

AFP POLICY BRIEF: DRAFTING OUTLINE

A drafting outline is a useful tool for organizing and honing in on the *essential* context, policy options, messages, evidence, and recommendations needed to convince an audience to take a particular action (the “ask”). **Answer each question with no more than two sentences, unless otherwise stated. These sentences will then form your brief narrative.** Completing this exercise will help you develop a focused, evidence-based brief that is *limited* to what is achievable *now*.

Audience

1. Who is the audience/targeted decisionmaker?
2. If there is more than one audience, is more than one brief needed? *One brief can be tailored to different audiences/decisionmaker clusters.*
3. How knowledgeable is the audience on the issue the brief will address? *Speaks to level of detail needed.*
4. What kind of an environment is the audience working in (e.g., supportive or nascent, centralized or devolved)? *Determines where emphasis is needed.*

Title (answer last)

1. What is the overall, key message of the brief in less than 10 words?
2. Can the words be reduced or divided into a title and subtitle?

Policy Brief Components

- Title
- Executive Summary
- Main Body
- Recommendations
- Conclusion (optional)
- Resources (optional)

Executive Summary

Problem/Opportunity Statement

1. What is the broader problem/opportunity you aim to address? *E.g., low modern contraceptive use, contributing to a high maternal mortality rate.*
2. What is the country doing to address the broader problem/opportunity? *E.g., FP2020, FP strategy.*

Approach/Options

3. Why is the current approach insufficient? *E.g., lack of supporting policies or regulations for implementation.*
4. What is the specific issue you aim to address to build on progress or change course? *E.g., limited number of contraceptive methods available.*
5. Why is it important to address the issue (why does it matter)? What is the key evidence to support this? *E.g., expanding method choice leads to increased contraceptive use, as evident by...*

Proposed Course of Action

6. What is the “ask” that will address the issue? *E.g., expand method choice to include three methods with high user satisfaction.*
7. Why is it important to take this action NOW? *E.g., increase access to modern methods to meet the varied needs of women and take another step toward fulfilling FP commitments.*

Main Body

Status of Issue

1. How has the issue evolved over time (historical perspective)? *E.g., slow introduction of methods, with some public-private partnerships developing.*
2. What are the root causes of the issue? *E.g., lack of political support or evidence.*

Current Landscape

3. Which approaches have been successful and which have not (national, regional, global)? *E.g., expanding access to a desired method and mode of delivery in neighboring countries.*
4. What are the *central* supporting data for these statements? *E.g., use of implants has increased steadily and continuation rates are comparatively better.*
5. What are the influencing factors (internal and external)? *E.g., civil society engagement, data availability.*

Available Options

6. What are the feasible options for addressing the issue? *E.g., introducing three methods, one method at a time, based on known demand in a particular region and partnerships with the private sector.*
7. What is the specific course of action (“ask”) the decisionmaker should take? *E.g., endorse the public sector provision of the method currently supported by law.*
8. What are the *central* supporting data for this action? *E.g., study shows unmet need for method is X%.*
9. What sub-headings or lead-in paragraph headings can capture your key messages and organize the information? *Looking at your answers above, list some phrases.*
10. What data or examples can be shown visually as graphics, text boxes, etc. to reinforce your key messages? *Looking at your answers above, list those with maximum impact for the audience.*

Recommendations

1. What is the specific course of action the audience should take as a priority for achieving their goals? *E.g., expand method choice to increase contraceptive use and accelerate progress toward a goal.*
2. What are the specific, practical, and feasible steps that will lead to achieving the ask? *Bullet them, with no more than one sentence each; keep to 4-6 steps. E.g., endorse the public provision of the methods, include a budget line item, train health workers, raise awareness through SBCC activities.*
3. Who should take these steps? *Consider dividing steps if more than one decisionmaker is involved.*

Conclusion (optional; typically for longer briefs)

1. What are your main take-aways (rational, emotional, and ethical arguments of your “ask”)? Why is it important to act *now*?

Resources (optional)

1. Is there detailed data or information the audience should be directed to? Someone to contact?

To provide feedback on this drafting outline, contact Lori Merritt at lmerritt@futuresgroup.com.