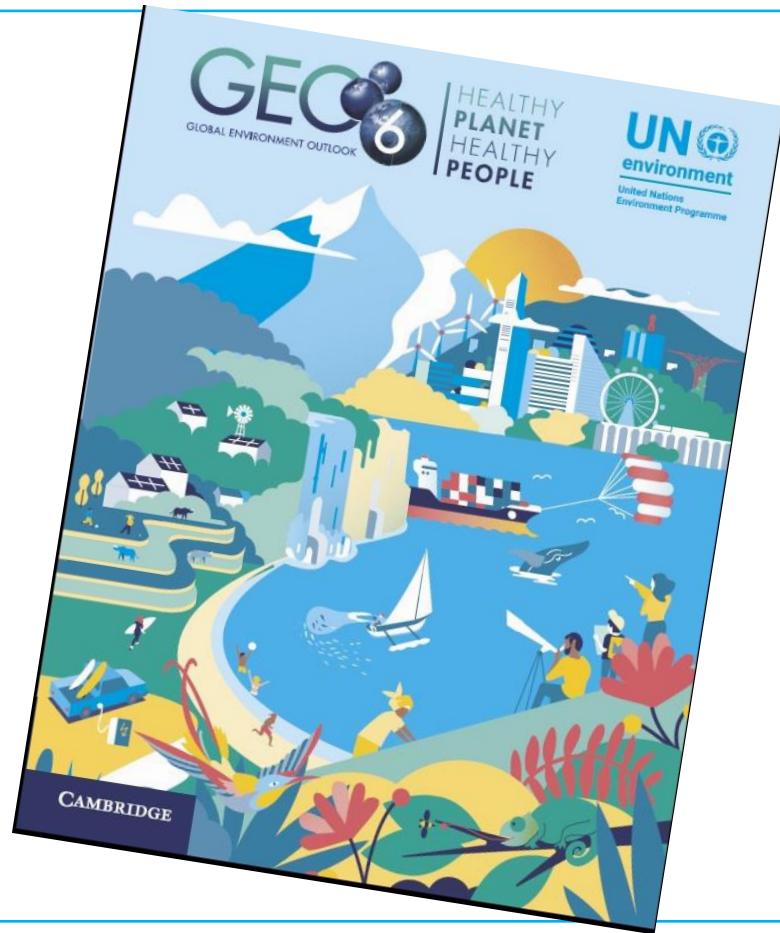UN environment programme
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Assessing policy effectiveness: a key tool for ensuring impact

Case study of an environmental policy

The sixth Global Environment Outlook

What does it have to say about policy?

- UNEP's flagship environmental assessment, conducted every 4-5 years.
- Has evolved over time to look more closely at why environmental policies might not be working
- 10 chapters in GEO-6 which looked at the effectiveness of 25 environmental policies.
- Goal of the analysis is try to draw some broad lessons learned from over 30 years of how countries or regions have tried to address increasingly complex environmental issues.

Policy Theory and Practice: what is assessment of policy effectiveness?

Key elements of ensuring intended impact

Figure 11.1: Conceptual outline of policy effectiveness analysis
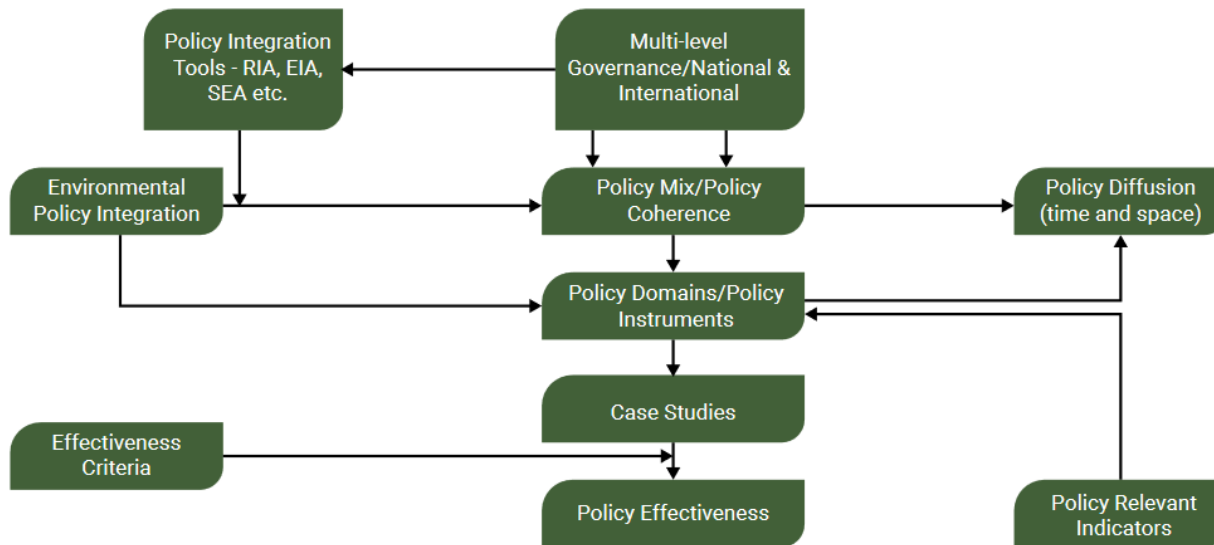
- In the environmental sphere, goals-based diplomacy has emerged as one of the ways for countries to make progress on environmental objectives
- Translating those environmental goals into reality requires effective national policies
- Effectiveness is determined by a number of factors, including overall cost, benefits, competitiveness, unintended consequences and environmental outcomes.
- Good up-front policy design often determines eventual effectiveness of policies

