

## UNIT 7

# Formulating and implementing road safety policy

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## Overview

**F**ormulating and implementing policies is necessary for improving road safety. Policies will have no effect on road safety unless they are implemented. This unit examines the importance of road safety policy, and then describes the basic steps and issues to consider in formulating and implementing road safety policy.

## Objectives

By the end of this unit, the trainee should be able to:

- explain the importance of developing policies for road traffic injury prevention;
- describe the process of developing a policy for road traffic injury prevention;
- discuss the role of a national lead agency in developing and implementing policies for road traffic injury prevention.

## Importance of policy in preventing road traffic injuries

The term policy can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Here we consider a national policy on road safety to be a written document that provides the basis for action to be taken jointly by the government and its nongovernmental partners (1).

A policy is necessary to (1, 2) :

- raise awareness and create mutual understanding about a situation;
- articulate ethical and other principles that should justify and guide action;
- generate a consensus vision on the actions to be undertaken;
- provide a framework for action;
- define institutional responsibilities and mechanisms of coordination;
- secure or raise political commitment;
- engage a variety of partners;
- identify measures which are likely to produce good results;
- monitor progress and effectiveness of strategies.

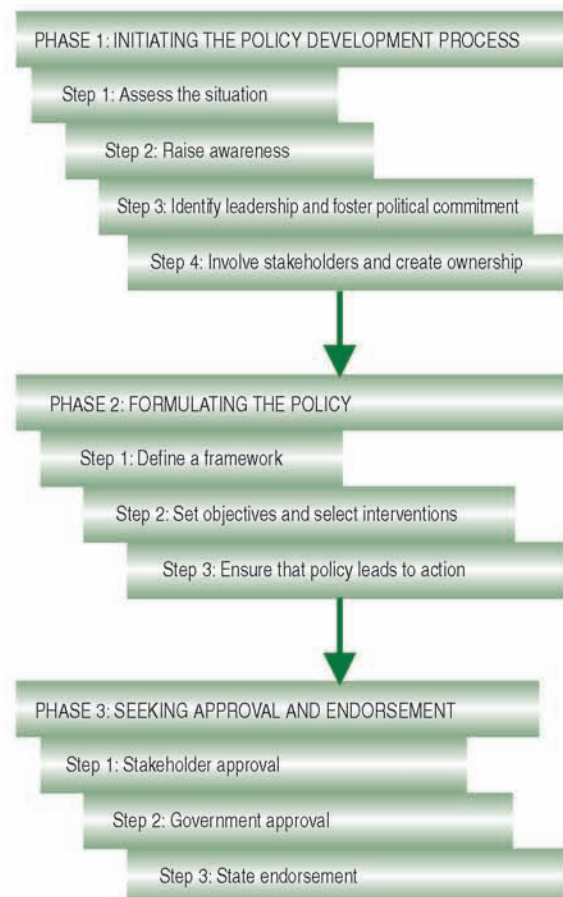
## Policy formulation process

Policy formulation and implementation is a continuous process. This process is often presented as taking place in phases or stages, in order to make it easier to identify key elements. However, it should be noted that this process is complex and it does not necessarily move in a smooth manner from one step to another.

For the sake of systematic presentation and clarification of key issues, we present the process of developing a national policy as taking place in three phases (Figure 7.1). In Phase 1 the policy development process is being initiated. In Phase 2 the policy document itself is being formulated.

FIGURE 7.1

### The three phases of the policy development process



Source: reference 1.

Finally, in Phase 3 official approval and endorsement of the policy is being sought. Each of the three phases is composed of a number of steps.

