

Cooling cities with green space – policy success factors

FACT SHEET



As cities grapple with the impacts of heatwaves, exacerbated by the urban heat island effect and amplified by climate change, green spaces can cool urban areas and provide other functions and benefits to city dwellers' health and wellbeing. Public policies play an important role in retaining and maximising urban green spaces.

In a study of green space policies for Melbourne and London, policy success – developing, endorsing and implementing policies that effectively contribute to urban green space provision – differed across jurisdictions and between cities, but common factors were identified. Conversely, the lack of these factors contributed to less effective implementation. These success factors include both organisational and individual policy maker's characteristics.

These success factors are categorised across four dimensions associated with the different processes, structures and areas of focus of policy making: *strategic* (leadership, vision), *tactical* (alliances and networks), *operational* (implementation) and *reflexive* (monitoring and evaluation).

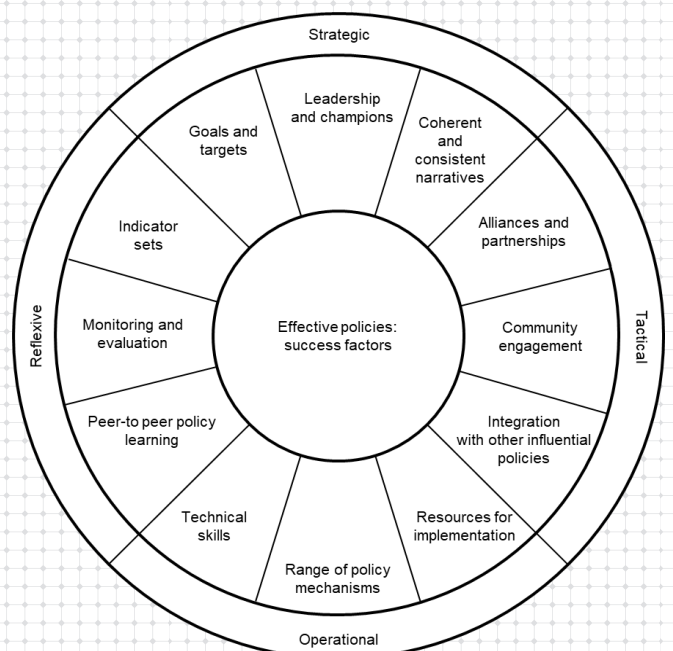
STRATEGIC

Within the **strategic** dimension, green space policy champions, both at executive and organisational levels, underpin decision making. Explicit targets and goals (e.g. tree canopy, open space or permeability

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targets) focus and drive activity. Narratives that span and include green spaces' diverse and multifunctional roles (e.g. 'cooling and greening our city') promote and explain strategic objectives.

TACTICAL

As part of *tactical* approaches, developing partnerships and networks is an important element of policy work, actively contributing to policy success. Community engagement and information, particularly interactive or participatory approaches, including citizen science programs can create new connections with place, and new stories of the importance of urban green spaces, trees and biodiversity in people's lives.

Community engagement also builds and reinforces ongoing political support for green space policies. Integration with other influential policy domains including land use planning and transport strengthens green space policies.

OPERATIONAL

Operational elements include translating strategic goals and targets into ongoing budget allocations for implementation and maintenance; developing policies that include a range of different mechanisms or settings (regulation, incentives, guidelines); and building high levels of technical skills to maintain healthy and resilient urban green spaces (supported by technical and procurement guidelines, and best practice toolkits).



REFLEXIVE

Reflexive factors are focused on monitoring and evaluation for ongoing learning, policy development and implementation improvements. As part of this, building meaningful indicator sets, to ensure useful and targeted data collection and analysis is essential.



The four dimensions together reinforce the value of integrated policy approaches that operate at a range of levels from *strategic* long-term goals and visions, to short term *operational* resources for implementation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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