

Adding Value to Policy Analysis and Advice

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Outline

1. The changing environment for NZ & Australian policy advisory system
2. Models, Frameworks, Tools and Methods
Althaus, Bridgman & Davis (Australia)
Bardach (US)
Mayer et al (Netherlands)
Scott & Baehler (Australia & NZ)
3. The benefits of an integrative systems perspective for more complex problems
4. Strategies for enhancing value from policy analysis and advice in the public sector

1. The NZ & Australian context

- Westminster systems of New Zealand and Australia; 'free & frank' advice;
- Repository of expertise for current and future governments governments; growing tendency for policy development to involve external expertise and individuals/organisations;
- Complexity of policy issues span agencies and require strategies involving public, private NGO sectors and services which need to be tailored to specific individuals, groups and contexts;

The changing environment for policy work

- International Influences
- Changing and complex outcomes and policy priorities
- New roles for central agencies
- Networked government/whole of government
- Multiple Level of Governments/COAG
- More contestable advisory system
- Media /OIA/FOA
- Stress between the analytical and political streams of advice (hot and cold advice)

What are some limitations of existing practices?

- Tight time frames demands responsiveness; whiteboard/group think can crowd out more robust information and analysis;
- Practical knowledge is an add-on to the policy process, not always valued, and can be more of a compliance exercise;
- A tendency for advisory systems to be 'risk averse' and to look for quick wins/ solutions;
- Concerns about quality and capability of the policy advisory system.

Free and Frank Advice?



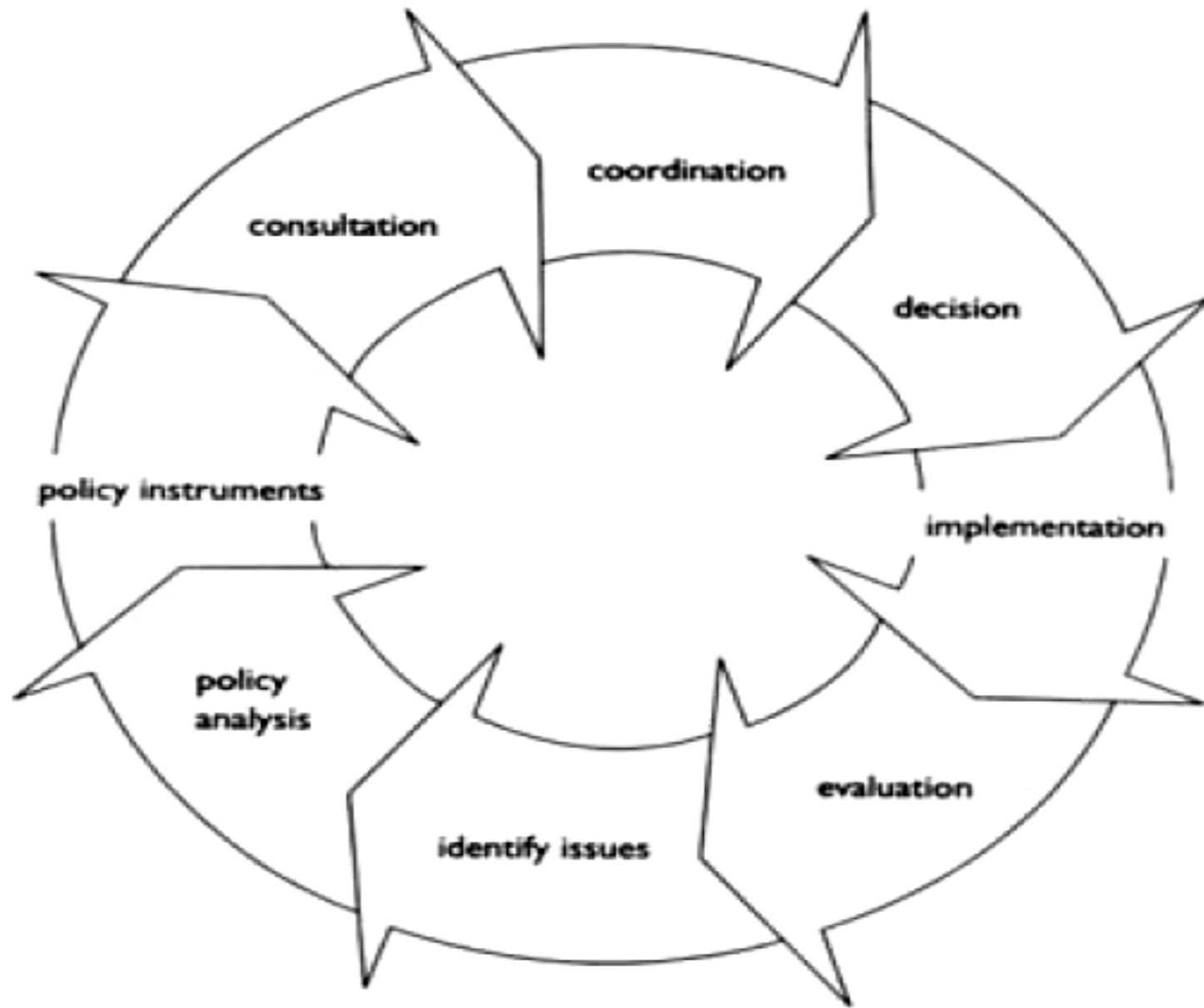
Australian Administrative Reform 'Ahead of the Game' (2010)

