

General Core Monitoring – Structured Decision Making Process

The SDM process is generally carried out in 6 steps (www.structureddecisionmaking.org 2010):

Step 1: Clarify the Decision Context

The first step in good decision making involves defining what question or problem is being addressed and why, identifying who needs to be involved and how, establishing scope and bounds for the decision, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the decision team.

Step 2: Define Objectives and Evaluation Criteria

The core of SDM is a set of well defined objectives and evaluation criteria. Together they define "what matters" about the decision, drive the search for creative alternatives, and become the framework for comparing alternatives.

Step 3: Develop Alternatives

A range of creative policy or management alternatives designed to address the objectives is developed. Alternatives should reflect substantially different approaches to the problem or different priorities across objectives, and should present decision makers with real options and choices.

Step 4: Estimate Consequences

Step 4 is an analytical exercise in which the performance of each alternative is estimated in terms of the evaluation criteria developed in Step 2. Care must be taken to determine the focal areas of uncertainty and to ensure that these are represented properly in the analysis.

Step 5: Evaluate Trade-Offs and Select

SDM is not a black box, and group discussion should always play a central role in evaluating preferences for alternatives. However, in many cases, preference assessment techniques (such as swing weighting) may be used to help people understand their preferred alternatives.

Step 6: Implement and Monitor

The last step in the decision process then is to identify mechanisms for on-going monitoring to ensure accountability with respect to on-ground results, research to improve the information base for future decisions, and a review mechanism so that new information can be incorporated into future decisions.