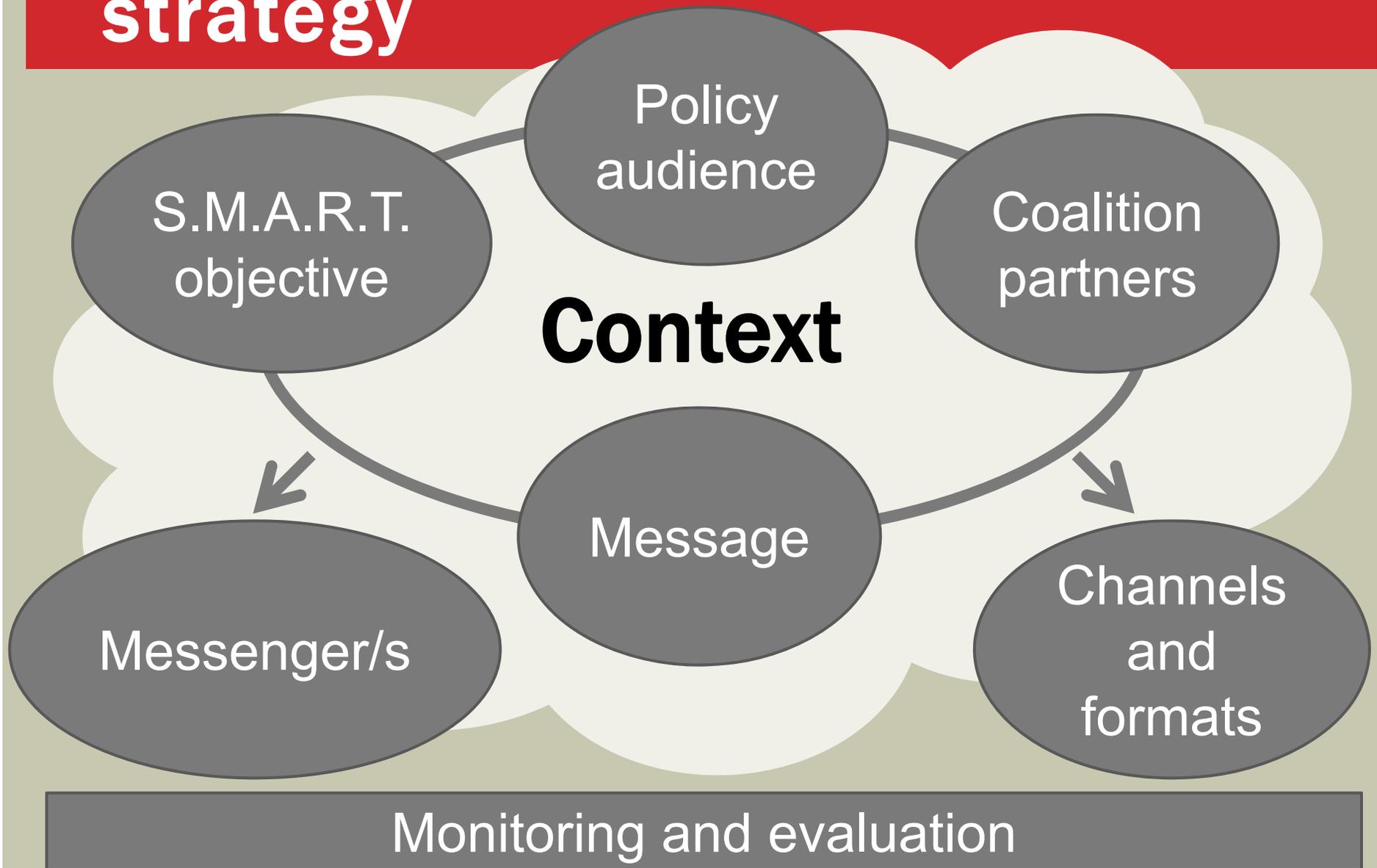


Let's Talk about Reaching Wider Audiences with our Research Results

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Elements of a communication strategy



Suggested plan of action

1. What are your S.M.A.R.T. objectives?
2. Who is your policy audience?
3. What is your context—the current policy debate?
4. Who should be your coalition partners?
5. What is your persuasive message?
6. Who would be the best messenger(s)?
7. What should be your communication actions?
8. M&E: How will you measure success?

**What are your
S.M.A.R.T.
objectives?**

Two types of objectives

Communication objective(s)

- What do you want to do?
- These actions are **outputs** that you **monitor**

Program objectives(s)

- What do you want the policymakers to do?
- These actions are **outcomes** that you **evaluate**

Are your objectives...

