Integrated Environmental Assessment Training Manual for the Arab Region

Module 3
Developing an impact strategy for your IEA

Session at a Glance

Session 1: **Introduction**

Session 2: The Impact Process

Session 3: Building an Impact Strategy

OVERVIEW

- This module will focus on methods and strategies to position and deliver a national EIA.

- The impact process takes time, and involves a real emphasis on being clear and strategic in identifying the changes you want to see as a result of your assessment.

- The process focuses on:

- - Building relationships with key people;

- - Finding out what they know already and what they need to know;

- - Creating opportunities to get your messages across;

- - Generating a dialogue, and

- - Gain the attention and support of those who may have been non- responsive to your assessment.

- A skeleton of impact strategy for the participants next SoE/IEA report.

- That you see yourself as someone capable of having a real impact on decision-making.

Learning Objectives

- Be able to **articulate** the reasons for conducting an Integrated Environmental Assessment.
- **Understand** the political context for implementing the results of an IEA. How are changes made in policy and practice in your country.
- **Move** beyond awareness of the importance of impact and communications to develop strategies to achieve impact.
- **Increase** recognition of who you want to reach and how that will affect how you undertake your work.
- **Recognize** that a meaningful impact is a dynamic result, requiring an ongoing strategy which is much more than a single product at the end of an assessment.
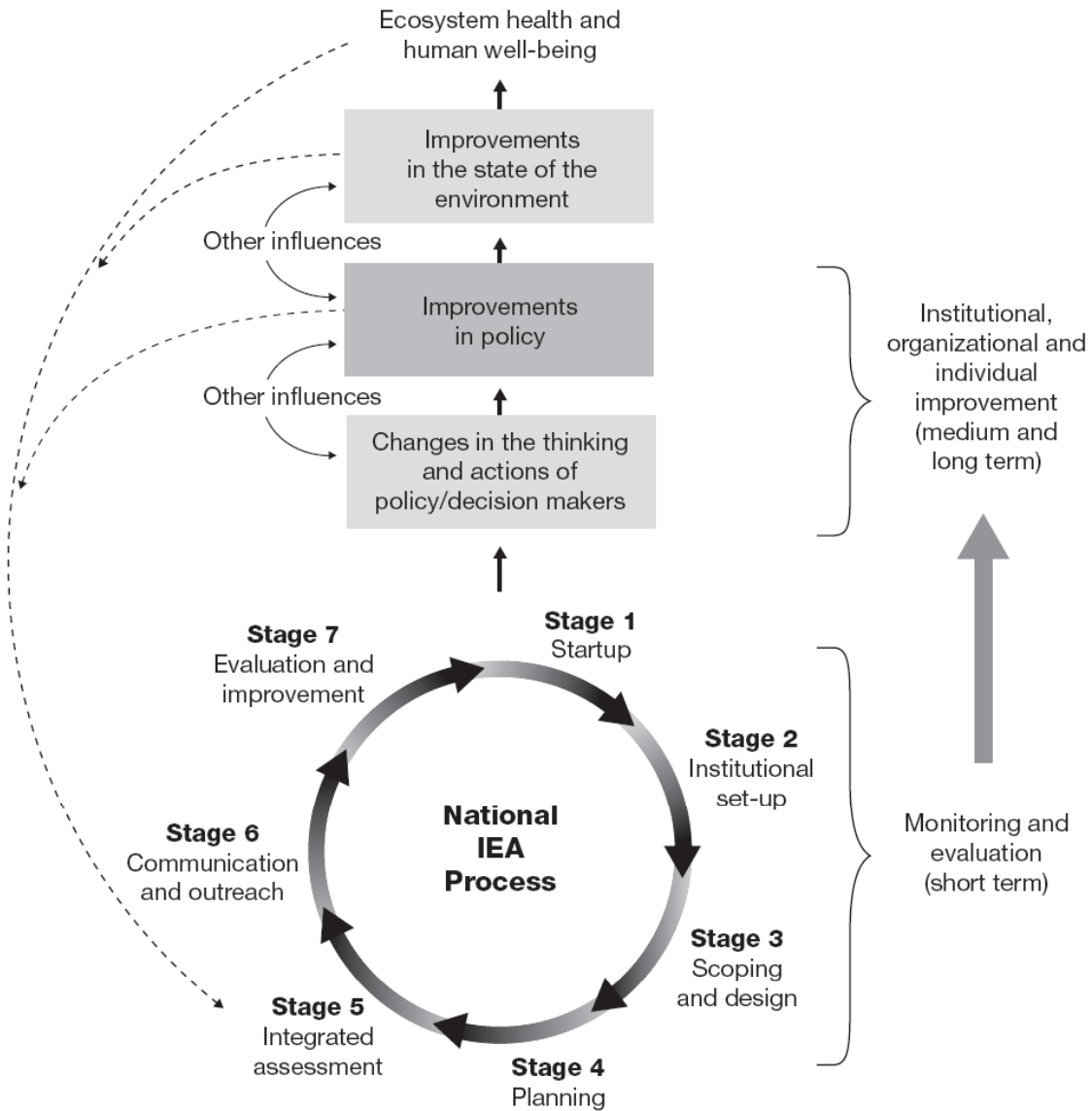
- The ideal rational type

- Confused type

- Muddling Through

- Assessment scientists and practitioners need to use credible scientific knowledge to impact decision-makers.

