Forging Stronger Links

Applying the Voluntary Sector Accord and Codes of Good Practice

January, 2005

Trainer Binder

Institute On Governance — Institut sur la gouvernance

Health Canada — Santé Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada — Agence de santé publique du Canada

Forging Stronger Links: Applying the Voluntary Sector Accord and Codes of Good Practices

AGENDA

	DAY 1	
8:30 – 9:30	Welcome, Introductions, Workshop Objectives	page 3
9:30 – 10:30	A Maturing Dialogue: The Relationship between the Voluntary Sector and the Government	page 5
10:30 – 10:45	*Break*	
10:45 – 12:30	A Look at the Two Players: Government and the Voluntary Sector	page 7
12:30 – 1:30	*Lunch*	
1:30 – 2:30	Tools to Foster the Relationship: The Accord	page 9
2:30 – 2:45	*Break*	
2:45 – 4:15	Tools to Foster the Relationship: Code on Policy Dialogue	page 12
4:15 – 4:30	*Close of Day 1*	
	DAY 2	
8:30 – 8:45	Review of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2	
8:45 – 10:15	Tools to Foster the Relationship: Code on Funding Practices	page 15
10:15 – 10:30	*Break*	
10:30 – 10:45	Putting It Into Practice – Introduction to Case Study	page 18
10:45 – 12:30	Putting It Into Practice – Small Group Work Part I	page 19
12:30 – 1:30	*Lunch*	
1:30 – 3:00	Putting It Into Practice – Small Group Work Part II	page 19
3:00 – 3:15	*Break*	
3:15 – 4:00	Putting It Into Practice – Small Group Report-Back and Plenary	page 20
4:00 – 4:15	*Workshop Close and Evaluation*	

Workshop Introduction & Participants' Expectations
Day One: 8:30 – 9:30

Purpose/Intent
- To create a shared understanding of workshop objectives
- To create a sense of excitement/engagement
- To review workshop agenda
- To introduce workshop facilitators and participants
- To surface participant expectations and questions

Time
1 hour

Materials
- Workshop objectives, agenda (in participant binders)
- Prepared flipchart and/or slides for this section (course objectives)
- List of participants (handout)
- Piece of flipchart paper on the wall, labeled "Expectations"
- Post-it notes on each table

Process

Participants are seated in mixed groups of 5 persons at roundtables. An overhead projector and flipchart are at the front of the room.

1. Introductory Remarks (1st slide) 15m (8:30-8:45)
- Washrooms
- Cell phones
- Binder
- Resource table
- Time
- Introduce moderators / presenters

2. Workshop Objectives 10m (8:45-8:55)

3. Ice-breaker activity 10m (8:55-9:05)
   a. Moderator asks all participants to stand
   b. Moderator ask the participants to form clusters using a selection of the following headings:

   Where do you work as an employee?
   - Government (Health Canada)
   - Voluntary Sector

- Have worked in both during career

Organizations who have seen their funding levels in the last few years:
- Increase
- Decrease
- Remain stable

How much do you work with the other sector?
- Once a week
- About 4 times a year (quarterly)
- Seldom

Do you have an issue you want to get on Health Canada's agenda? – raise your hand.

How many of you have as individuals (inside work or out):
- Written a letter to a Minister
- Signed a petition
- Marched
- Developed or worked on an advocacy campaign

4. Participants' introductions and expectations 25m (9:05-9:30)

   a. Participants are asked to pair up and interview each other, and then to present their partner briefly (name, organization, where they are from and their expectation for the workshop).

   b. The identified expectations should be written on a sticky note and posted on the piece of flipchart paper on the wall. The workshop moderator then indicates (where possible) whether or not the issue will be dealt with during the course of the workshop.

A Maturing Dialogue: The Relationship between the Voluntary Sector and Government
Day One: 9:30 – 10:30

Purpose/Intent
- To create an understanding of the relationship between the voluntary sector and the federal government by providing an overview of:
    - The history of the relationship
    - The Voluntary Sector Roundtable
    - The Voluntary Sector Initiative
    - The view today
- To explore existing best practices

Time
- 1 hour

Materials
- slides for this session

Process

1. Presentation... 20m (9:30-9:50)
    (Trainer – note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes)

2. Question & Answer... 10m (9:50-10:00)

3. Small Group Work – ask participants, at their tables, to discuss some best practices they currently employ with the other sector. Participants should record these best practices on a sheet of paper 15m (10:00-10:15)

4. Small Group Report Back – have participants report back on their existing best practices. Note these best practices on a flip chart at the front of the room. Trainer should, as needed, add to the list generated by participants using the attached list. These best practices will be referred back to at several points during the course. 15m (10:15-10:30)
    Note: these existing best practices should be documented as part of a post-workshop report that is submitted to the Office of the Voluntary Sector, Health Canada.

