

# Preparing policy briefs: A quick step-by-step guide

Préparer une note d'orientation :  
Un guide rapide, étape par étape

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# Guide overview – Présentation du guide



## What is and what is not a policy brief

Ce qui est et ce qui n'est pas une note d'orientation



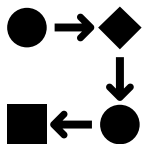
## Audience

Public



## Structure

Structure



## Process between G1HN team members and the KT Coordinator

Processus entre les membres de l'équipe G1HN et la coordinatrice KT

# A policy brief – Une note d'orientation

## What is it Ce que c'est

- A concise summary – Un résumé concis
- Between 2-4 pages (700-1,500 words)  
Entre 2 à 4 pages (700- 1500 mots)
- Intends to promote a dialogue  
Doit servir à susciter/créer un dialogue
- Can contain pictures and nice graphs  
Peut contenir des images et des graphiques

## What it is not Ce que ce n'est pas

- Research report – Un rapport de recherche
- Technical report – Un rapport technique
- Contains everything and lots of details  
Exhaustif jusque dans les moindres détails

# Two main types of policy briefs

## Deux principaux types de notes d'orientation

### Advocacy brief

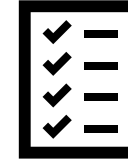
Un plaidoyer



- Argues in favour of a particular course of action – Arguments en faveur d'une ligne de conduite particulière
- Targeted audience – Public visé
- More “interventionist”  
Plus “interventionniste”

### Objective brief

Résumé neutre



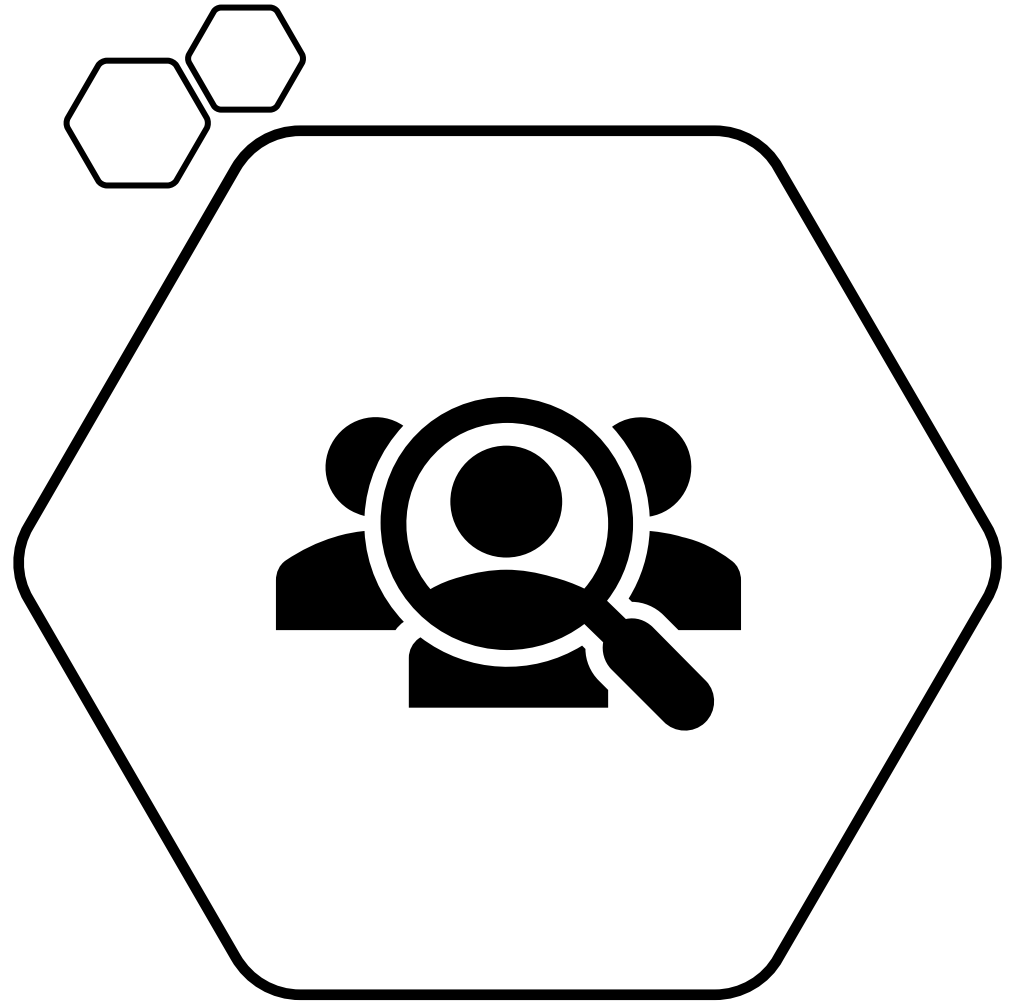
- Gives balanced information for policymakers to make up their mind – Donne des informations neutres pour permettre aux décideurs politiques de prendre une décision
- Larger audience – Public plus large
- More “neutral” – Plus “neutre”