- They should also be impacted, and explore the areas and answers that political actors are seeking.

- If decision-makers impact you with the sought answers, then you are in a better position to impact them likewise.

Definition of Impact

- In simple terms, it is the ability of the assessment to lead governments and actors into adopting different policies and behaviors from what they originally intended. Yet, this lacks much action.
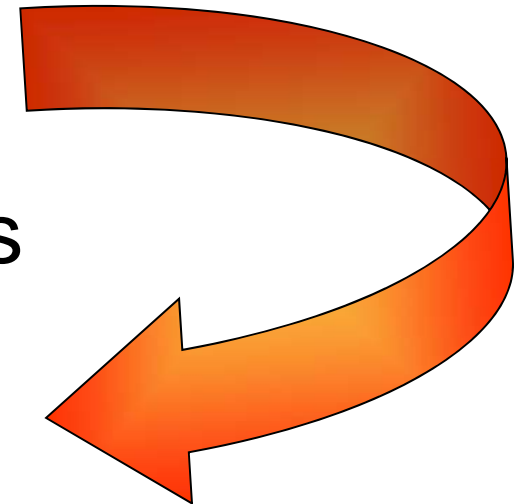
Broader Meaning

- Changes to an issue domain.

  Defined as the areas in which relevant actors seek to address an issue of common interest, characterized by different beliefs and policy preferences.

There is also a need to acknowledge the non-assessment related factors like, social and technological solutions, that could bring about change In the issue areas

Helping Points

- Assessment is a social process, where scientists, policymakers, and other relevant actors collect data, conduct analyses, explain, discuss, learn, and interact with each other, regarding the assessment issues

- The process and not the product

- Potential users must view the assessment as:

    - Addressing actual issues
    - Legitimate
    - Credible

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Session 3:   Building an Impact Strategy

Session 4:   Implementing an Impact
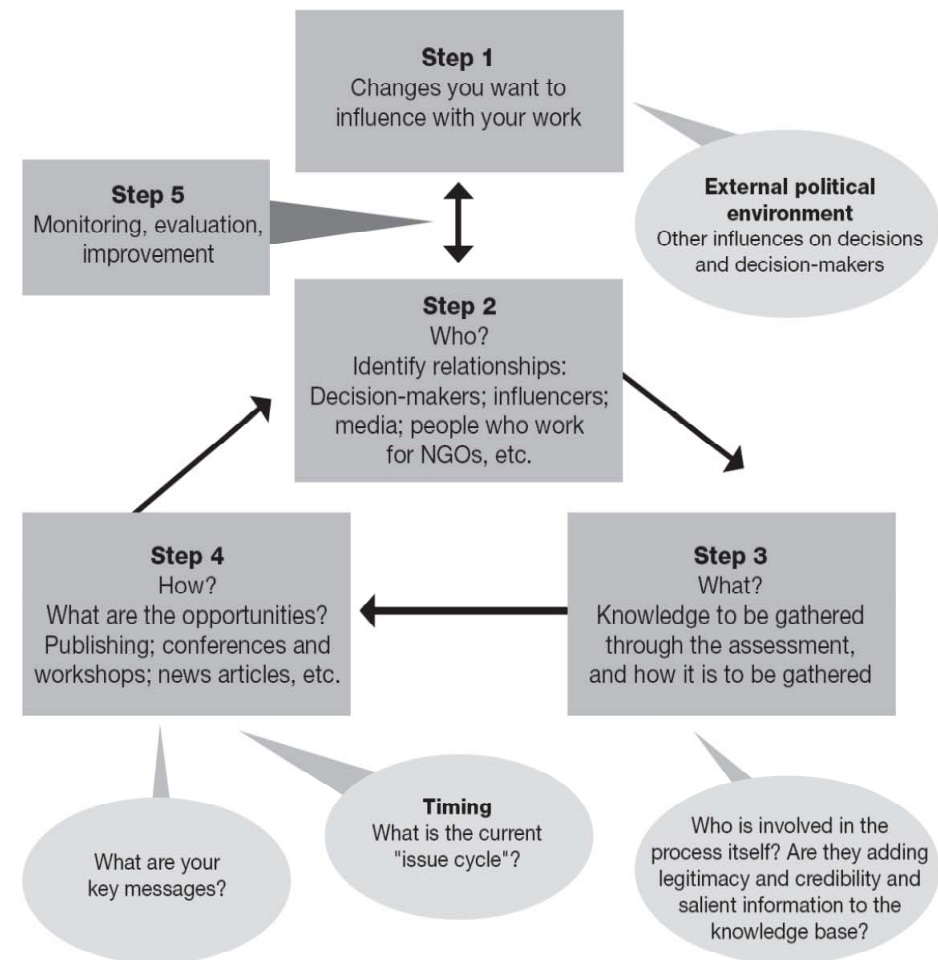   Strategy

- What is an impact strategy?