Examples of Good Practices

For Both Health Canada and Voluntary Organizations in Health

- Sharing interesting research
- Going to colleagues' events and inviting them to yours
- Discussing embryonic funding proposals with funders and what's coming up on the Government horizon with voluntary organizations
- Taking the time to understand the realities of each others' worlds (pressures, limitations, opportunities)
- Getting buy-in from players on both sides by demonstrating usefulness and impact
- Having a Government or Voluntary Sector colleague (for support, questions, upcoming issues, sounding board, test drive, douse bad ideas, honest feedback)
- Creating streamlined processes of working together
- Creating an environment of trust
- _Before_ a crisis emerges, getting to know who the key players in the other sector are in your field. You will want them to take your phone calls.
- Having good, ongoing communication

For Health Canada

- Factoring in the time and money it takes for meaningful consultations, moving beyond the "usual suspects" consultations that don't provide an inclusive, broad view
- Information-sharing across Government on how Departments are implementing the Accord and the Codes and what good practices exist (**note:** Health Canada is the first to issue a public report on this)
- Involving diverse groups with a range of interests and capacity
- Keeping Voluntary Sector colleagues informed about funding available as part of ongoing programs and exceptional funding
- Supporting administration costs in budgets (policy proposal development takes time – accountability takes time)
- Addressing technological challenges of funding by having a Help Desk for Voluntary Sector Organizations

For the Voluntary Sector

- Developing ways to speak with one voice, where possible and desired, and ensuring that the diversity of the sector is engaged and represented (recognizing that without a "statement of community interest" the Government may have to write it themselves)
- Tying proposals to interests of the Government by picking up on emerging issues
- Anticipating money becoming available at year-end and developing "stem cell" proposals (which can be trimmed, sized, scaled, but are ready to go)
- Having ongoing communication with partners and funders and calling during March (budget) madness to ask (i.e. money to print a report the funder had previously sponsored)
- Looking at the big picture: for example, if X gets rent money, Y might lose their programming
- Working with partners on projects and submitting proposals together, to develop capacity in both organizations and to learn from each other's strengths

*_Note_: this list was prepared with input from the pilot for this course with participants from both Health Canada and the Voluntary Sector (May 2004).

A Look at the Two Players
Day One: 10:45 – 12:30

Purpose/Intent
- To review the strengths that the Government and the Voluntary Sector bring to the table
- To create an understanding of the federal government in terms of:
  - The federal government structure and decision-making process
  - The structure of Health Canada
  - Making health policy
- To create an understanding of the Voluntary Sector in terms of:
  - The structure of the sector
  - The sector's policy capacity and how the sector makes decisions
  - Resource issues facing the sector

Time
- 10 minutes (strengths of the sectors)
- 60 minutes (Government)
- 35 minutes (Voluntary Sector)

Materials
- Slides for this session
- "Influences on Policy" handout (taken from participant slides)
- "F/P/T Advisory Committee Structure" handout
- "Voluntary Sector Forum" handout
- "Stakeholder Engagement" handout
- "Principles of the Canada Health Act" handout

Process

1. Introduction to session and presentation of slides 1-3 .... 10m (10:45-10:55)
   (Trainer – note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes)

2. Presentation of slides 5-7 – Government Capacities and Decision-making
   .... 10m (10:55-11:05)

3. Presentation of slides 8-17 – A Word About Health Canada and the PHAC
   .... 15m (11:05-11:20)
   (Trainer: note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes and handout for slide 16)

4. Presentation of slides 18-31 –How Health Policy is Made in Canada
   .... 25m (11:20-11:45)
   (Trainer: note questions in speaking notes and handouts for slide 22, 23 and 24)