A typical policy cycle

How can policy be more effectively be developed and implemented?

Figure 11.2: The policy cycle
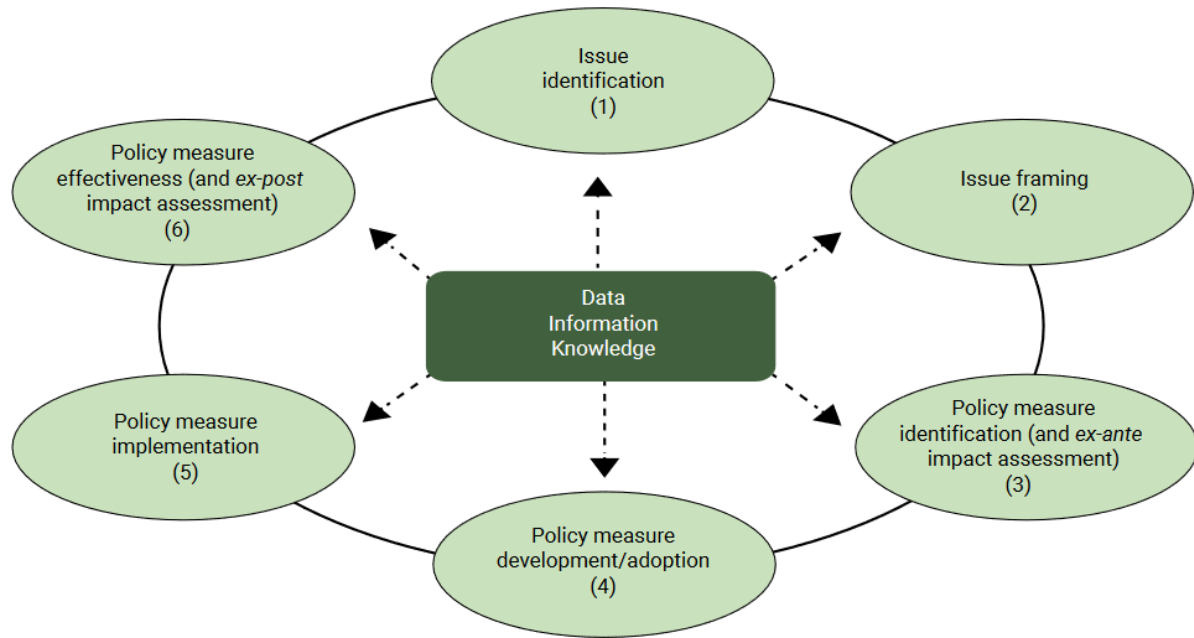
Source: European Environment Agency [EEA] (2006)

- **Issue identification:** What are we trying to solve? What would be the ideal outcome?
- **Issue framing:** How complex is the issue? What are the other impacts that might result from the policy?
- **Policy/measure:** which instrument should be the most effective? Pricing, regulation, persuasion?
- **Performance indicators:** how should we track the policy?
- **Effectiveness assessment:** After some time, have we achieved the intended outcomes?
- **Adaptive management:** what should we change to redirect the policy?

