**Preparing Alternatives: Checklist**

Generating a range of policy options is an important step in the policy development process. Once a list has been generated, this checklist is intended to help identify the strongest options for further analysis. The checklist is not presented in any particular order and the relative importance of each question will vary depending on the policy issue being considered.

**Merit** – does the policy option address the root cause? Does research and other evidence support this option?

**Reliability** – Are there proven test cases? Has this been successful elsewhere?

**Stability** – Will it still work if conditions change? If not how likely are conditions to change?

**Riskiness** – Is there a chance that it will fail?

**Cost** – Can it be implemented within existing budgets? Will it be cost-effective? Are there sources of funding available to support implementation?

**Simplicity** – Is it easy to implement?

**Compatibility** – Is it consistent with existing policies, programs, services?

**Reversibility** – If it turns out not to work, will it be easy to remove/cancel?

**Robustness** – Will it hold up over time?

**Acceptance** – Is it consistent with public and stakeholder input and expectations?

**Dependencies** – Does its success depend on external factors? Will it work if one of its component parts fails?

**Communicability** – Will it be easy to explain?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **How Do You Identify the Full Range of Policy Options? Some Methods to Consider** | | |
| **Comb the World:** Research policy responses to similar problems in comparable places; Look for real world case studies | **Conduct Research:** Undertake a literature review of journals, government reports, conference proceedings, etc. | **Develop Typologies:** Identify everyone impacted, consider what they might recommend (based on evidence and engagement), and analyze which policy option would best address all impacts. |
| **Consider Differing Priorities:** Consider what groups of people with different priorities would do in the same situation | **Consider the Data:** Review data associated with the problem; what does it suggest that you do? | **Modify Existing Solutions:** magnify (do more), minify (do less), substitute, combine, rearrange, relocate, adjust timing, adjust organization, change decision-making approach. |
| **Listen:** Scan what people are recommending that government do (sourced from: consultations, social media, traditional media, letters to the editor, letters to the minister etc.). Consider who isn’t speaking up, but may be impacted. | **Talk to Others:** Undertake a jurisdictional scan (e.g., email questions to other governments, undertake key informant interviews, contact people who have implemented similar policies). | **Brainstorm:** list all possible options with no judgement, then evaluate and rank ideas identified. |

****

Policy connects the dots

PolicyNL