- When do you prepare an impact strategy?

- Why would you need an impact strategy?

What is an Impact Strategy?

- An impact strategy consists of the steps you take to ensure that the work you do will lead to real progress on key issues or concerns.

- It is proactive in nature, and adaptive in a public policy environment where priorities of governments and citizens can shift and change.

Step 1
Changes you want to influence with your work

External political environment
Other influences on decisions and decision-makers

Step 5
Monitoring, evaluation, improvement

Step 2
Who?
Identify relationships:
Decision-makers; influencers; media; people who work for NGOs, etc.

Step 4
How?
What are the opportunities?
Publishing; conferences and workshops; news articles, etc.

Step 3
What?
Knowledge to be gathered through the assessment, and how it is to be gathered

What are your key messages?

Timing
What is the current "issue cycle"?

Who is involved in the process itself? Are they adding legitimacy and credibility and salient information to the knowledge base?
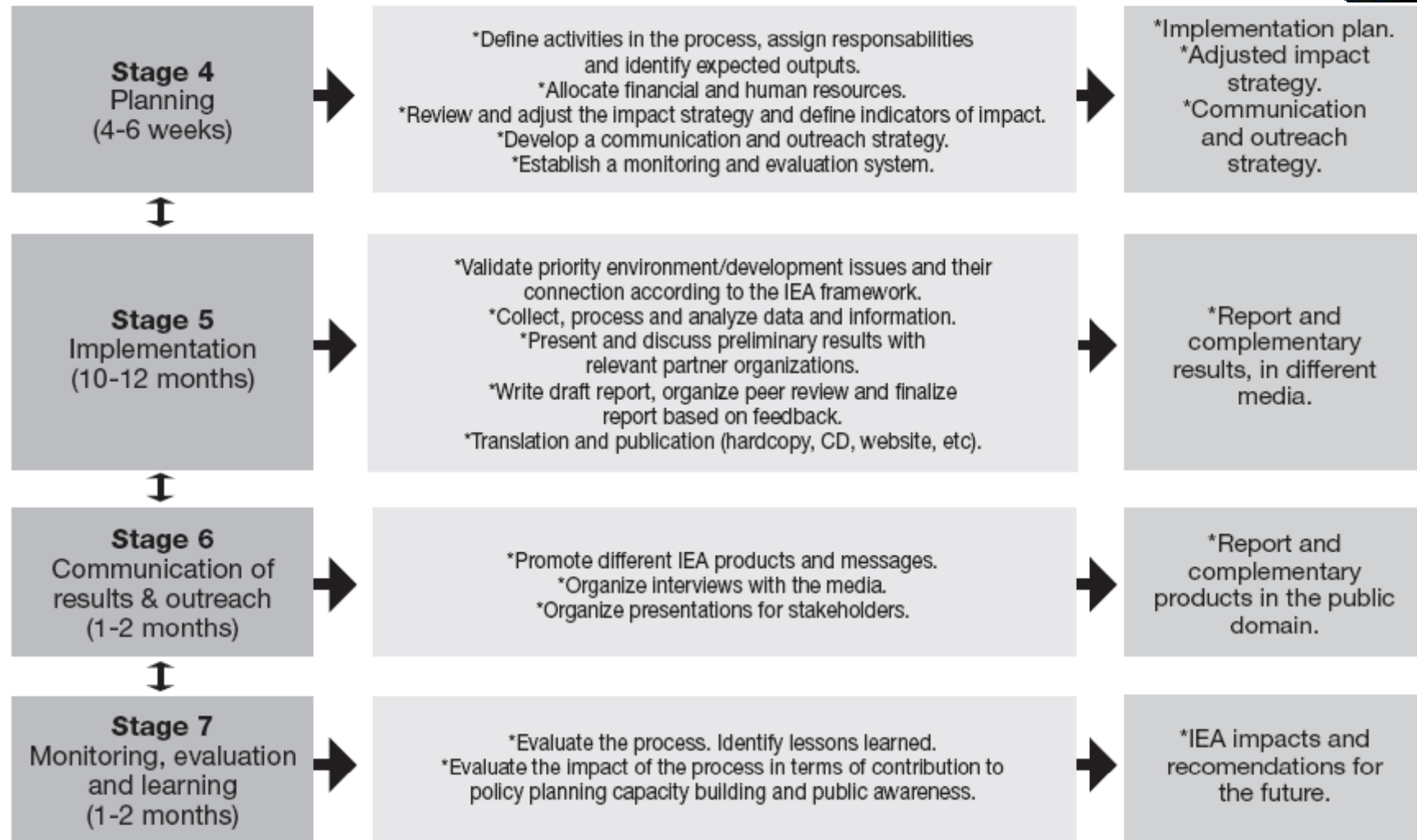
Source: IISD (2004)

- The impact strategy is initiated in the "institutional set-up" stage of the GEO process. It is formalized in the "scoping and design" stage, implemented in stages 4, 5 and 6, and regularly monitored, assessed and improved.

- The manager of the GEO/EIA process is responsible for:

  ➢ Developing the strategy

  ➢ Implementing the strategy

  ➢ Monitoring performance on the strategy to ensure results are being achieved, and modifying or adjusting the strategy as needed.