5. Question & Answer – Government.. 10m (11:45-11:55)

6. Presentation of slides 32-43 – Voluntary Sector Capacities, Contributions and Resource Issues 25m (11:55-12:20)
   (Trainer: note questions and exercises in speaking notes and handout for slide 35)

7. Question & Answer – Voluntary Sector 10m (12:20-12:30)

The Accord
Day One: 1:30 – 2:30

Purpose/Intent
- To review and create a shared understanding of the Accord and how it can be used, by providing:
    - An introduction and highlights, including what the Accord is and is not
    - A summary of issues that emerged
    - An opportunity for discussion on how the Accord can be used

Time
- 1 hour

Materials
- slides for this session

Process

1. Ask participants to review the list of best practices generated earlier in the day on the flipchart(s). Assign each table 2-3 of the best practices (depending on the number originally generated) and ask them, at their tables, to link the best practices to sections of the Accord (especially in terms of Commitments and Principles 10m (1:30-1:40)

2. Have a representative of each table report back on the results, including reading the relevant paragraph for each best practice. Trainer should demonstrate additional links to the Accord using the list provided (attached) 15m (1:40-1:55)

3. Presentation.. 25m (1:55-2:20)
(Trainer – note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes, slides 11-12)

4. Question & Answer.. 10m (2:20-2:30)

Examples of how the good practices (listed in the initial list, Tab 2) are reflected in the Accord: "In the Spirit of the Accord"

Good Practices for Both	Reflected in the Spirit of the Accord
Taking the time to understand realities of each others' worlds	In discussing the principle of "co-operation and collaboration", the Accord says **working relationships** should be flexible and respect what others contribute and the challenges and constraints under which they operate.
Getting buy-in from players on both sides by demonstrating usefulness and impact	One of the principles of the Accord is "**accounting to Canadians**" – this includes ensuring transparency, high standards of conduct and sound management in work together and monitoring and reporting on results.
Having a Government or Voluntary Sector buddy	In discussing the principle of "co-operation and collaboration," the Accord says **working relationships** should be flexible and respect what others contribute and the challenges and constraints under which they operate.
Creating streamlined processes for working together	The Accord says "appropriately designed **processes and governance structures** are necessary to achieve sustained dialogue."
Creating an environment of trust	The Accord says dialogue should be carried out in a way "which respects each party's confidential information and builds and maintains **trust**."
Having good, ongoing communication	One of the Accord's guiding principles is "**dialogue**" that is open, respectful, informed, sustained, across a range of viewpoints.
Good Practices for the Government	
Factoring in the time and money it takes for meaningful consultations	The Government committed to recognizing its need to "engage the voluntary sector in open, informed, and sustained dialogue in order that the sector may contribute its experience, expertise, knowledge and ideas in developing better public policies and in the design and delivery of programs."
Information-sharing across the Government on implementation of the Accord and the Codes and on good practices	Both Sectors agreed to take ongoing actions **to increase awareness about the Accord** within the sector and the Government of Canada, and among Canadians.
Involving groups with diverse capacity	One of the Accord's guiding principles is "dialogue" that is open, respectful, informed, sustained, **that welcomes a range of viewpoints**.
Providing timely information about possible money leftover in advance	In discussing the principle of "co-operation and collaboration", the Accord says working relationships should be **flexible** and respect what others contribute and the challenges and constraints under which they operate.

Supporting administration costs in budgets	In the Accord, the Government of Canada committed to recognize and consider the implications of its legislation, regulations, policies and programs on voluntary sector organizations, including **the importance of funding policies and practices** for the further development of the relationship and the strengthening of the Voluntary Sector's capacity.
Addressing technological challenges of funding by having a Help Desk for VSOs	The Government committed to developing the mechanisms and processes required to put the Accord into action and recognized the importance of funding policies and practices on the relationship and the strengthening of the sector's capacity.
Good Practices for the Sector	
Developing ways to speak with one voice, where possible and desired, and ensuring that the diversity of the sector is engaged and represented.	In the Accord, the Voluntary Sector committed to "serve as a means for the voices and views of all parts of the voluntary sector to be represented to and heard by the Government of Canada, ensuring that the full depth and diversity of the sector is reached and engaged."
Tying proposals to the needs of the Government by picking up on emerging issues	In the Accord, the Voluntary Sector committed to continuing to "identify important or emerging issues and trends in communities" and to act on them or bring them to the attention of the Government
Anticipating left-over budget money and developing "stem cell proposals"	In discussing the principle of "co-operation collaboration," the Accord says working relationships should be **flexible** and respect what others contribute and the challenges and constraints under which they operate.
Ongoing communication with funders and partners and calling during March budget madness to ask what money may be left	In discussing the principle of "co-operation and collaboration", the Accord says working relationships should be **flexible** and respect what others contribute and the challenges and constraints under which they operate.
Working with partners on projects and submitting proposals together to develop capacity in both organizations	In the Accord, the Voluntary Sector committed to "serve as a means for the voices and views of all parts of the voluntary sector to be represented to and heard by the Government of Canada, ensuring that the full depth and diversity of the sector is reached and engaged."

