

Policy Research Institute
Key Elements of Policy Research Proposal

In Policy Research Institute (PRI) usage, “policy” includes constitutional mandates, laws, regulations, periodic and annual programs as well as budgetary allocations, the regime of ongoing practice, implementation and monitoring weakness as well as weakness to crystallize and implement learning from mistakes.

While prioritizing public policy for research, the PRI centers attention on policies that are relatively wider in scope and pregnant with larger impact. However, the PRI also recognizes the significance of policy case studies that include “scaling-up” policy conclusions and suggestions.

The PRI recommends the following guidelines for formulating a policy research proposal and for scoping a research task:

- A. Identification of a specific and concrete
 - Public policy weakness or failure
 - Gap and contradiction in policies within and among sectors, between macro and sectorial policies, and between time periods
 - Gap between policy and practice
 - Lack of sets of information or institutional memory to frame evidence-based policies
 - Lack of appropriate indicators or standards of judgments to measure outcomes in a valid and reliable manner
 - Absence of a deliberate and coherent view and design of sector-wide and inter-sectoral policy framework without which synergy, scaling-up and scaling-down as well as “intersectoral transfer” of valid policy suggestions cannot take place
- B. Broader substantive and historical conditions responsible for identified weakness, failure, gap, absence, lack, contradiction, etc. (Note that this, in essence, is akin to describing a theoretical context.)
- C. The specific context responsible for identified weakness, failure, gap, absence, lack, contradiction, etc.
- D. Identification of the nature, scale and dynamics of the negative or less than optimal impact of such policy failure, weakness, gap, absence, lack and contradiction, etc.
- E. Key policy questions to be investigated
- F. Segments the policy questions can be divided into (for the purpose of allocation of research tasks and researchers)
- G. Broad-scale and sharp enunciation of potential significance of post-investigation policy research outcomes
- H. Nature of information or data required to answer policy questions as well as sets of information and evidence currently available and unavailable in order to answer key policy questions

- I. Quality of evidence, information or sets of data and the likely implication of data quality upon recommendations made
- J. To the extent that available data is inadequate, describe the nature of inadequacy. What data would allow a better and fuller answer to resolve the policy questions? How could such data potentially be generated and which existing agencies are best placed to do so. In addition, describe the nature of new data, if any that will be generated during the course of this current policy research initiative
- K. A, B, C, D and E to be carried out in conjunction with review of Nepal's historical and other as well as international experience and evidence
- L. Mode of analysis of data and its justification
- M. Mode of presentation of data. It is important that the data be presented in a manner that is immediately apprehensible. Express data not only in relation to relatively abstract statistic(s) such as correlation, standard deviation or even ratio and proportion but to concrete persons – men, women, boys, girls, old, young, etc.
- N. Bearing of results on specific strands of policy
- O. Potential scalability of research outcomes to other subsectors and sectors as well as ecosystemic, political, economic, cultural spaces including provinces and municipalities as well as future time and historical periods and phases.
- P. Strategic and operational initiatives as well as steps to be taken to mitigate problems identified in C above. Also, stakeholders, implementing agency, timeline, etc. required in order to mitigate problems identified.