Stages Of The GEO-based IEA Process

STAGES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
Stage 1 Start-up (4-6 weeks)	*Secure legal mandate for environmental assessment and reporting. *Identify a local technical team within the lead agency. *Develop a basic outline for conceptual framework and process, capacity, time and resources required. *Hold start-up meetings to discuss, adjust and finalize the process and instituttional arrangements. *Secure commitment for resources and in-kind contributions.	*MOUs reviewed *Conceptual framework
Stage 2 Institutional set-up (1-3 months)	*Define roles and responsibilities of the political and technical partners. *Establish mechanisms of coordination among partners and collaborating institutions. *Define an institutional framework. *Discuss the elements for the impact strategy. *Prepare a stakeholder map.	*MOUs signed *Institutional. *Framework. *Stakeholders map.
Stage 3 Scoping and design (2-4 weeks)	*Clarify methodological issues. *Establish geographic boundary and detailed timeline for producing the report. *Identify key environmental issues. *Identify indicators, data requirements and sources of information. *Draft an outline of the report. *Identify the target audience. *Develop the impact strategy. *Discuss the elements for a communications and outreach strategy.	*Design document (including annotated structure or outline). *Impact strategy

Stages Of The GEO-based IEA Process

Stage 4 Planning (4-6 weeks)	*Define activities in the process, assign responsibilities and identify expected outputs. *Allocate financial and human resources. *Review and adjust the impact strategy and define indicators of impact. *Develop a communication and outreach strategy. *Establish a monitoring and evaluation system.	*Implementation plan. *Adjusted impact strategy. *Communication and outreach strategy.
Stage 5 Implementation (10-12 months)	*Validate priority environment/development issues and their connection according to the IEA framework. *Collect, process and analyze data and information. *Present and discuss preliminary results with relevant partner organizations. *Write draft report, organize peer review and finalize report based on feedback. *Translation and publication (hardcopy, CD, website, etc).	*Report and complementary results, in different media.
Stage 6 Communication of results & outreach (1-2 months)	*Promote different IEA products and messages. *Organize interviews with the media. *Organize presentations for stakeholders.	*Report and complementary products in the public domain.
Stage 7 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (1-2 months)	*Evaluate the process. Identify lessons learned. *Evaluate the impact of the process in terms of contribution to policy planning capacity building and public awareness.	*IEA impacts and recomendations for the future.

Considerations for an Impact Strategy

- **Why has the assessment been mandated?**
  - What is the political and bureaucratic context in which it is taking place?
  - How can you build bridges with those who might not be in favour of the process? It is important to learn who supports the findings and recommendations of the assessment.

- **If SoE reports were prepared in the past, what happened to them?**
  - What priorities for action were recommended?
  - How were they acted upon?

- **Who is involved in the assessment process?**
  - Do participants add or detract legitimacy from the process?

- What is taking place in the current bureaucratic context that might:
    - Prevent senior bureaucrats from supporting your findings
    - Enable them to apply your findings in support of a certain agenda

    What is taking place more generally in your country that might lead to a **window of opportunity**?

Considerations for an Impact Strategy

- There are many ways to get a sense of the political and public environment in which your assessment is taking place:

- **Investigate** with current/former bureaucrats their recollections about the process involved in securing the mandate to do the assessment.

- **Review** the relevant statutes and regulations that govern the assessment process.

- **Monitor** political and social coverage in the national media, what does it think worth reporting.

- **Attend** meetings of NGOs and community based organizations to assess their priorities.

In groups of 3–4, discuss the context of a previous national assessment in your country.

A.

- What was the context for previous assessments with which you are familiar?

- Are you operating under a legal or policy mandate?

- Are your assessments part of a larger program for government accountability?

B.

- Why were your assessments mandated, directed or commissioned?

- Were your assessments a high priority for your superiors?

- What other things concern them?

C. How did/will higher-level decision-makers use your findings?

Understanding what the **issue attention cycles** are will help in choosing actors to engage with and when to engage them.

➢ What is on the public, political and bureaucratic radar screen?

➢ Where will new information and recommendations for action be most useful?

Understanding Issue Attention Cycles

- In **West Asia Region** as well as other regions the **social attention** to global environmental risks has tended to **lag** years and even decades behind scientific and technical developments.

- A cycle can **rise relatively rapidly**, remain high for a short period of time, and then drop off again.

- In other cases, **there may be two cycles** for a specific issue.

Phase 1:

- **Gradual build-up** of scientific and analytic capacity through research, monitoring and assessment activities.

- Over a long period; characterized by **relatively low public attention,** society's capacity to address new issues gradually accumulates.

- It is **unlikely that new institutions will become involved** to a major extent with the issue.

Phase 2:

- **Rapid rise in public attention,** a renegotiation of leadership, and an emergent need for new institutions.

- The **need for coalitions of actors to push the issue forward** becomes recognized.

- **Coalition building** is encouraged over increased participation by individual or isolated groups of actors.

Phase 3:

- Linkages between the **knowledge**-intensive and **action**-intensive **management** functions increase in frequency and run in both directions: knowledge influences action and vice versa.