Note: this list was prepared with input from the pilot for this course with participants from both Health Canada and the Voluntary Sector (May 2004).

The Code on Policy Dialogue
Day One: 2:45 – 4:15

Purpose/Intent
- To review and create a shared understanding of what the Code on Policy Dialogue is and how it can be used, by providing:
  - An introduction and highlights
  - A review of the commitments
  - An opportunity for discussion on how the Code can be applied.

Time
- 1 hour 30 minutes

Materials
- slides for this session
- handout – Commitments in Brief on Code of Policy Dialogue

Process

1. Presentation...40m (2:45 – 3:25)
   (Trainer – note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes, and handout for slide 15)

2. Question & Answer.. 15m (3:25-3:40)

3. Small Group Work – form 3 or 6 groups, ensuring (as much as possible) that each group has representatives from both government and the voluntary sector. Assign each group 1 or 2 stages of the Policy Development Cycle (refer back to slide 6). Ask them to answer two questions.. 20m (3:40-4:00)
   - What sections of the Code on Policy Dialogue apply to your element of the policy development process?
   - What would applying the Code for your element of the policy development process look like in day-to-day life? (i.e. What would be the best practices?)

4. Have the groups report back on the results of their discussion. Trainer should add ideas from the attached list and link to the list of best practices as needed
   .... 15m(4:00-4:15)

Examples of the Policy Code in Action

- Strategic priorities exercise at the Canadian Mental Health Association now includes "influencing public policy" and they now need to build an operational plan and could use the Code for this.
- Terms of Reference for the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) Advisory Committee in the BC Region.
- HIV/AIDS Division and Canadian AIDS Society did a workshop for the HIV/AIDS community on the Accord and Codes and how it could be used.
- It will be useful for consultation on HIV/AIDS strategy.
- Population Health Fund in Atlantic Region: 3 years, 80 projects that influence policy.

Examples of Good Practices linked to the Policy Code

The following are examples of work going on in Health Canada, tied to Good Practices in the Policy Code.

- OCAPI publishes the calendar of public involvement activities taking place in the HPFB on their website (ocapi.hc-sc.gc.ca) to:
  - ensure broad voluntary sector representation (4.1.3)
  - contribute to awareness and sharing of policy implications (4.1.5)
  - and strengthen knowledge and capacity for effective dialogue (4.1.4)

  Strengthening this good practice might involve improving awareness and distribution of the calendar of public involvement activities by:
  - listing more activities
  - increasing and improving the information provided on each activity
  - working with the regions to broaden the distribution list to reach more of the voluntary sector organizations
  - developing a list serve to notify recipients about calendar updates.

- Common evaluation and promotion of services in the National Network of Quitlines (in the HECS, Tobacco Control Programme, Office of Prevention, Cessation and Protection). The National Coordinating Body for the National. Network of Quitlines is composed of the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society. Quitlines are also delivered by the Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Here, the Government is seeking out expertise and input, using it in policy development.

- There is a new project that will mark the start of involvement between the Corporate Consultation Secretariat and the Voluntary Sector. It involves dialogue training with Voluntary Sector staff and selected members/representatives of Voluntary Sector organizations. This is Good Practice 4.2.2 (develop diverse ways to engage in regular dialogue) as well as strengthening the knowledge and capacity for effective dialogue (4.1.4) and providing opportunities to learn and improve dialogue and facilitation skills.

- The Corporate Consultation Secretariat leads public involvement practice capacity building – to provide advice to staff planning public involvement. There is a Public Involvement Learning Strategy and Public Involvement Committee Network meetings. The good practice at work here is 4.2.3: "use full range of methods to engage the Voluntary Sector."