Sources: FAO, 2011; Ridde, Dagenais & DesRosiers, 2017

# Identification of policymakers

## Identification des décideurs politiques

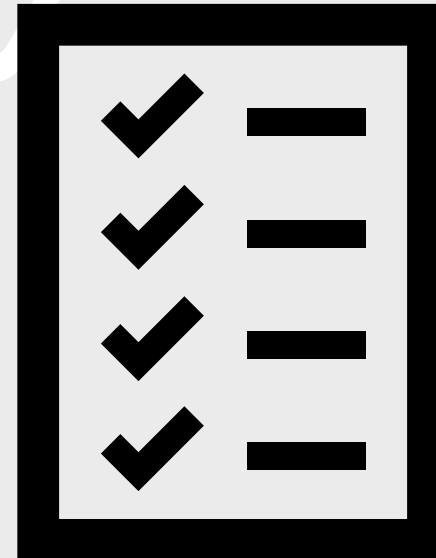
- Levels of government: federal, provincial, territorial, municipal?  
Niveaux du gouvernement : fédéral, provincial, territorial, municipal ?
- International policymakers?  
Décideurs politiques internationaux ?
- Large public?  
Public large ?
- Donors?  
Bailleurs de fonds ?

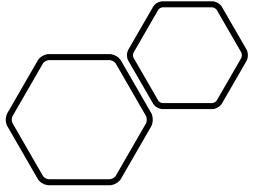


# Structure (2-4 pages or 700-1,500 words)

(2-4 pages ou 700-1500 mots)

1. Title - Titre
2. Summary - Résumé
3. Recommendations - Recommandations
4. Introduction
5. The body (the main text) – Le corps (texte principal)
6. Policy implications – Implications politiques
7. Conclusions
8. Authors and references – Auteurs et références
9. Use of boxes and sidebars – Utilisation des cases et des encadrés





# 1. Title - Titre



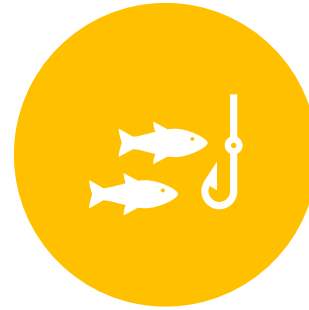
LESS THAN 12 WORDS

MOINS DE 12 MOTS



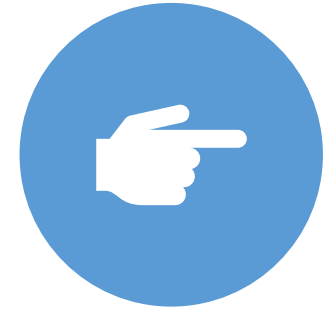
SHORT

COURT



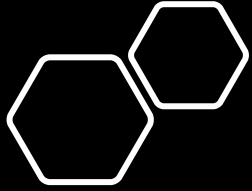
CATCHY

ACCROCHEUR



TO THE POINT

DROIT AU BUT



## 2. Summary

### Résumé

- Less than 150 words – Moins de 150 mots
- A brief summary or policy messages at the beginning – Au début, un bref résumé ou des messages politiques
- Main contain 3-4 bullets – Doit contenir principalement 3-4 points
- Ask yourself “What are the main points you want policymakers to get – even if they read nothing else?” – Demandez-vous : “Quels sont les principaux points que vous voulez que les décideurs politiques retiennent – même s’ils ne lisent pas la suite?”