- There is also a general decline in public attention to the issue.

Phases of Issue Development According to Level of Attention

Phases of an issue attention cycle (adapted from Social Learning Group 2001).
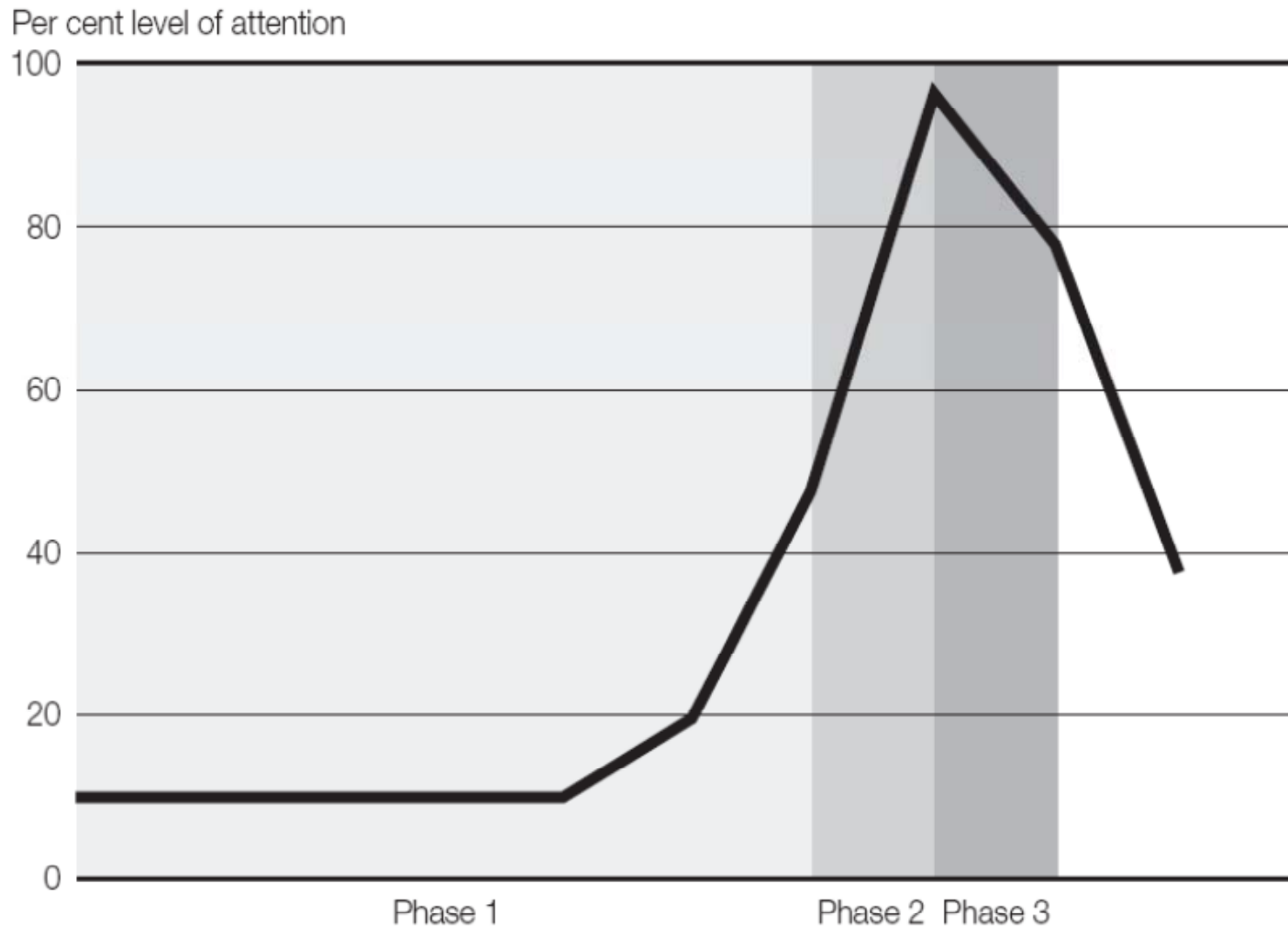
Discuss in plenary…

• What issues are of most concern to citizens in your country right now?

• How is your political leadership responding?

• How might you align findings from your assessment with these concerns?

- Attention to climate change issues in West Asia Region and particularly in GCC states was illustrated by the decisions taken during the 3rd OPEC Summit held in Riyadh. The **"issue linkage"** appears to have been a critical factor in getting climate change onto the agenda of the public and the policy-makers. A large fund ($750 million) was committed during the summit by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates to support research and development of cleaner technologies toward reversing the current trends in global warming.

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Session 3:   **Building an Impact Strategy**

An Impact Strategy Builds on Communications Activities

	Impact Strategy	Traditional Communications Activities
Purpose	Goal is to effect change and to identify your potential role as a change agent.	Goal is to ensure people understand the findings and recommendations.
Audience	Small group of key actors and those who have access to those actors.	Broader audiences.
Timing	Developed at the beginning of the assessment process, monitored and adjusted throughout the process.	Part of the impact strategy; usually implemented towards the end of the strategy when findings and recommendations are known.