- The Community Animation Program of the Population and Public Health Branch runs a Community Collaboration Project (CCP), whose mission is to design and model and multi-agency collaborative approach to help facilitate and enable joint planning and project development activities. The goal is to move this from a pilot program stage to a more sustainable form. They invited community groups to a workshop to network and discuss regional pertinent issues and concerns. Good practices for Health Canada involve:

  - Considering impacts of government actions on the Voluntary Sector

  - Providing opportunities for governments to jointly support community initiatives in the future

  - Developing diverse ways to engage in regular dialogues

  - Ensuring broad Voluntary Sector representation

  - Strengthening knowledge and capacity for effective dialogue

Code of Good Practice on Funding
Day Two: 8:45 – 10:15

Purpose/Intent
- To review and create a shared understanding of what the Code of Good Practice on Funding is and how it can be used, by providing:
  - An introduction and highlights
  - A review of the commitments
  - An opportunity for discussion on how the Code can be applied.

Time
- 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials
- slides for this session
- handout – CCRA policy statement
- handout – Commitments in Brief for the Code on Funding

Process

1. Presentation of slides 1-2 .... 5m (8:45-8:50)

2. Slide 3 – "Clearing the Air" activity 10m (8:50-9:00)
    (see speaking notes on slide 3 and attached notes for possible responses)

3. Presentation of slides 4-20 .... 25m (9:00-9:25)
    (Trainer – note questions and items for discussion in speaking notes, and handouts for slides 6 and 20)

4. Question & Answer 15m (9:25-9:40)

5. Small Group Work – form 3 or 6 groups, ensuring (as much as possible) that each group has representatives from both government and the voluntary sector. Assign each group 1 or 2 stages of the Policy Development Cycle (refer back to slide 6 of day 1 session on the Policy Code). Ask them to answer the following question15m (9:40-9:55)
    - What would applying the Funding Code look like in day-to-day life for your assigned stages of the Cycle? (i.e. What would be the best practices?)

6. Have the groups report back on the results of their discussion and record ideas on a flip chart. The example attached can be used by the trainer to further illustrate best practices 20m (9:55-10:15)

Funding Code Activity on 'Clearing the Air': List of Possible Responses

Issues for both the Government and the Voluntary Sector

- The need for multi-year funding (for planning, capacity-building, human resources) – note that multi-year funding does occur in Health Canada's regional offices

- Frustration with project-based, time-limited funding

- The need for dialogue about priorities: where are programs heading? This tends to happen more in the Department's Regional Offices

- The need for increased monitoring: what needs to be done to ensure accountability? The Government needs to ensure monitors with a financial background. The Voluntary Sector does annual audits and is generally far more accountable than they are perceived to be, although they do it in a different way (approval basis rather than cash basis).

- The frequent transition in Government (change of Minister, election etc.) means an ensuing lack of clarity with regard to project expectations (particularly accountability and outcome measures)

- There are few people on either side with the expertise to track outcomes (what didn't happen) which means insufficient education and training

- Different government departments require different systems (i.e. grant application, reporting info)

- The paperwork for smaller projects (under $50,000) should be cut back

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A Case Demonstrating Good Practices in the Funding Code

The following is an example of where the Voluntary Sector and Government worked together to positively enhance each others' policy and resources. Good practices include:

- 5.1.1 (for the Voluntary Sector) demonstrating and communicating value in the delivery of programs and services

- 5.1.3 (for the Voluntary Sector) using its extensive networks to communicate information and co-ordinate among organizations as appropriate to avoid duplication

and working with government funders to identify ways to make programs more responsive to local needs

- 5.3 (for both Government and the Voluntary Sector) exchanging information and building awareness to improve mutual understanding.

The Alliance for Breast Cancer Information & Support has a great many partners in Government and the Voluntary Sector, including Health Canada and its Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society. There are also smaller community-based groups such as the Children and Women's health Centre of BC. The impact of the Alliance is certainly greater than if each individual organization acted alone and it allows the agencies to work more efficiently. Participants can draw upon the partnerships and resources constructed and forged by the Alliance. The Alliance can see both volunteers and professionals save significant amounts of time by adopting what has already been done or already been learned elsewhere. The Alliance gives Government a ready-made network of people in many communities who can help them work toward their own goals and objectives. This means that the relatively small investment by Health Canada and other organizations in the Alliance pays very big dividends. Individuals, communities, Canadians and Health Canada all benefit from community-based, capacity-building partnerships: better information, better support and a more efficient use of professionals' time.