Strategic policy capability was identified as one of many issues to address in the APS.

- http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/index.cfm

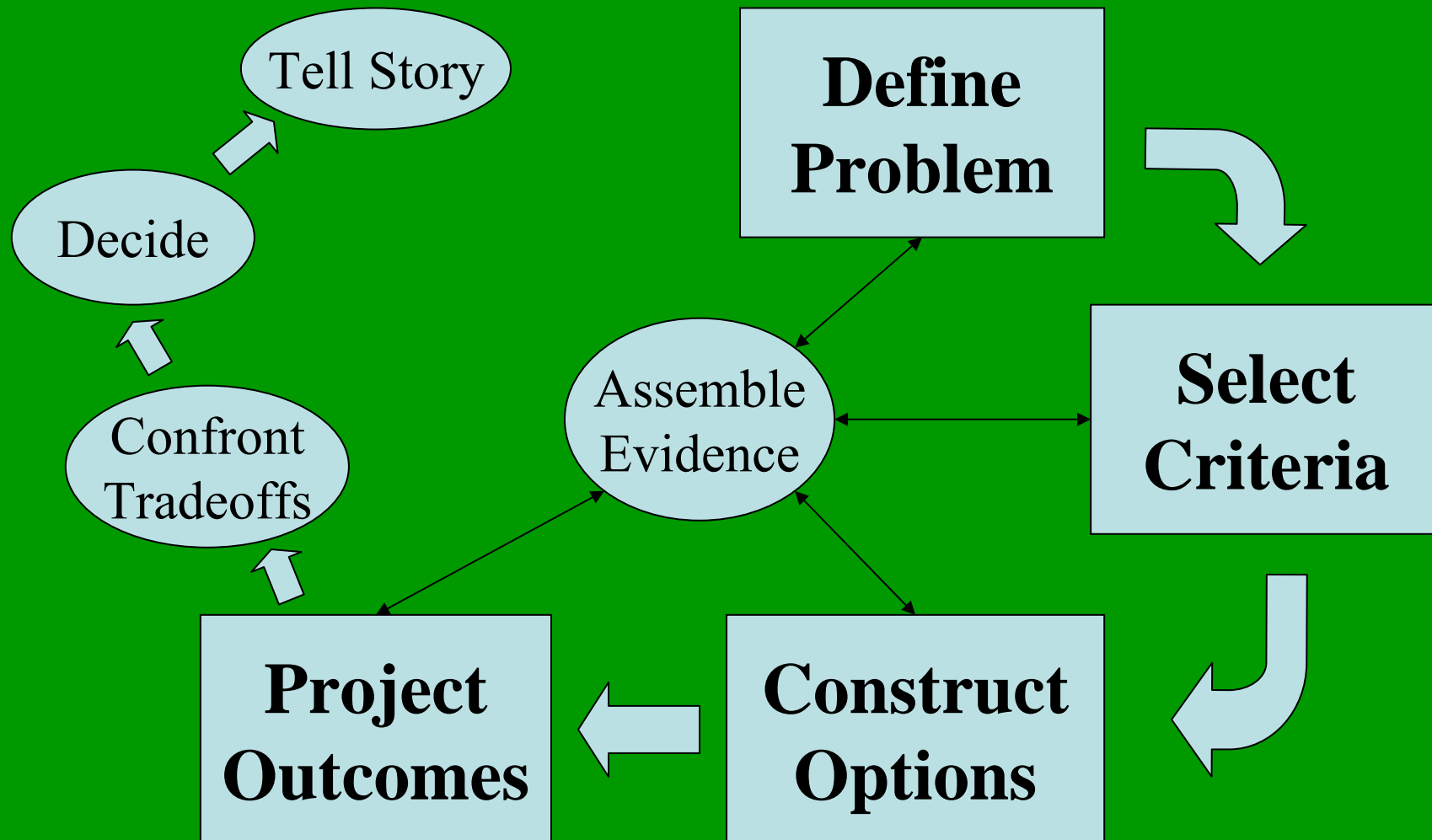
2. Models, frameworks, tools and methods to guide practice

- Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (Australia)
- Bardach's 8 fold Path of Applied Problem-solving (US)
- Mayer van Daalen & Bots Policy hexagon (Netherlands)
- Scott & Baehler hexagon model (Aust/NZ)



The Australian policy cycle

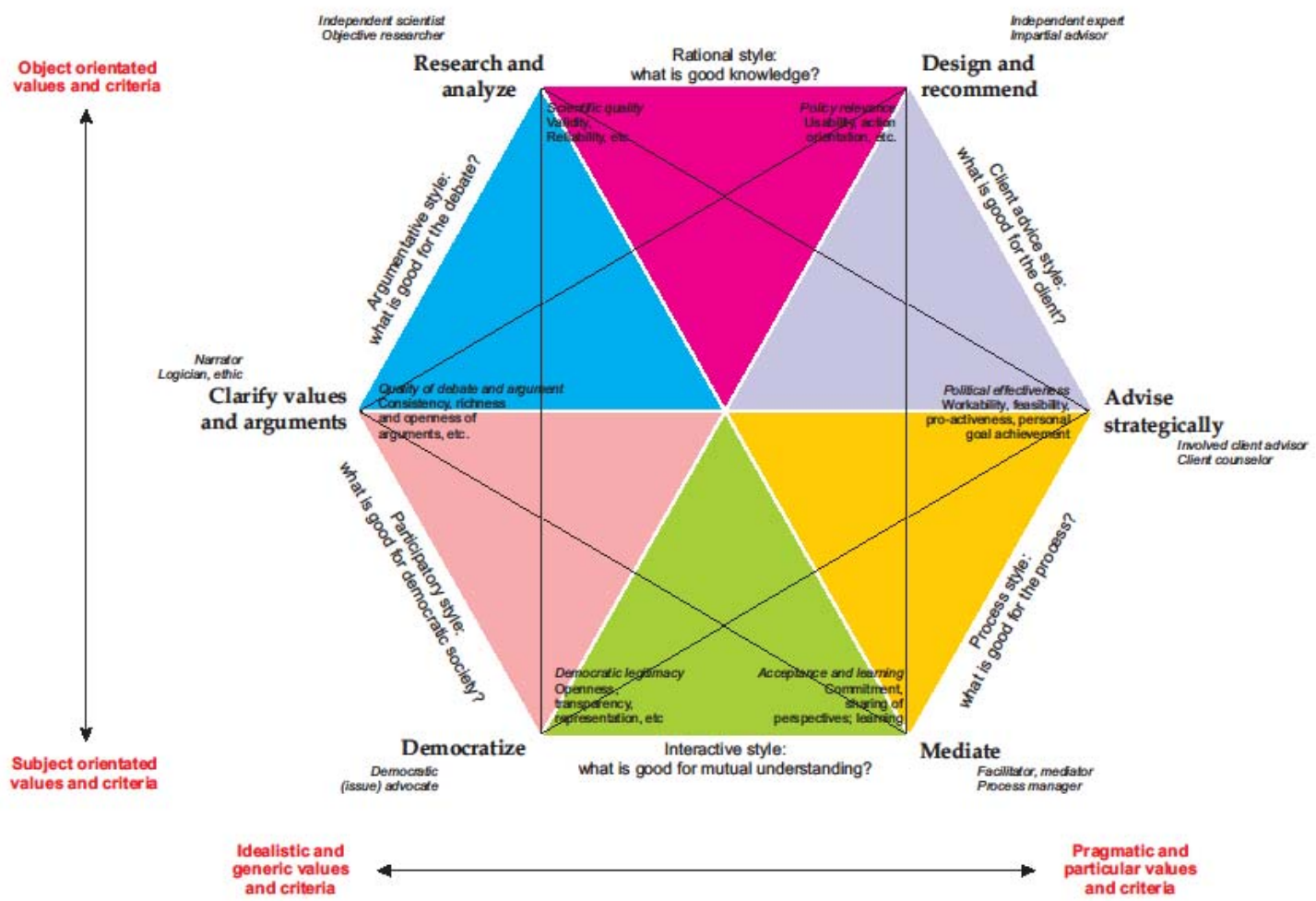
Outline: Bardach's steps



Mayer van Daalen & Bots

Hexagon: six roles

research and analyse
design and recommend
advise strategically
mediate
democratize
clarify values and arguments



