

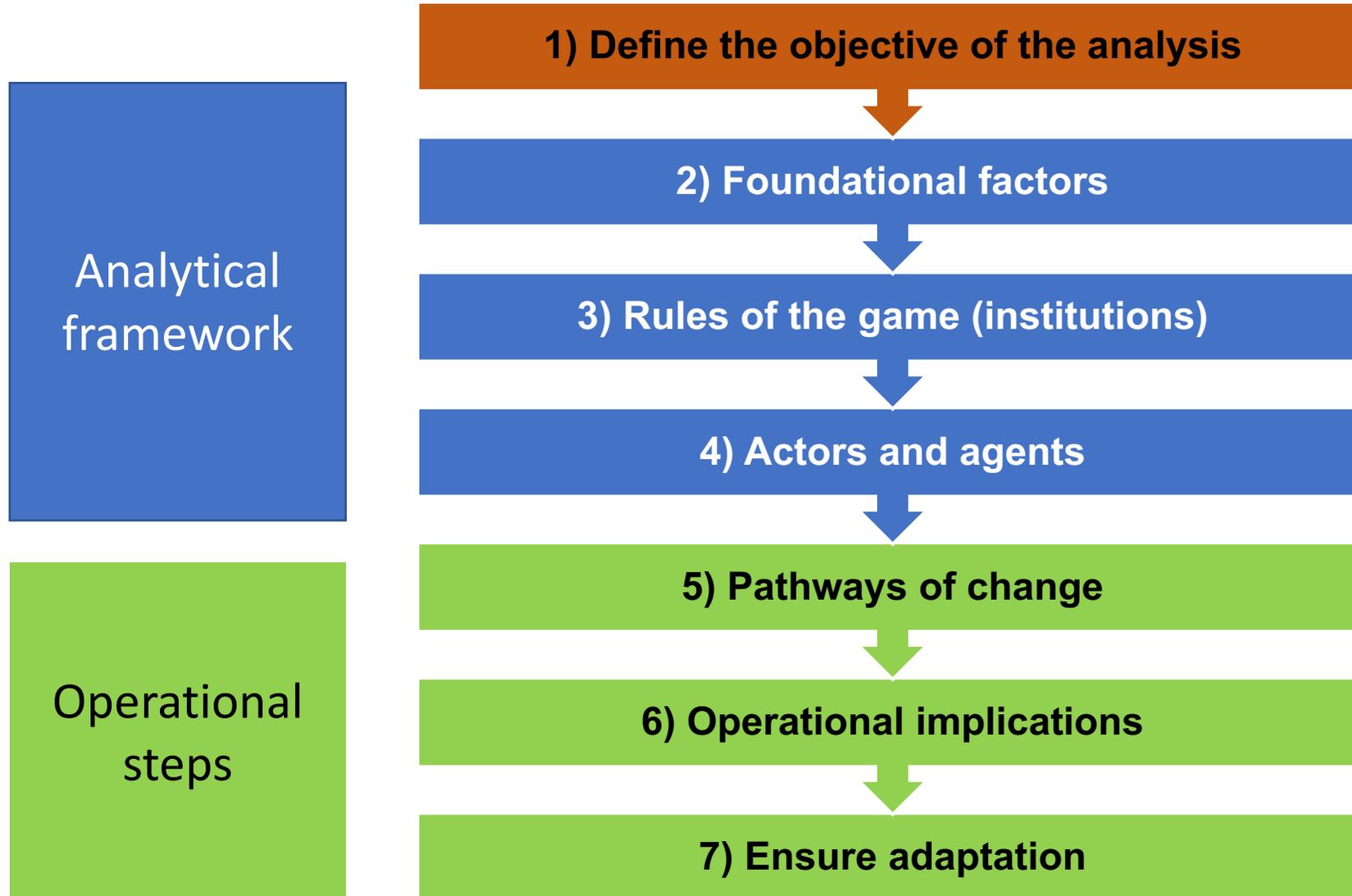
Introduction to case study exercises

Session 5

SDC Balkans Thinking and Working Politically Workshop,

Skopje, 12 September 2019

A seven-step framework to go from analysis to action



Starting the exercise

- Go to your group + appoint a chair and rapporteur
- You've been given background information on a programme
- You need to develop a programme, using a PEA and a TWP approach!
- You can write responses on flipcharts.
- For debriefing in plenary: report back what you learned, not the answers
- Steps 1 to 4: Problem-setting and analysis
- Steps 5 and 6: Two scenarios
 - Define pathways for change
 - Design SDC's response
- Step 7: Challenge: ensure the programme is flexible and adaptive

Step 1: objective setting

PEA at all levels can be *contextual* and/or *problem-driven*

Contextual analysis aims at improving understanding of the context for development interventions and to design interventions that fit with the context. Examples:

- How can we better understand the incentives acting on politicians to deliver public goods and services?
- What are the factors shaping decentralisation processes?
- What factors determine the extent to which local actors engage in democratic and accountability processes?
- What might stimulate and sustain collective action by social groups to demand better public services?
- What are the relationships between politicians and business people and how does this affect economic development?