Steps in Building an Impact Strategy

1. **Creating the change statement**. What you would like the impact of your assessment to be?

2. **Relationship management**. Identify the key actors that you are seeking to influence, and build connections to them.

3. **Knowledge management**. Gather and analyse the knowledge for the assessment.

4. **Opportunity management**. Move the knowledge into the hands of those you want to influence.

5. **Monitoring and improvement**. Determine whether your impact strategy is working, and adjust it as necessary.

- Who is involved in the process, are they adding:

- **Legitimacy**, which ensures that the assessment is carried out in a fair and politically acceptable way, taking the views and values of the respective audiences into account;

- **Saliency,** which means that the assessment addresses the information needs of its users, and

- **Credibility,** which means that the technical and scientific reliability of the information.

Model for an Impact Strategy

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Who is involved in the process itself? Are they adding legitimacy and credibility and salient information to the knowledge base?

Source: IISD (2004)

1. Creating the Change Statement.

• An impact strategy is anchored by the "change statement". What would you like to see changed or done differently as a direct result of your assessment?

• An impact statement may be broad, may identify key policy mechanisms, or may focus on one priority area.

- A change statement may be broad, such as getting policy-makers to use the IEA.

  For example…

  Key departmental decision-makers will use the information gathered during the assessment to develop policy priorities, departmental strategic plans and budgets.

  Or:

- State, as well as national, level planners will review the findings of the assessment, and prepare internal policy briefs on how they will address the recommendations of the assessment.

- The change statement could also identify key policy mechanisms.

Example…

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper planning and implementation process is adjusted to increase attention to environmental degradation, protection and rehabilitation, based on the findings of the assessment.

- The change statement could focus on one key priority you want your findings to address.

  Example:

  The government institutes a national watershed management plan that takes into consideration the responsibilities and capacities of villagers to protect and rehabilitate their water sources.

Step 2 : Relationship Management

- Identify the people you want to reach and obtain a better understanding of their perspective.

  ➢ How do these people acquire information?

  ➢ Who do they trust?

  ➢ Who are the people they listen to, and how can you reach them?

- Central to determining who to reach is the core concept of relationship management: maintaining the connections and influence over time.

Leaders and Revolutionaries
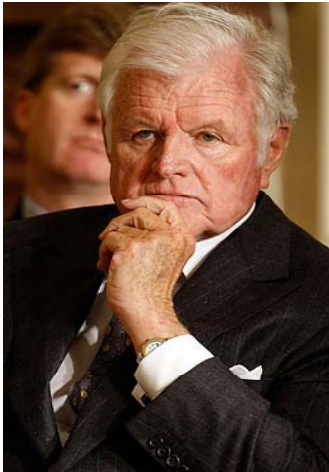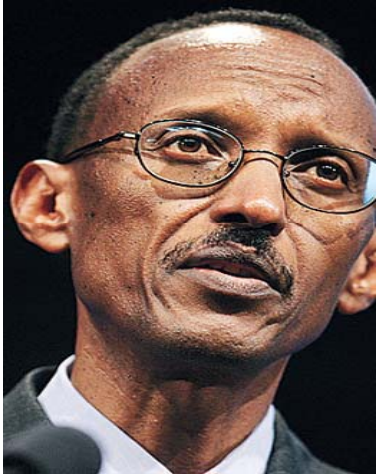
Artists and entertainers

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Faces from West Asia
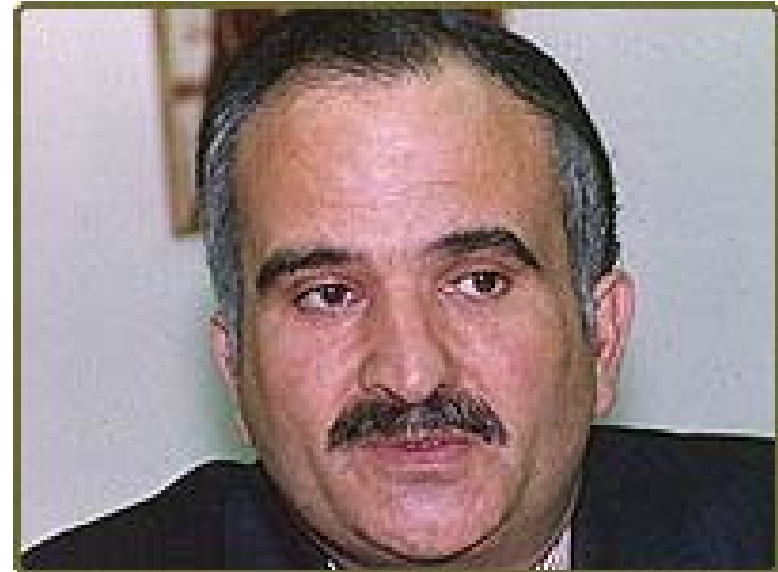
Analyse what they need to know, and what you need to know that will help them take or influence the decision.

➢ Consider how to **build trust** in your final product.

➢ Increase the **relevance and salience** of your findings by including participation of decision-makers in the process.