3. Benefits of a systems approach

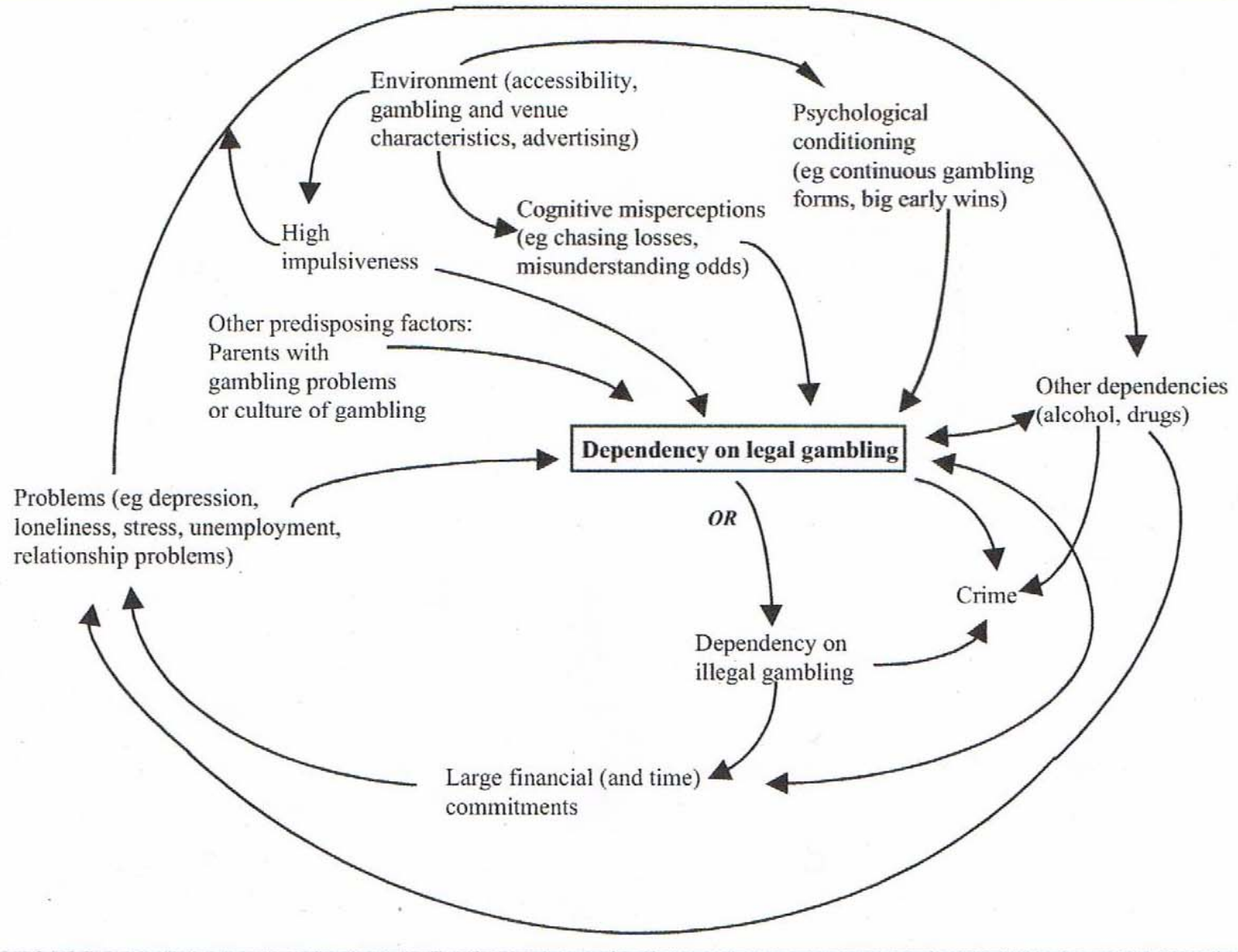
- It facilitates portraying more complex issues and various influences on policy outcomes – coming from both in and outside of government; This is particularly important when outcomes require changes to individual, group and organisational behaviour;
- It helps identify state and non-state options and encourages options which are cross-sectoral and involve collaboration with others;
- An easier way to consider public value – which must be tested and interrogated and not assumed.
- It helps formulate hypotheses/views about some cause and effects and what works (and doesn't);
- It assists advisers to select and apply useful policy tools and methods.

