

Keep Track of changes in the policy environment

To regularly review and adapt the funding strategy

Before you start

- Gain a thorough knowledge of your Action Plan.
- Prepare your review team members by presenting them the Action Plan and by providing them short descriptions of the themes and planned projects.
- Most members of the review group need to have a good understanding of your Action Plan and its different elements as well as an excellent knowledge of the relevant policy environment.
- The team should have the capacity to assess evolving changes rationally without bias or political influence and to listen to each other. Good communication and trust are important facilitating factors.
- Organise the discussions in a safe and calm environment to ensure that the review group will not be disturbed by other issues and that you will have enough time for listening and understanding each other's point of view.

It is a necessary part of any action plan to understand the great lines of policy, political circumstances, evolving socio-economic needs and potential institutional change and to assess the impact of any change on the Plan.

2 tools are proposed for this task in order to understand complex problems by simplifying them:

- 1) The **Nested Wholes Diagram** helps to understand the wider context of a project/action plan, particularly the policy context and the wider institutional, political and socio-economic environment.
- 2) The **Iceberg Model** is a tool for analysing the deeper causalities of a problem or phenomenon such as change. This helps distinguishing observed changes in a policy or institutional environment between those that are in or out of the project leader's sphere of control.

How to use it?

Step 1 Summarise the main points of your Action Plan and projects, ensure that the members of the review team will have a good level of understanding and be available for any required clarification (organise a detailed briefing at the first meeting).

Step 2 As a group, use the **Nested Whole Diagram** and identify the main policies and funding programmes that have a close relation to your Action Plan. Include also institutions, NGOs, political, social and economic organisations and those policies and funding programmes that have a less direct connection with the Action Plan, but could still be relevant. Draw the main connection lines between the elements of this ecosystem.

Step 3 Agree how often the group should meet to review the diagram and to assess the impact of any changes, and schedule the meetings.

Step 4 As a group, identify any intelligence about forthcoming change that might affect the Action Plan. It will be useful to differentiate between four areas: policy, politics/government, institutions, and funding programmes. Update the original Nested Whole Diagram accordingly.

Step 5 As Debate on what the observed developments might imply for the Action Plan (i.e. likelihood and risks of accessing funding for projects). With the help of the **Iceberg Model** go deeper into these issues for understanding their roots, and for distinguishing those changes that your Action Plan and Funding Strategy can accommodate from those that cannot be easily addressed.

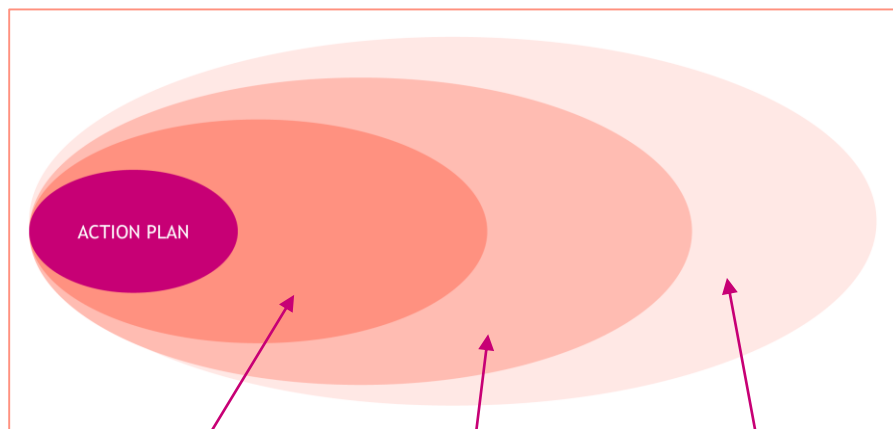
Step 6 Discuss as a group the necessary actions and how the Action Plan and its Funding Strategy and potentially individual projects need to be adjusted in view of the observed developments. Ensure that the overall rationale, aims and objectives of the Action Plan are not compromised.

Step 7 Communicate the findings and suggestions for adjustments with relevant decision makers.

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The Nested Wholes Diagram

It provides you with a horizontal map on the overall policy and strategy environment of your funding Strategy. It helps you to easily detect the interactions between a change on any of the policy and strategic levels and your Action Plan.



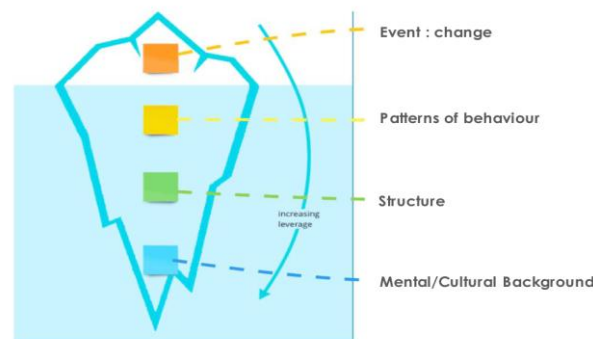
Proximate whole:
Decision makers, organisations, partners that are in immediate relationship with the Action Plan on the city level.

EU whole: EU policies, strategies and decision makers

National Whole: All the decision-making bodies and policies on the regional and national level that may influence the funding of the projects within the Action Plan

The Iceberg Model

It helps you to go deeper in the understanding of a given political change or decision by investigating the structural and mental roots of the decision. With the help of this tool you will be able to assess the way how your Funding Strategy should react on the political change.



Event: this is the surface, the event or phenomenon that you might observe immediately in your everyday practice. **Question to answer:** What is happening? What can we observe? (for example: A political decision)

Patterns of behaviour: This is the current situation or the sequence of recent events leading to the "surface". **Questions:** What has been happening over time? What are the current trends? (our example: a sequence of political decisions, debates or events leading to the decision)

Structure: This level indicates the relationship of the pattern with other patterns; it reveals all the other events, situations that might influence the examined one. **Questions:** What are the connections between the events and trends? (example: how the political decision can be linked to other decisions in the same field, or reflecting the same political approach...)

Mental/Cultural background: This deepest layer investigates the cultural, mental roots of the event. **Questions:** Which assumptions, beliefs, cultural habits are shaping the system? (our example: what kind of political beliefs, convictions can be found behind the decision?)