## 3. Recommendations Recommandations



On the first page: immediately after the Summary  
Sur la première page : immédiatement après le résumé



State recommendations clearly  
Exposer clairement les recommandations



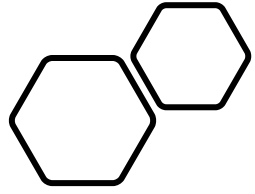
Make them easy to find  
Les rendre faciles à trouver



Keep them short  
Soyez concis

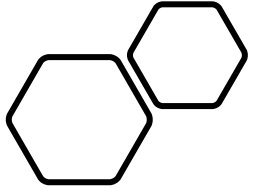


Make them realistic  
Les rendre réalistes



## 4. Introduction

- **The problem (what is the problem and why it is important)**  
Le problème (quell est problème et pourquoi il est important)
- **Background, context (What happens, where, who is involved)**  
Historique, contexte (ce qui se passe, où et qui est impliqué)
- **Causes of the current situation (Why)**  
Les causes de la situation actuelle (pourquoi)
- **Effects of current situation (What effects does it have)**  
Effets de la situation actuelle (quels sont les effets)



## 5. The body – Le corps du texte



MAKE IT LOGICAL  
LE RENDRE LOGIQUE



KEEP THE  
PARAGRAPH SHORT  
LE PARAGRAPHE DOIT ÊTRE  
COURT



USE MORE HEADINGS  
UTILISER PLUS DE TITRES



ASK YOURSELF “SO  
WHAT”  
DEMANDEZ-VOUS “ET  
ALORS”

# 6. Policy implications – Implications politiques



Suggested revisions in policy (What are the various options)

Suggestions des révisions de la politique (quelles sont les différentes options ?)



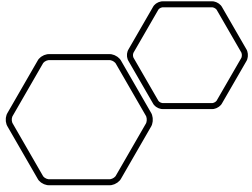
Effects of the revised policy (How will the policy changes improve the situation)

Effets de la politique révisée (Comment les changements de la politique amélioreront-ils la situation ?)



Advantages and disadvantages of each policy option

Avantages et inconvénients de chaque option politique



## 7. Conclusions



NOT NECESSARY FOR A POLICY  
BRIEF

PAS NÉCESSAIRE POUR UNE NOTE DE  
POLITIQUE



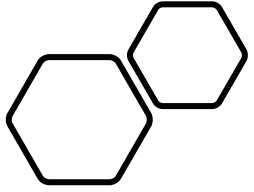
KEEP IT VERY SHORT (ONE  
PARAGRAPH IS ENOUGH)

SOYEZ CONCIS (UN PARAGRAPHE EST  
SUFFISANT)



DO NOT REPEAT WHAT HAS  
BEEN ALREADY SAID

NE PAS RÉPÉTER CE QUI A DÉJÀ ÉTÉ  
DIT



## 8. Authors and references – Auteurs et références

Mention authors and team members if desired

Mentionner les auteurs et les membres de l'équipe si vous le souhaitez

Add references if necessary

Ajouter des références si nécessaire

# Suggestion of breakdown for a 2-4 pager (700-1,500 words)

Suggestion de répartition  
des informations pour une  
note d'orientation de 2-4  
pages (700-1500 mots)

TITLE - Titre

Engaging and informative - *Engageant et informatif*

SUMMARY (10%) – *Résumé (10%)*

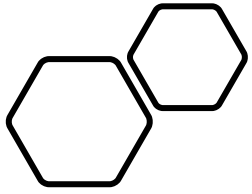
RECOMMENDATIONS (10-15%) –  
*Recommandations (10-15%)*

INTRODUCTION (5-10%)