Examples of useful methods and tools

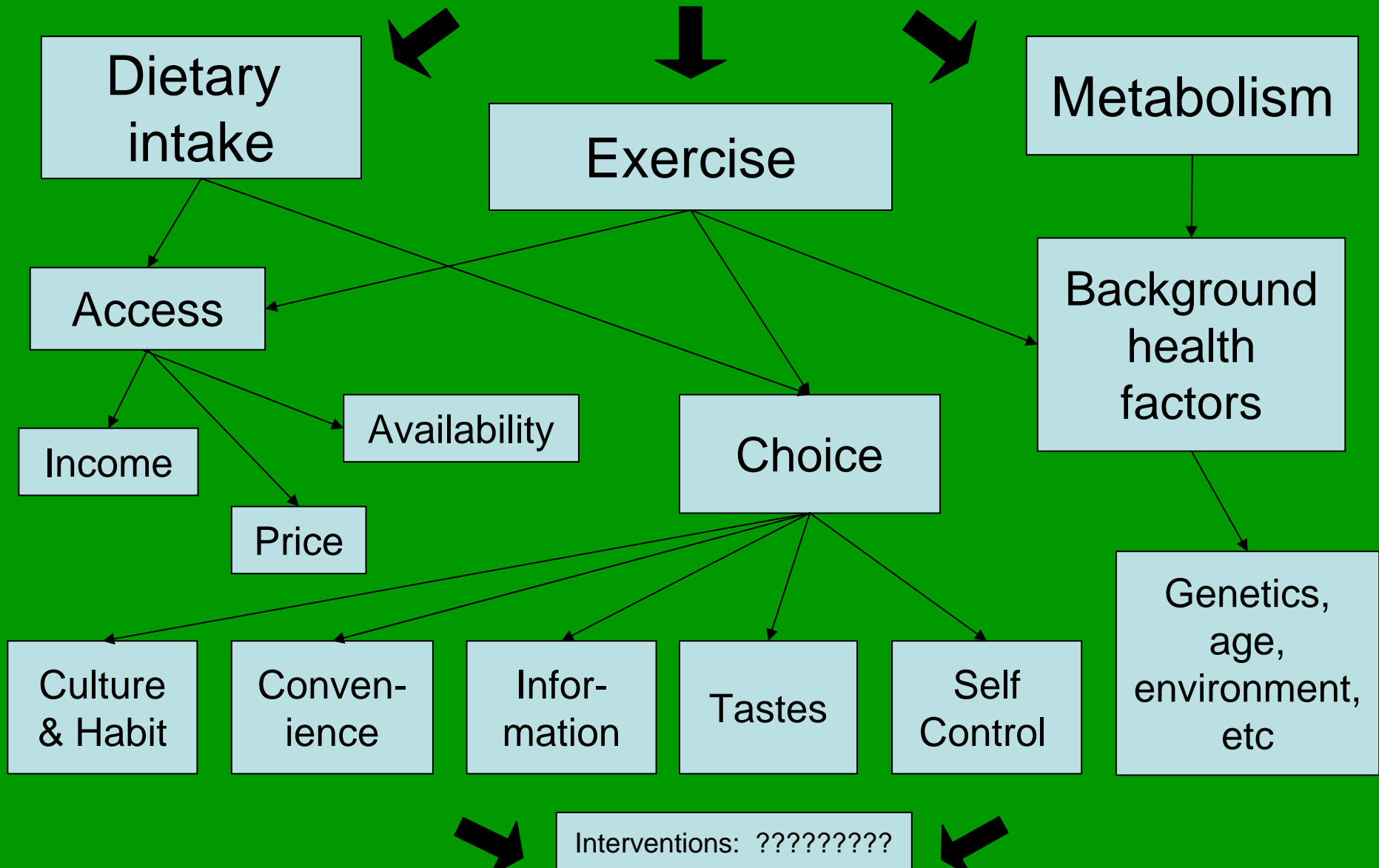
- Causal pathways -gambling
- Intervention logic - healthy body weight
- Policy logic, assumptions and risks:
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Figure 9