Important points to note about the process presented in Figure 7.1 are as follows:

- In real life, a policy development process can be much more chaotic than the best-case scenario portrayed here. It may be necessary to jump ahead and come back to a step that ideally should have happened earlier on in the process.
- This process is influenced by social, economic and political factors.
- Political will and commitment are necessary for effective policy formulation and implementation.
- The process takes time, consultation, negotiation and effort.
- Ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the entire process.
- Consultation should be conducted with all stakeholders in an open, fair and transparent manner.
- Ensure that all the stakeholders approve and endorse the policy document.
- The very act of developing a policy document can bring about significant changes in attitudes and perceptions that can go a long way towards tackling a problem.
- Implementation of policy is essential once a policy has been formulated.
- Implementation of road safety measures requires coordinated action. Responsibilities at different levels need to be clearly spelled out.
- Financial and human resources need to be provided for implementation.
- Evaluating policy implementation is necessary. Evaluation provides feedback on how well the policy is working and can lead to improvement of the policy itself.

### **Institutional framework**

Road safety work is a complex process involving different sectors. There is thus a need for a functional and effective institutional framework for the development and implementation of policies and programmes to prevent road traffic injuries.

### **Activity**

#### **Task**

Is there a national road safety policy and action plan in your country? If your answer is yes, prepare a one-page summary of the aims, targets and activities that have been implemented. What are the strengths in the policy and plan? What are the weaknesses in the policy and plan? If there is no policy, what steps do you plan to take to initiate the process of developing a national road safety policy or action plan?

#### **Expected results**

This exercise is meant to assist trainees with reviewing their national road safety policy and action plan. If possible, the trainees should be given this question in advance of the training session so that they have time to gather the relevant information. If this is not possible, allow them answer based on their previous knowledge and experience. This exercise is meant to get trainees to think much more deeply about the road safety policies and action plans in their countries, and especially about whether or not these policies and plans are being implemented.

### **The need for a lead agency**

Though different institutional frameworks are possible, there is a need to identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road safety effort. The lead agency should have authority and responsibility to make decisions, control resources and coordinate efforts by all sectors of government – including those of health, transport, education and the police. This agency should have adequate finances to use for road safety, and should be publicly accountable for its actions.

Different models can be effective in road safety and each country needs to create a lead agency appropriate to its own circumstances. Specific efforts should be taken by the agency to engage all significant groups concerned with road safety. The national road safety agency should be an

independent statutory organization attached to, or functioning in parallel with the ministry dealing with road transport, and it should be independent of the road building agency. The road safety agency should have a chairman of the rank of a minister or principal secretary to the government of the country. Awareness, communication and collaboration are key to establishing and sustaining national road safety efforts. National efforts will be boosted if one or more well-known political leaders can actively champion the cause of road safety.

The specific tasks of a national lead agency are to (1):

- manage, coordinate and commission all activities regarding road safety in the country;
- advise all arms of the government on all matters relating to road safety;
- formulate policy, set goals and elaborate strategies for road safety in the country, including the targeting of particular areas and the setting of priorities;
- coordinate between different agencies of the government, research and academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations;
- compile and analyse national statistics, and ensure that comprehensive data exist for road safety planning;
- set road safety research priorities and fund projects in those priority areas;
- assemble and disseminate information and good practice, including sharing research findings, good practice models and experiences with various agencies involved in road transport and safety planning;
- establish and fund research and teaching institutions and centres specifically for work on road safety or transport and related issues;
- establish safety standards for roads, road infrastructure and vehicles;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the road safety strategies at the central and local levels;
- encourage and enable local governments to set up relevant institutional structures;

- organize regular national conferences on road safety;
- procure sufficient finance for road safety work;
- coordinate the planning and implementation of road safety work, taking into consideration the interests of society, user groups, trade and industry, and individuals, as well as environmental aspects.

### Sub-national and local institutions

While the national lead agency coordinates the road safety effort for the entire country, it may also be necessary to have sub-national institutional structures to translate and implement policy at the local level. Formal systems need to be set up in each state or province, and in each city to coordinate local efforts. Operational intersectoral programmes can be designed and implemented every year. These plans and interventions take into account national priorities as well as the local needs identified through the involvement of local actors.