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-based

Let's write down an objective

**Who is your policy
audience?**

We're talking about three types of audience

1. Who can make the decisions you want?
2. Whose support would be helpful?
3. Who might block the decisions you want made?

They could be all sorts of people

- Government officials
- Elected representatives
- Journalists
- Leaders of nonprofit organizations
- Company executives
- Staff of donor organizations
- Even your own boss

For all these individuals...

- How much do they know?
- What do they care about?
- What are their sources of information:
How can you reach them?

Let's look at their heads

- Why do policymakers' level of understanding of your issue?
- How can the information can they handle?

The only thing worse than talking down to them is talking over their heads

Next, let's look at their hearts

- What are the key values and core concerns? Is there a “we” message?
- What beliefs, values, or concerns will you have to overcome?
- How might the policymakers themselves **benefit** from supporting your issue?

Let's describe some policymakers



**What is your policy
context?**

You have already filled out a policy context questionnaire

This was designed to help you think about:

- What individuals and groups are involved in policymaking on your issue?
- Do these policymakers use research evidence as a basis for decision-making?
- Is your policy issue currently “on the agenda”?

Do you need to...

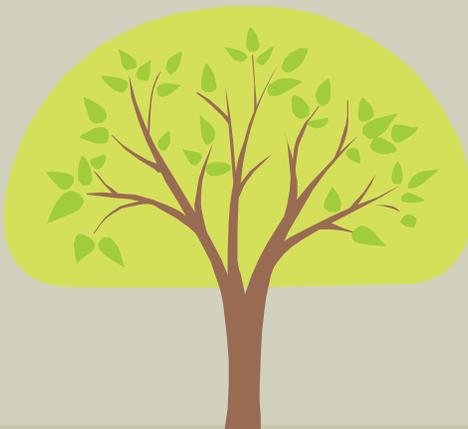
- Jump into an existing debate?
- Introduce a new issue that no one is thinking about?
- Counter the arguments of your opponents?
- “Reposition” your issue into a new discussion that you are more likely to win?

**Who would be your
best coalition
partners?**

Communication beyond “us” and “them”