Step 1: objective setting (2)

Problem driven analysis aims at finding ways to address a specific public policy problem. The problem must be connected to the way that institutions, interests and incentives work (i.e. not just a technical problem or lack of capacity). Problems should be clearly defined and operationally relevant.

Examples:

- Why is the system of medicine procurement and supply not working properly?
- Why is country x spending too much on tertiary health care and too little on primary health care?
- Public financial management is undermined by weak budget execution and lack of transparency. Why are formal accountability institutions not working?

Step 2 - Structural factors

Foundational / structural factors are deeply embedded factors that shape the broad character of the state and political system. Many have long term origins and may be slow to change.

Questions to ask:

What long-lasting or deep-seated features of the region, the state or the society must be noted in order to understand the way institutions work and people behave in the context or field of problems under consideration?

For example:

- The extent of the state's territorial control and revenue base
- Geostrategic factors
- Colonial legacies
- The social class structure

Step 3 - Rules of the game

*This covers the **formal and informal institutions**, norms and values that influence the behaviour and capacities of different actors and the relationships between them. May be 'sticky', but can also change over the medium term.*

Questions to ask:

- What are the key legal and regulatory instruments affecting the problem or context of concern. Are these enforced? Are they subverted by informal institutions?
- To what extent is political power personalised or vested in strong institutions?
- How does the system of political and electoral competition affect the problem in hand?
- What are the economic institutions affecting markets, competition and the creation of economic rents
- How do gender relations affect power and rights?

Step 4 - Understanding the interaction between institutions, individuals and incentives

1. What's the problem?
 - Identifying the manifestations of weakness. Symptoms and causes.
2. Who's in charge here?
 - Mapping institutional power: Who has power? Over whom? What is the source of that authority?
3. What's in it for me?
 - Incentives: personal, political, institutional, cultural
4. Who wins & who loses from change?
 - Understanding attitudes to reform
5. "Make sure everybody gets something"
 - Building a coalition for change by aligning incentives towards reform

Step 5 – Change pathways

A theory (or pathway) of change is needed in order to make a bridge between (a) understanding the PE dynamics (Steps 1-4) and (b) drawing out the implications for development agencies or governments.

The theory/pathway of change should describe a **plausible pathway by which change is expected to occur**. The content of Theory of Change varies, but may include:

- longer-term changes (e.g. socio-economic classes; women's education; cities; economic structures....)
- shifting institutions (markets, information, media...)
- impact of changing regional/international context
- changes among actors (new coalitions , interests...)

Questions to ask:

- What **trends** are already observable in the foundational factors, institutions and actors analysed in steps 2-4?
- How stable is the **political settlement**? Where are the sources of that may lead to a renegotiation of the political settlement?
- What are the **plausible alternative scenarios** for future reform? What factors might lead each scenario to happen?
- **What can be learned** from previous of comparable reform episodes on how change happens?
- What is the **potential to promote reform** through: 1) making use of long term trends in foundational factors, 2) promoting institutional reform, 3) improving information flows and transparency, 4) bringing stakeholders together in new alliances/coalitions?
- What **intermediate steps** may be needed on the change pathway?

Step 6 – operational implications

What are the implications of the analysis for:

- **Country strategy**
Choice of sectors, funding levels, aid modalities, mix of aid and non-aid instruments
- **New programme/project design**
PEA can inform questions of timing, sequencing, entry points, partner selection, funding modalities, risk management, MEL
- **Review of existing programmes/projects**
How should existing programmes be adapted to respond to the changing risks and opportunities identified by PEA? Ongoing basis or mid-term reviews.
- **What else for SDC offices in the Balkans?**

Step 7 – Flexibility, adaptation, iteration

Projects need to change when a) the context changes OR b) when activities are not having in the intended effect. Political analysis is central to both:

- a) **Continuing political analysis** should be able to identify how shifts in the context might affect the project, undermine local support or alter the underlying incentives
 - Project plans and activities can then be revised in the light of those changes

- b) **MEL needs to be a continuing** and integral exercise, so you know immediately if an activity is not working ...
 - the political analysis should force you to reflect on previous assumptions and alter activity accordingly

But: **flexibility is not a substitute for strategy**

- the programme should have consistent strategic objectives, but be willing to alter the path in order to get there