➢ Ensure greater **legitimacy** through participation of scientists in the knowledge development process.

Step 4: Opportunity Management

- Move knowledge into the hands of those you want to influence.

- Take advantage of key windows to move the assessment findings into the hands of others, and creating opportunity directly.

- The development of "key messages" is essential in this step.

Key messages are short, simple, plain language statements that capture the essence of the work.

- Measure incremental changes in attitudes, actions and behaviors that are a direct outcome of your work.

- Monitoring, evaluation and improvement should be in place to identify and map incremental changes that will lead to decisions or changes you are seeking.

- Track interactions with your contacts and the media.

Example of a Database

A Possible Continuum of Behavior Changes in Target Actors

- **Receiving information**
  - Information sent to target actors
  - Meetings are set up with target actors

- **Seeking and processing information**
  - Target actors seek information from others to verify information in the IEA
  - Media reports messages that are consistent with IEA

- **Acting**
  - Target actors issue new policy briefs, white papers, frameworks, regulations, other responses.

- **Demanding**
  - Target actors ask for more work from IEA process leaders (e.g., follow-up investigations, more in-depth assessments).

In groups of 3–5, consider:

– What kinds of changes do you feel are reasonable and meaningful from such an assessment?

– How would you know whether or not such changes were made and were sustainable?

In plenary, one spokesperson report for the group, summarizing changes to be expected.

- Social Learning Group (2001) found that self-conscious process evaluation was rare in the management of global environmental risks.

- Consequently, there are few examples of formal "impact strategies" to draw from

- Nonetheless, we can learn from assessments that have had some impact success.

- These can provide the participants from the Region pointers for the development of an impact strategy

- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).

- Kingdom of Bahrain Strategy to enhance Public Awareness and Decision-making.

- Yemen National State of Environment Report (2001).

- **Step 1:** *Impact statement: what did the strategy want to see changed as a result of the assessment?*
- Bahrain's awareness strategy stated that, a key step towards meeting the challenges posed by a changing climate is to initiate a national dialogue to raise awareness among key policymakers, civil society organizations and NGOs about its causes and potential consequences.
- A shared understanding among these individuals and institutions is essential, not only for mobilizing public support, but also for undertaking the range of participatory activities that will undoubtedly be needed.

– The Key objectives:

1- Identify and increase levels of environmental awareness among key segments of Bahraini society**.**

2- Protect the environment, rationalize natural resource use, and reduce resource depletion rates.

3- Inculcate in the younger generation a set of values and ethical standards that will lead to proactive attitudes and behavior toward climate change and environmental protection.

4- Facilitate public participation and support for resource conservation.

5- Enhance institutional capacities of various government departments, civil society, industrial and economic organization relevant to climate change, environmental management, and resource conservation.

6- Establish networks for influencing social, economic and environment   policies to be more conducive to sustainable development

7- Target influential private and civil society groups for raising awareness campaigns regarding specific adaptation, mitigation and vulnerability reduction policies and measures that could be effectively implemented.

Step 2: Relationship Management

Communication strategy identifies several categories of
civil society groups:

1-These include children, youth and teachers.

2-Governmental policy and decision makers.

3- Non-governmental and civil society organizations.

4-The media.

5-Scientific and academic community.

6- Religious leaders.

7- The private sector.

Step 3: Knowledge Management

- The public awareness strategy was planned as a parallel component of the climate change activities, but its implementation workshop was conducted as the last activity. Because it was based on the data and information gathered and analyzed to achieve the objectives of the climate project .

- However, core knowledge management functions and the relevancy, saliency and credibility of the findings of the assessment were ensured during the series of the workshops conducted to various stakeholders.

Step 4: **Opportunity Management: how to reach key actors and broader audiences:**

- The strategy identified distinct areas of action to deliver the knowledge into the hands of those the awareness strategy wanted to influence, these include:
  - The need for planning activities to inform and **engage** stakeholders throughout the interactive process. These were realized through the series of the workshops.
  - The preparation of **key messages**
  - **Encourage community-based** initiative through knowledge sharing and grass-roots communication.
  - **Encourage and enhance the NGO** formulated plans to strengthen the adaptive capacity of the local communities to various environmental stresses including climate change.

- ## **Step 4:**
  - The need to **strengthen the national capacity** to sustain actions and decision that emerge from the awareness building strategy.
  - **Education, on-the-job training**, formal and informal skill development are core requirements to fill the gaps in knowledge that will help stakeholders and communities to be actively and effectively involved in climate change issues.
  - The **communications strategy** identified a broader range of opportunities to deliver the various components of the awareness strategy which includes:
  - Workshops and meetings with NGOs.
  - The Media.
  - Formal presentations to departmental and parliamentary committees.
  - Training and teaching programmes.
  - Exclusive events with private sector.

Step 5: **Monitoring, evaluation and improvement**

- These were essential components of the climate change including the awareness activity, planned to measure and evaluate the question of success. Monitoring and evaluation were essential:

- To measure incremental changes in attitudes and behavior and to adjust the awareness strategy accordingly.

