

# GUIDANCE NOTE

## Identifying policy options

The third step in the policy cycle is to identify the policy options which could resolve the policy problem and achieve desired policy objective(s).

The range of viable options which could resolve a policy problem will be influenced by the nature of the problem to be addressed, the policy objectives and the stakeholders affected.

It is important to consider all viable options to improve the likelihood that the best approach to achieving the policy objective will be identified.

### Types of options

The types of options available to government can include:

**No action**—taking no action (or maintaining the status quo) should always be presented as a viable option. The no action option serves as the baseline for the impact analysis (next stage in the policy cycle).

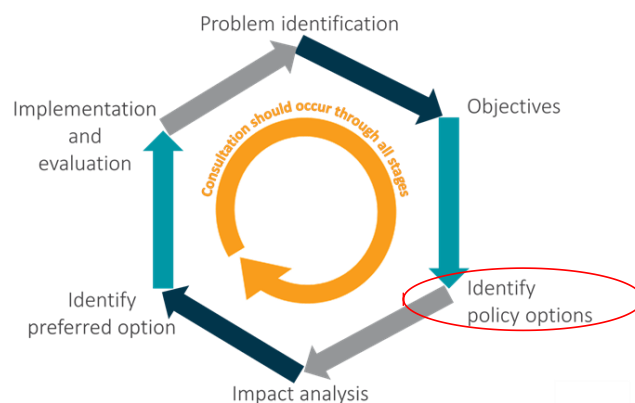
**Regulation**—prescribes conduct or processes through new regulation or simplifying, clarifying and improving an existing legislative framework. *For example, prescribing workplace health and safety requirements.*

**Education and awareness**—mechanisms that seek to influence behaviour by providing information. *For example, advertising campaigns to raise awareness of the impacts of passive smoking.*

**Market-based instruments**—incentives are put in place to achieve policy objectives through mechanisms such as tradeable permits, licences, taxes or subsidies. *For example, tradeable fishing licences that are used to preserve environmental values.*

**Co-regulation**—industry develops its own arrangements, with government legislative backing to allow for the arrangements to be enforced. *For example, the radio and television industry developed a code of practice in consultation with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The codes have legislative backing in the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth). The AMCA monitors the codes and deals with unresolved complaints.*

**Self-regulation**—an industry or a profession can self-regulate with industry-formulated rules or codes of conduct. Industry is responsible for enforcement as there is no use of legislation. *For example, industry-led accreditation schemes, codes of conduct and licensing.*



### Selecting options

The process for selecting options includes undertaking a preliminary assessment of all viable options and eliminating all the infeasible ones.

#### Consider the following points when selecting options:

- How does the option achieve the objective(s)?
- What are the key features of the option?
- What changes (funding, resource, capacity, technical) would need to be made to implement the option?
- Are there any barriers to implementation?

Also consider whether the option is consistent with, and does not duplicate existing Queensland Government, Commonwealth or local government regulation.

During the appraisal, it is not unusual for some options to be identified as impractical as they are unlikely to solve the problem, achieve the policy objective(s), or are not consistent with other regulation.

Consultation is recommended to help identify alternative options. Agencies should be willing to add further options that emerge from consultation.