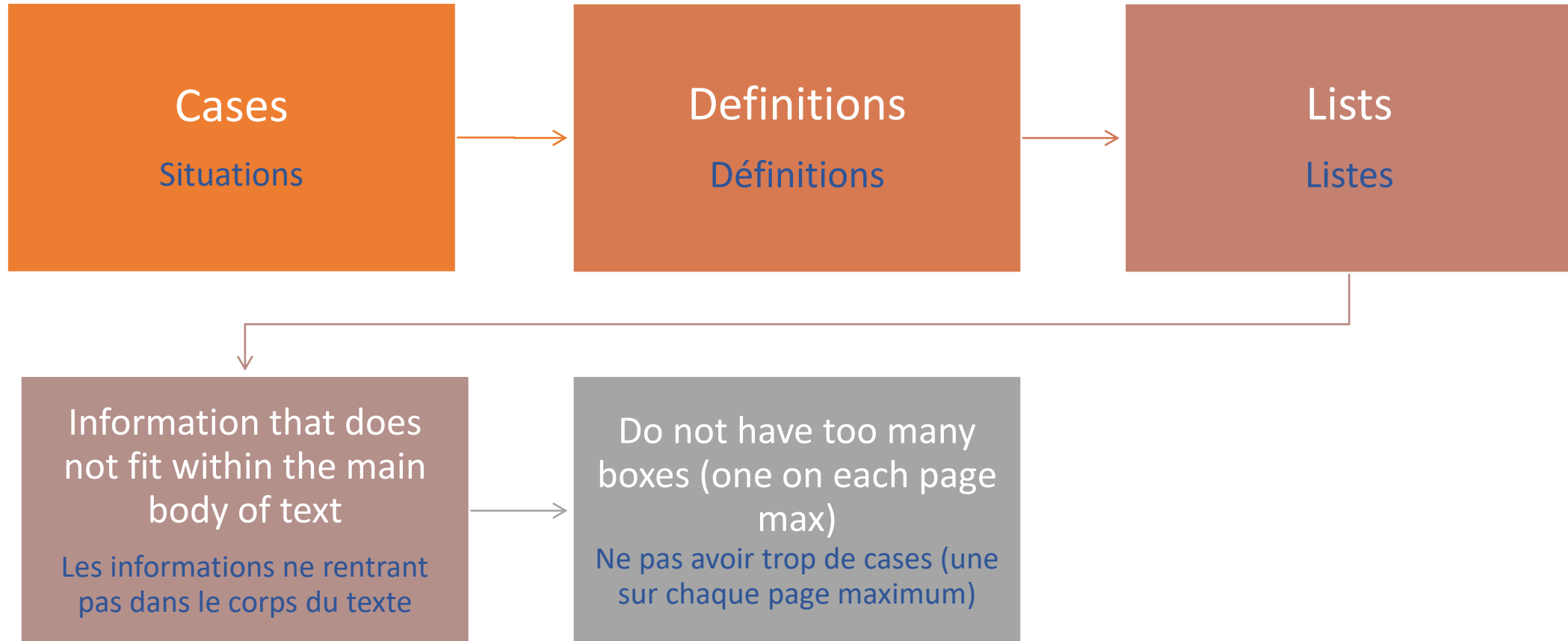
BODY OF POLICY BRIEF (30%)  
*Corps de la note de politique (30%)*

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS (30%) – *Implications politiques et  
conclusions (30%)*

AUTHORS AND REFERENCES – *Auteurs et références*



## 9. Use of boxes and sidebars for... - Utilisation des cases et des encadrés





# Examples of 4-pager policy briefs

## Exemple d'une note d'orientation de 4 pages



February 2011

### Breathe Easy: Tobacco Tax Brings Better Health, New Revenue

Renate Pore and Elizabeth Paulhus

Each year, the use of tobacco claims the lives of thousands of West Virginians. The state currently has the nation's highest smoking rate among adults and pregnant women and one of the highest among children. West Virginia also taxes tobacco products at very low levels. Only seven states in the nation have lower tobacco taxes.

Bills (SB 362/ HB 2973) introduced in the 2011 Legislative Session would raise the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products in West Virginia. Increasing the tobacco tax by \$1.00 a pack would reduce smoking. This in turn reduces tobacco-related illnesses and decreases health care costs. In addition, an increased tobacco tax would provide West Virginia with substantial new tax revenue that could be used for investments in the long-term health and well-being of West Virginians.