There could be a road safety agency in every state or province. The form and structure of such agencies would vary from country to country because of wide differences in administrative and financial structures at the sub-national level. The provincial agency, which sets policy for road safety in the province, can involve officials from concerned departments, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations and businesses concerned with the road transport sector. The actors involved could include departments of roads, transport, police, education and health, along with experts from academic and other research institutions.

The provincial agency would take a leading role in coordinating the road safety effort of all relevant agencies and community groups within its particular administrative area. These activities should be consistent with the national road safety plan, and the provincial agency should coordinate activities across all relevant agencies in that administrative area.

## Key points

- Policy formulation and implementation is a continuous process.
- This process is often presented as taking place in phases or stages, to make it easier to identify key elements, but the process is complex and does not necessarily move in a smooth manner from one step to another.
- There is a need for a functional and effective institutional framework for development and implementation of policies and programmes to prevent road traffic injuries.
- There is a need to identify a lead agency in government to guide the national road safety effort. The national lead agency coordinates the road safety effort for the entire country.
- It is necessary to have sub-national institutional structures to translate and implement policy, and coordinate activities across all relevant agencies at the local level.

## Definitions of key concepts

- Policy: a set of principles guiding decision-making, providing a framework against which proposals or activities can be tested or measured (1).
- Strategy: addresses the “how” of a national policy by defining the main directions and actions to achieve policy objectives.
- Action plan: defines (more precisely than a strategy) the specific activities, resources and time frame needed to achieve policy objectives, and provides guidance on how to implement, monitor and evaluate activities.
- Institution: formal or informal system of rules, structures and constraints that guide and shape human interaction (3).

## Questions to think about

- a) What is the relationship between policy and legislation?
- b) Is there a functional institutional framework for road traffic injury prevention in the sub-national administrative units in your country? What do you identify as the strengths and weaknesses in the existing framework? What practical steps do you propose to take to address the weaknesses you have identified?

## References

1. Schopper D, Lormand JD, Waxweiler R. *Developing policies to prevent injuries and violence: guidelines for policy-makers and planners*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2006.
2. Foster M et al. Making policy. In: McClure R, Stevenson M, McEvoy S, eds. *The scientific basis of injury prevention and control*. Melbourne, IP Communications, 2004: 267–282.
3. North D. *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

## Further reading

Drager N, McClintock E, Moffitt M. *Negotiating health development: a guide for practitioners*. Cambridge, MA, and Geneva, Conflict Management Group and World Health Organization, 2000.

Peden M et al. *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.

Notes

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## Trainee's evaluation of Unit 7: Formulating and implementing road safety policy

This form is to be completed by the trainee at the end of this unit to assess the content and approach used. This evaluation is helpful to the trainee, trainer and developer of this manual.

1. To what extent did you achieve the objectives set for this unit? (Please check once using "X" for each objective)

Objectives	Completely successful	Generally successful	Completely unsuccessful
Explain the importance of developing policies for road traffic injury prevention.			
Describe the process of developing a policy for road traffic injury prevention.			
Discuss the role of a national lead agency in developing and implementing policies for road traffic injury prevention.			

2. What is your overall rating of the content presented in this unit? (Please check one using "X")

Scale	Excellent	Better than expected	Satisfactory	Below average
Rating				

3. How do you rate the balance between theoretical and practical content in this unit? (Please check one using "X")

Scale	Good balance	Too theoretical	Too practical
Rating			

4. a) Did you find the activities presented in the unit helpful? (Please check one)

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

- b) If yes, in what ways were they helpful? What improvements do you suggest?

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- c) If no, what were the shortcomings? What suggestions do you have to make them helpful?

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5. What did you like most about the unit?

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6. What did you like least about the unit?

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7. What did you learn most from this unit?

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8. Explain how your organization, community, city and country, and other interested parties will benefit from your having read this unit.

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9. What do you think should be added to this unit?

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10. What do you think should be dropped from this unit?

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