Putting It Into Practice: A Case Study
Day Two: 10:30-10:45; 10:45-12:30; 1:30-3:00 and 3:15-4:00

Purpose/Intent
- To have an opportunity to apply the Accord, Codes and some best practices to an actual situation
- To share ideas for approaches to building the relationship between the voluntary sector and the federal government

Time
- 15m (introduction to the case study)
- 105m (small group work part I)
- 90m (small group work part II)
- 45m (small group report-back and plenary)

Materials

Part I
- case study instruction overhead or LCD slides
- handout - case study – Voluntary Sector perspective
- handout - case study – Government perspective
- handout - news articles for case study Part I
- handout - Accord and Codes cards
- 1 flipchart for each small group

Part II
- handout - case study policy announcement

Process

1. **Introduction to the Case Study**………………….……………...15m(10:30-10:45)
   a. Facilitator divides participants into 2 or 3 groups (each with 6-8 participants), ensuring (as much as possible) a mix of Government and Voluntary Sector representation in each group.
   b. Facilitator asks each group to sub-divide into the roles of "Voluntary Sector" and "Government," and encourages participants to take on the role that they are less familiar with.

c. Facilitator hands out Part I of the case study - ensuring that each participant receives their chosen role – and the news articles (to everyone) and asks participants to read/review it and ask questions of clarification only.

d. Facilitator hands out three cards to each participant:
- *To those taking on the "Voluntary Sector" role:*
  - A blue card that lists one of the values and principles listed in the Accord
  - A pink card that lists one of the shared or Voluntary Sector commitments (good practices) listed in the Code on Policy Dialogue
  - A green card that lists one of the shared or Voluntary Sector commitments (good practices) in the Code on Funding Practices.
- *To those taking on the "Government" role:*
  - A blue card that lists one of the values and principles listed in the Accord
  - A yellow card that lists one of the shared or government commitments (good practices) listed in the Code on Policy Dialogue
  - A white card that lists one of the shared or government commitments (good practices) in the Code on Funding Practices.

e. Participants are to ensure that the value/principle and commitments they are assigned are reflected in the upcoming dialogue sessions.

f. Facilitator then outlines the case study and dialogue process (case study slides) and reminds the groups that they will be asked to report back on the results of their dialogue at the end of the day.

2. **Small Group Work Part I** - Participants work in their small groups to discuss the case study and answer the questions posed. Half of the group should take on the perspective of the Executive Director of the Voluntary Sector organization and her/his staff, the other half should take on the perspective of the lead policy analyst for Health Canada and his/her team. Together they should define the problem, determine how best to get the issue on the agenda, and develop a list of options for addressing the issue. Funding issues (including human resources, in-kind resources etc) for these elements of the policy cycle should also be addressed. If desired, the Voluntary Sector and Government "teams" may (briefly) caucus separately to discuss sector-specific perspectives. One member of the group records their answers on the flipchart provided.. 105m (10:45-12:30)

3. Lunch .... .60m (12:30-1:30)

4. **Trainer - Policy Announcement** – trainer to hand out and read out the policy decision taken by the government.. 5m (1:30-1:35)

5. **Small Group Work Part II** - Participants work in their small group to discuss Part II of the case study and answer the questions posed. Through dialogue, and given the policy announcement by the federal government, the groups should discuss how the policy can best be implemented and monitored, to ensure that their perspectives are still reflected as the policy is rolled out and that it has the impacts and outcomes intended. Funding issues (including human resources, in-kind resources etc) for these

elements of the policy cycle should also be addressed. One member of the group records their answers on the flipchart provided……………....85m (1:35 – 3:00)

6. *Break*..15m (3:00 – 3:15)

7. **Small Group Presentations** - Facilitator asks each small group to present the results of their case study and allows the other participants to ask a few questions to each group 30m (3:15-3:45)

8. **Plenary** - Facilitator leads a plenary discussion on the key lessons learned from the case study, and records these on the flipchart at the front of the room 15m (3:45-4:00)