Causal pathways and problem gambling



End outcome: Healthy body weight

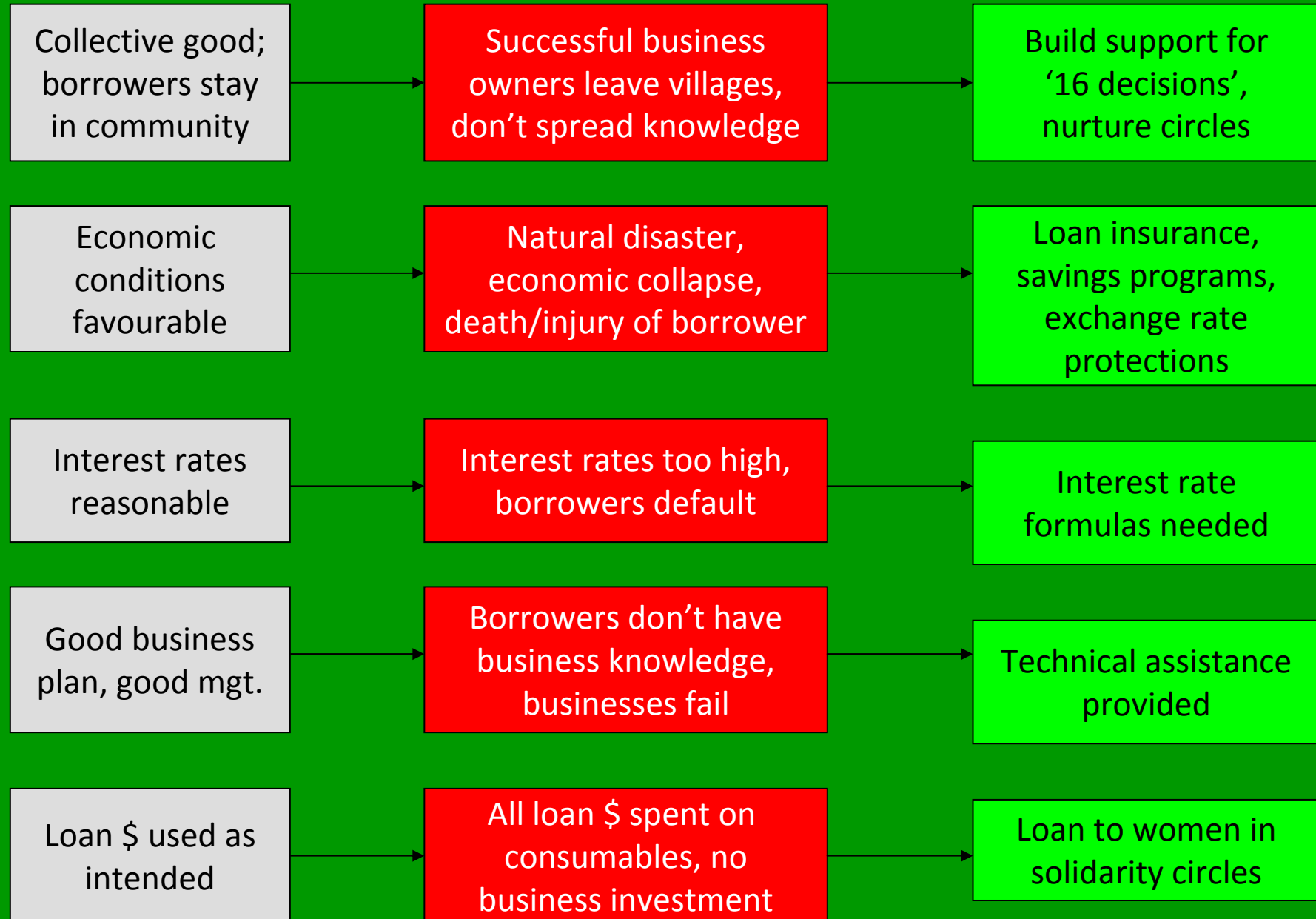


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ASSUMPTIONS

RISKS

REMEDIES



4. How can more value be derived from policy work?

Policy Capability: ‘the sustained ability to perform from a systemic perspective’, a complex phenomena which involves individual, organisational and environmental influences.

