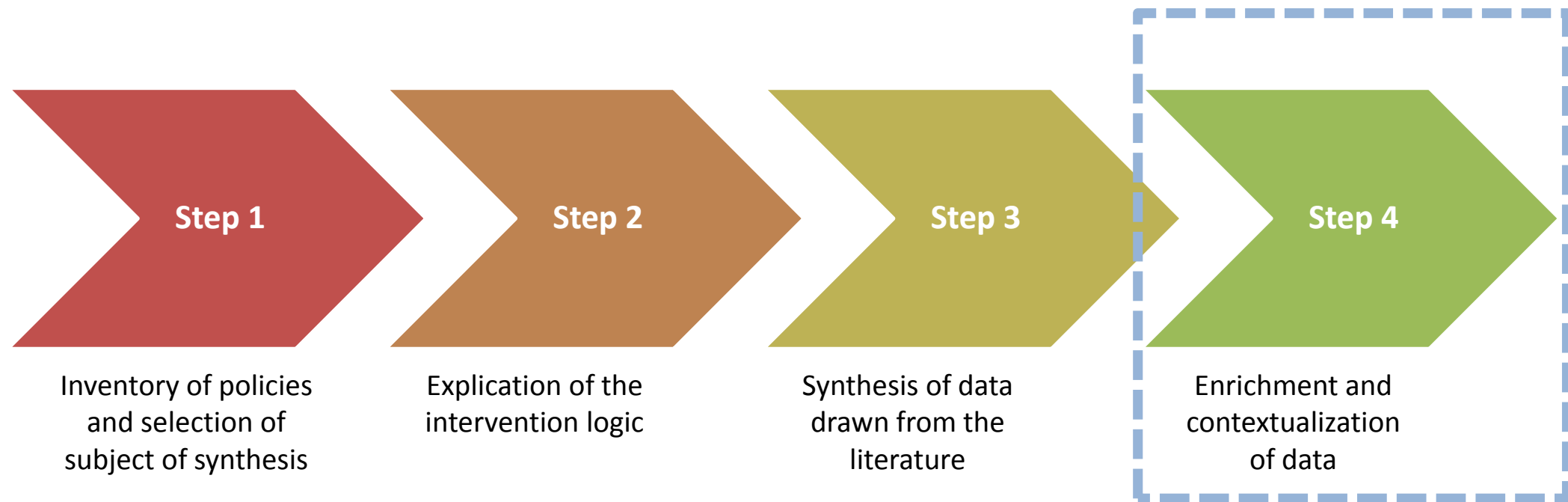
Scenario
3

You are asked to produce a literature review on a given public policy.
You are looking for an adapted approach.



Scenario
4

A high-quality literature review is released.
Although it was produced elsewhere, it is relevant to policy issues in your region / province.
You are interested in contextualizing the results of that literature review.



Resources on deliberative processes

- Series of **fact sheets** produced by the **NCCHPP** (F.P. Gauvin)
<http://www.ncchpp.ca/130/publications.ccnpps>
- **Lavis**, J. N., Boyko, J. A., Oxman, A. D., Lewin, S. et Fretheim, A. (2009). **SUPPORT Tools** for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP) 14: Organising and using policy dialogues to support evidence-informed policymaking. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 7(Suppl 1)(S14)

Scenario

5

You are looking for a framework with which to conduct a policy analysis.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Effects | Effectiveness |
| | Unintended effects |
| | Equity |
| Implementation | Cost |
| | Feasibility |
| | Acceptability |

- List of recap questions
- Analyze *all* or *some* of the dimensions

A Framework for Analyzing Public Policies Practical Guide

September 2012

Preliminary version – for discussion

Public health actors in public, community and academic networks may be called upon to work on public policies and, within the context of this work, to interact with policy makers at different levels (municipal, provincial, etc.). However, they often find that the content of their discourse does not meet all the information needs of these decision makers.

This document presents a structured process based on an analytical framework that reflects a public health perspective, while at the same time integrating other concerns of policy makers. The document addresses four questions:

- What public policies does this analytical framework apply to?
- In what types of situations is it useful?
- Which policy facets does it focus on?
- How is the analysis carried out?

An analytical framework for what type of public policy?

"Public policy" here refers to "a strategic action led by a public authority in order to limit or increase the presence of certain phenomena within the population" (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy [NCCCHPP], 2012). More specifically, the proposed framework is designed to analyze healthy (or presumed to be healthy) public policies.

Definition of healthy public policy proposed by Miilo (2001, p. 622):

Healthy public policy improves the conditions under which people live: secure, safe, adequate and sustainable livelihoods, lifestyles, and environments, including, housing, education, nutrition, information exchange, child care, transportation, and necessary community and personal social and health services.

Healthy public policies can be generated by and implemented in various sectors. Their expected impact on health derives from their impact on

living conditions, which in turn strongly influence health.

Carrying out an analysis of public policies: in which situations is this useful?

Usually, public health actors do not have the power to make public policy decisions, and they represent only one voice among many: policy making is influenced by numerous groups and organizations with an interest in the outcome (Miilo, 2001). It is therefore important to present the public health perspective while remaining aware of the other perspectives being expressed and how these may resonate with policy makers. Given this context, the analysis of public policies proves useful, particularly in the following situations:

- 1) Before the decision to adopt a public policy is made

There are several possible scenarios:

- You must **inform a decision maker** about the relevance of adopting a particular public policy. You do not have a particular bias with regard to this policy and the aim is simply to provide the decision maker with the information needed to make an informed decision. The proposed framework allows for such a structured analysis.
- To address a public health problem, you wish to **promote the adoption of a public policy**; you are thus consciously playing the role of advocate, guided by your organization's mission. Applying the analytical framework to the policy clarifies its implications, which helps you prepare your supporting arguments and advocacy strategy.
- You wish to **compare public policies**. The goal may be to inform the decision making process when there are several competing options, or earlier in the process, to decide which policy should be the focus of in-depth

Available at:

http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/Guide_framework_analyzing_policies_En.pdf



Many thanks!

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