Policy typology

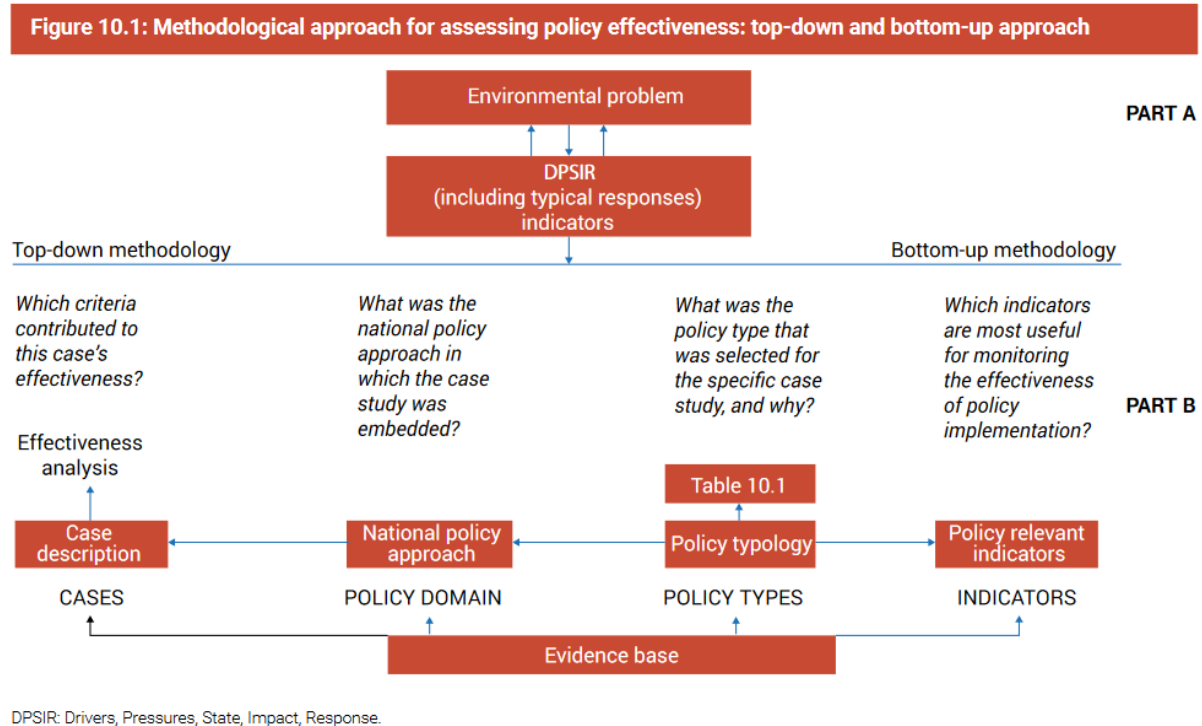Which broad categories of policies could be implemented

Table 10.1: Policy typology

Policy instrument / governance approach	Point of intervention[a]	Assumed causal mechanism
Command and Control	Industrial processes and products Technologies End of pipe or smokestack pollution control	Prohibition of environmentally harmful technologies (products and processes) or demanding environmentally friendly technologies as part of permitting => reduced emissions/resource use => if emissions/resource use cannot be reduced enough by upstream controls, then improved waste management is needed. Can also address enabling issues such as property rights and access issues.
Promotion of innovation	Green innovation	Incentivizing R&D in green technologies => introducing green technologies to markets (=> cost savings + exports)
Market-based/ economic incentives	Pricing of products or processes	Change of relative prices between environmentally harmful and green technologies => increased markets for green services; => incentives to innovate and disincentives to cause environmental harm.
Convincing consumers, employees and stockholders	Public information, education, knowledge, awareness, advocacy	Knowledgeable consumers and producers will voluntarily choose environmentally sound products and processes.
Enabling actors	Environmental actors	Strengthening participation of governmental and non-governmental actors in decision-making on policies or projects leading to improved project design and implementation.
Supporting investments	Infrastructure and technologies	'Green' infrastructure (waste management, electricity grids for renewables, railways, etc.) => enabling market access for green technologies => demand for increased access.

- **Command and control:** Regulation, standards
- **Promotion of innovation:** Supporting research and development, support for commercialization
- **Market-based incentives:** carbon price, subsidies
- **Changing behaviours:** public education, knowledge, awareness, advocacy
- **Supportive investments:** infrastructure, enabling market access

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Qualitative method for assessing policy effectiveness

Which criteria are important to consider?

Figure 10.1: Methodological approach for assessing policy effectiveness: top-down and bottom-up approach

DPSIR: Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact, Response.

- 12 criteria for assessing case studies"
  - i. Baseline
  - ii. Coherence/convergence/synergy
  - iii. Co-benefits
  - iv. Equity/winners and losers
  - v. Enabling/constraining factors
  - vi. Cost/cost-effectiveness
  - vii. Time frame
  - viii. Feasibility/implementability
  - ix. Acceptability
  - x. Stakeholder involvement
  - xi. Unintended effects
  - xii. Effectiveness/goal achievement
- Tracking of outcomes indicators – environmental results

Effectiveness depends on national context

Assessment can be somewhat subjective

- If the initial situation was desperate, then any improvement can be viewed as being effective;
- High costs of some policies may take resources away from other areas;
- Is the policy benefiting wealthy individuals (free riders) at the expense of poorer communities?
- How easy is it to adapt the policy once it is in place?
- Are there transboundary issues? Are other communities or countries affected by the policy?
- Can the policy be considered more effective if co-benefits are more carefully tracked?
- How can bias be avoided in the assessment process?

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Open discussion

- How you assess the effectiveness of your STI policies

- Did the policy have a baseline before it was implemented?

- Was cost effectiveness assessed?

- Were co-benefits assessed?

- What challenges do you find when assessing the effectiveness of your STI policy?

Thank you

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Resources

- https://www.unep.org/resources/assessment/part-b-policies-goals-objectives-and-environmental-governance-assessment-their?_ga=2.212622996.1238710380.1637924947-1514210053.1613424110
- https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27663/GEO6_CH10.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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