#### West Virginia leads the nation in smoking

The rate of smoking is higher in West Virginia than in all other states (Table 1). Particularly troubling is the number of pregnant women who smoke. Nearly one in three

and long-term.<sup>2</sup> Encouraging pregnant women to stop smoking is vital for the present and future health of West Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

The cover of a policy brief titled "Human resources for mental health care: current situation and strategies for action". It is identified as "PRIME Policy Brief 3" and dated "May 2013". The authors listed are Ritsuko Kakuma, Harry Minas, Nadja van Ginneken, Mario R Dal Poz, Keshav Desiraju, Jodi E Morris, Shekhar Saxena, and Richard M Scheffler. The cover features a vertical sidebar on the left with the URL "www.prime.uct.ac.za". The main content area includes a "SUMMARY" section with a bolded title: "The overwhelming shortage of human resources for management and delivery of essential mental health care, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), is well recognized. The current status, the human resource needs, cost to eliminate the shortage, and evidence on effective service delivery models are less understood." Below the summary is a list of five bullet points, each starting with a diamond symbol, detailing the findings and recommendations of the brief.

PRIME Policy Brief 3  
May 2013

### Human resources for mental health care: current situation and strategies for action

Ritsuko Kakuma, Harry Minas, Nadja van Ginneken, Mario R Dal Poz, Keshav Desiraju, Jodi E Morris, Shekhar Saxena, Richard M Scheffler

www.prime.uct.ac.za

**SUMMARY** *The overwhelming shortage of human resources for management and delivery of essential mental health care, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), is well recognized. The current status, the human resource needs, cost to eliminate the shortage, and evidence on effective service delivery models are less understood.*

- ❖ A review of the current state of human resources for mental health, needs, and strategies for action, was conducted.
- ❖ Mental health care can be delivered effectively in primary care and community settings. Non-specialist health professionals such as family physicians, nurses, social workers and occupational therapists with appropriate training and adequate supervision have been shown to be able to detect, diagnose, treat and monitor individuals with mental disorders and reduce caregiver burden. Lay health workers, affected individuals and caregivers with psycho-education and brief training have also demonstrated their ability to detect and intervene earlier, improved treatment compliance, better understand the illness and cope better.
- ❖ Human resources for mental health (HRMH) in LMICs face serious shortages that are likely to worsen unless Ministries invest substantially and implement effective HRMH strategies.
- ❖ The specific composition of the mental health human resources will vary across settings according to varying population needs, mental health system structures and available resources.
- ❖ Mental health specialists continue to play essential roles in service delivery and training of non-specialist workers.
- ❖ Effective leadership and management of human resources for mental health will be essential in addressing key challenges such as mobilization of financial resources, recruitment, and retention, and equitable distribution of human resources.

# Process of policy brief production (2-3 months)

Processus de production d'une note d'orientation (2-3 mois)



# References - Références

- Dagenais, C., & Ridde, V. (2018). Policy brief as a knowledge transfer tool: to “make a splash”, your policy brief must first be read. In: SciELO Public Health.
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- Ridde V, Dagenais C, DesRosiers B. Note de politique (policy brief). Guide de préparation, [Internet]. Équipe Renard; 2017. Available from: [https://fr.slideshare.net/equipe\\_renard/note-de-politique-policy-brief-guide-de-preparation-76907308](https://fr.slideshare.net/equipe_renard/note-de-politique-policy-brief-guide-de-preparation-76907308) [Accessed 10 Nov 2020].
- Smith, C. (2019). *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process* (5th ed.): Oxford University Press.
- Wolfe R. Policy briefs. A guide to writing policy briefs for research uptake, [Internet]. RESYST; 2013. Available from: [https://blogs.ishtm.ac.uk/griphealth/files/2017/01/Policy-briefs-guide\\_2015.pdf](https://blogs.ishtm.ac.uk/griphealth/files/2017/01/Policy-briefs-guide_2015.pdf) [Accessed 10 Nov 2020].

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