“It can be defined as an outcome (a capable nation, government, worker); an output (performance); or an input (knowledge, competency, ability to perform)”.

(Bryson, J., Mallon M & Merritt, K. 2004)

Elements of Capability

- Knowledge
- Skills: ability (usually learned through training) to perform tasks;
- Competencies: knowledge, skills and abilities required by staff to perform to high standard;
 - general: communication, generic management skills;
 - contextual: public sector understanding; government priorities;
 - technical: specific bodies of knowledge, analytical skills;

Adding Value to Policy Advice

- Policy design must include implementation considerations;
- Co-production is essential when there is no agreement about 'wicked' issues' and solutions can not be delivered by one organisation working in isolation;
- Focus on organisational success is not enough; must focus on aligning policies to ensure effectiveness;
- Budget constraints can encourage 'efficiency' over 'effectiveness'; both are needed;

- Policies need to work in theory and practice, based on evaluation, learning and innovation;
- Understand policy issues in a wider system context, particularly for more complex issues;
- Look at a range of ‘problem-solution’ pairs, rather than accepting policy advisory requests as ‘advice on a problem’;
- Develop crafting skills to design policy processes which are ‘fit for purpose’;
- More evaluation and information on ‘what works’ is needed to provide continuous learning and adaptation.

Policy as Design – involving art, science and craft

- Greater alignment between strategy, policy and service delivery in pursuit of outcomes;
- More discussion and skills development in applying concepts and frameworks to issues and testing and evaluating effectiveness in achieving outcomes;
- Invest in and develop the profession of policy analysts and advisers;
- Professional policy advisers must have the freedom, time and resources to undertake their work and for it to be considered;
- Westminster advisory systems have a lot going for them; their value comes from quality of the advice and decisions which emerge from them.

POLICY WORK DOMAINS

STRATEGIC

Build strategy, frame policy choices, undertake research and development, anticipate issues

Role of government analysis, trend analysis, futures thinking

RESPONSIVE

Formulate, test, refine, and design programs, supply just-in-time information and advice

Options bank withdrawals, policy cross-breeding, assessment of options against criteria, risk analysis and mitigation planning

OPERATIONAL

Prepare programs, roll them out, learn, improve delivery and effectiveness, feed back to policy designers

Learning from process evaluations, bee keeping, systems for feedback from target populations, risk assessment

FUNCTIONS

SELECTED TOOLS & TASKS

Market and government failure spotting, option spotting using system maps, learning from outcome evaluations

Pilot testing, dialogue-based crafting of options, forensic analysis of current policy

Organisational analysis and strategic thinking

Systems thinking, strategic conversation, intervention logic, evidence review, scenario writing

Policy Roles & Functions

POLICY CO-PRODUCTION

Longer-term future focus; setting agendas

ENVIRONMENT SCANNING

- *Forecasting
- *Alert to long-term trends and potential changes in society, economy, etc
- *Future-oriented briefings, BIM's & equivalents
- *Suggest directions for policy development

- *Strategic conversation
- *Working across government and with non-gov't actors to clarify issues, set agendas, find better approaches
- *Partnerships
- *Deliberative democracy
- *Summits

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

- *Monitoring
- *Systematic review of existing research
- *New research
- *Ongoing evaluation
- *Goal clarification
- *Learn from past and apply to future

OPTIONS ANALYSIS & DESIGN

- *Scope problems and opportunities
- *Search for new and better ideas (blue skies work)
- *Clarify roles of gov't and non-gov't agents
- *Test policy ideas by projecting outcomes, analysing logic

- *Put gov't priorities into action
- *Tailor bright ideas to local settings
- *Make new and existing programmes work
- *Find and manage risks
- *Find and fix design flaws
- *Retrofit policy arguments to chosen policies

IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS & DESIGN

- *Eyes and ears of minister
- *Anticipate problems and opportunities and alert key people to them
- *Short-turnaround briefings
- *Contributions to speeches, press releases, parliamentary questions, etc

Present and near-term future focus; enacting agendas

RESPONSIVENESS TO POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Broad Focus

Detail Focus



Policy leadership involves everyone

Policy analysts and advisers

Elected/appointed decision-makers

Citizens and stakeholders

Various public, private and NGO sector
organisations and institutions

Academic and practitioner communities

Media

International and local research and evidence

Leadership and followership are required