- Identify and map incremental changes that will lead to decisions and changes you are seeking through the implementation of the strategy.

- Redesign the communications strategy in light of the impact assessment to achieve desired impacts.

- Some of the above ideas were never implemented-but they are a good set of objectives for continuous improvement.
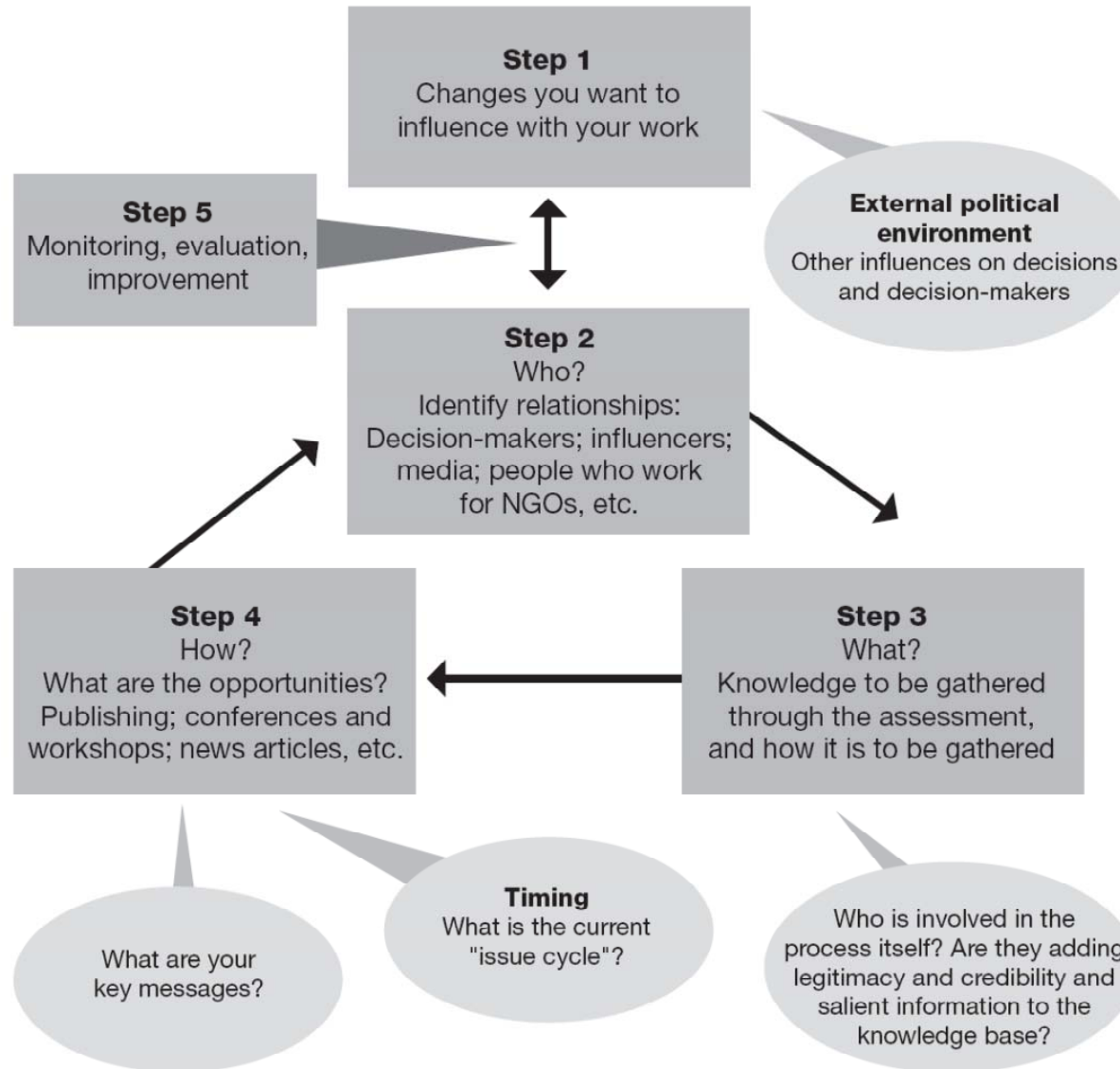
- Refer to Module 3 for two other case examples:

- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

- Yemen National State of Environment Report (2001).

Source: IISD (2004)

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- The core concept of relationship management is maintaining the connections and influence over time.

Analyse what they need to know, and what you need to know that will help them take or influence the decision.

- Consider how to **build trust** in your final product.

- Increase the **relevance and salience** of your findings by including participation of decision-makers in the process.

- Ensure greater **legitimacy** through participation of scientists in the knowledge development process.

- Move knowledge into the hands of those you want to influence.

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- The development of "key messages" is essential in this step.

Key messages are short, simple, plain language statements that capture the essence of the work.

- Presentation of group strategies

  Group Review:
  - What was similar and dissimilar among the strategies?
  - What were the strengths of the strategies?
  - What areas need further refining?

- Measure incremental changes in attitudes, actions and behaviors.

- Identify and map incremental changes that will lead to decisions or changes you are seeking.

- Track interactions with your contacts and the media.

Thank you