Coalition
Audience
partners



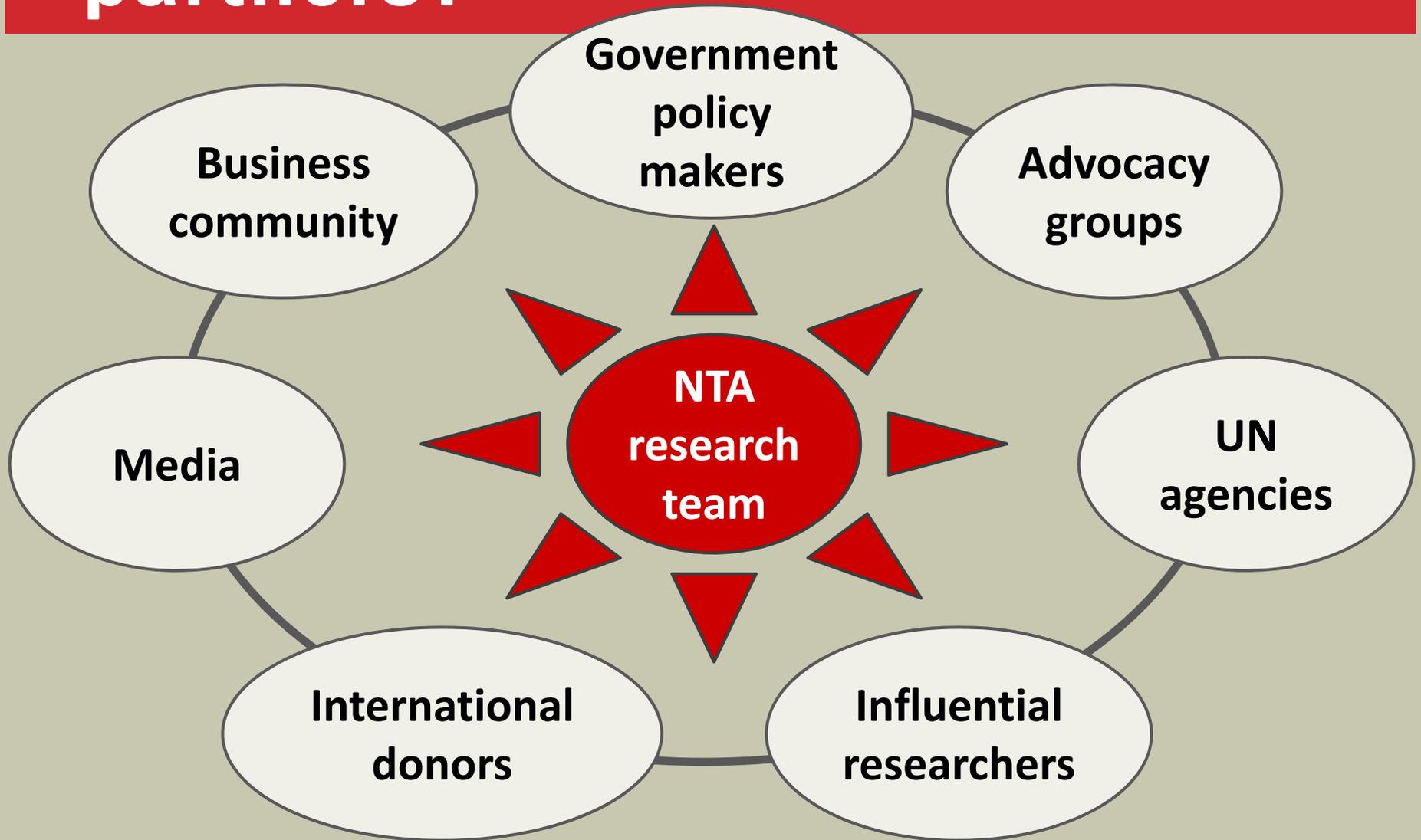
We all bring something to the table

- Who has access to policymakers?
- Who has convincing research results?
- Who can advocate for a policy change?

Make and maintain contacts from the beginning

- Establish an **advisory board** that includes the policymakers themselves plus researchers, advocacy leaders, media, and others
 - Better, more relevant research
 - Better ownership of results
- Give your coalition partners an active role throughout the research process
 - **They** present the research results
 - **They** develop the policy response

Who do you need as coalition partners?



Who do you need as coalition partners?



**Developing a
message: What do
you have to say?**

The 25 : 4 : 1 formula

- 25-page scientific paper or report
- 4-page policy brief
- 1-page take-home message
 - Problem — solution — action: Each 35 words

Before you approach a policy audience...

You must be able to answer three questions:

- Why should they care? Importance of your research
- What should they do? Policy recommendation
- How much will it cost? The bottom line

Your coalition can help with this

Show the social and economic benefits of your research

- We're tired of problems with no solutions
- Along with benefits, give us a realistic estimate of political and financial costs
- Show us a human face
- Or better yet, let the human face do some of the talking
 - Beneficiaries
 - Policy champions

Clear messages, memorable indicators, sensitively framed

- Three message tests: Your mother, teenage children, breakfast cereal
- Memorable indicators: 1–3 numbers, simple graphics
- How do we “frame” our message?
 - Serious problem...practical solution
 - Fits well into political context
 - Does not conflict with institutional pressures
 - Consistent with ruling ideology

Write a policy message

- Identify an NTA or CWW research finding
- Describe the policy context for this finding
- Create a message based on your finding and a policy implication: 2–3 sentences, possibly a number

Exercise: The one-minute elevator speech

- Who are you and why should this person listen to you?
- What is NTA or CWW?
- Why is NTA or CWW important to this person? Examples of some useful findings
- What do you want this person to do?
- How can this person get in touch with you?

**How do you best
deliver your
message?**

WHO delivers the message is just as important as what you say

Which messenger(s) are most likely to convince you policy audience of the importance of your findings and the need to take action?

Choose an effective messenger

- You?
- Your boss?
- Collaborating organization?
- Policy champion?
- Third-party validator?
- Potential beneficiary?

Channels and formats (roughly in order of importance)

1. Informal policy briefings
2. Mass media: Interviews, opinion pieces by experts, news articles
3. Policy briefs
4. Scientific papers or reports with related nontechnical summaries and policy recommendations
5. Formal presentations at meetings

Tips on timing

- New leaders want new ideas
- If it costs money, it must be presented at the right point in the budget cycle
- Use focusing events or help create your own
- Be ready (“lurking”) when the time is right
 - Good communication links established
 - Clear, compelling messages formulated

**M&E: How will you
know if you are
successful?**

Monitor your outputs

- Did you complete each activity that you planned and produce each written communication?
 - On time?
 - Within budget?
- What did you learn that will help you do better?

Evaluate the outcomes

- Did knowledge, behavior, or policy change as a result of your activities?

M&E is a continuous process

Measurements of outputs and outcomes need to be:

- Defined
- Reviewed, and
- Possibly redefined

Throughout the communication process

Key components of successful policy communication

1. Set S.M.A.R.T. objectives
2. Think clearly about your policy audience
3. Join or start up a coalition that maintains continuous dialogue with policymakers and other key groups
4. Provide clear, simple messages with memorable indicators
5. Use credible messengers and a variety of channels and formats
6. Pay attention to timing
7. Monitor and evaluate your activities and learn how to do better