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# Maximising public support for health policies

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**ROUND TABLE ON ALCOHOL  
CONSUMPTION, HARMS AND  
POLICY OPTIONS**

Czech Republic

*30 November 2023*



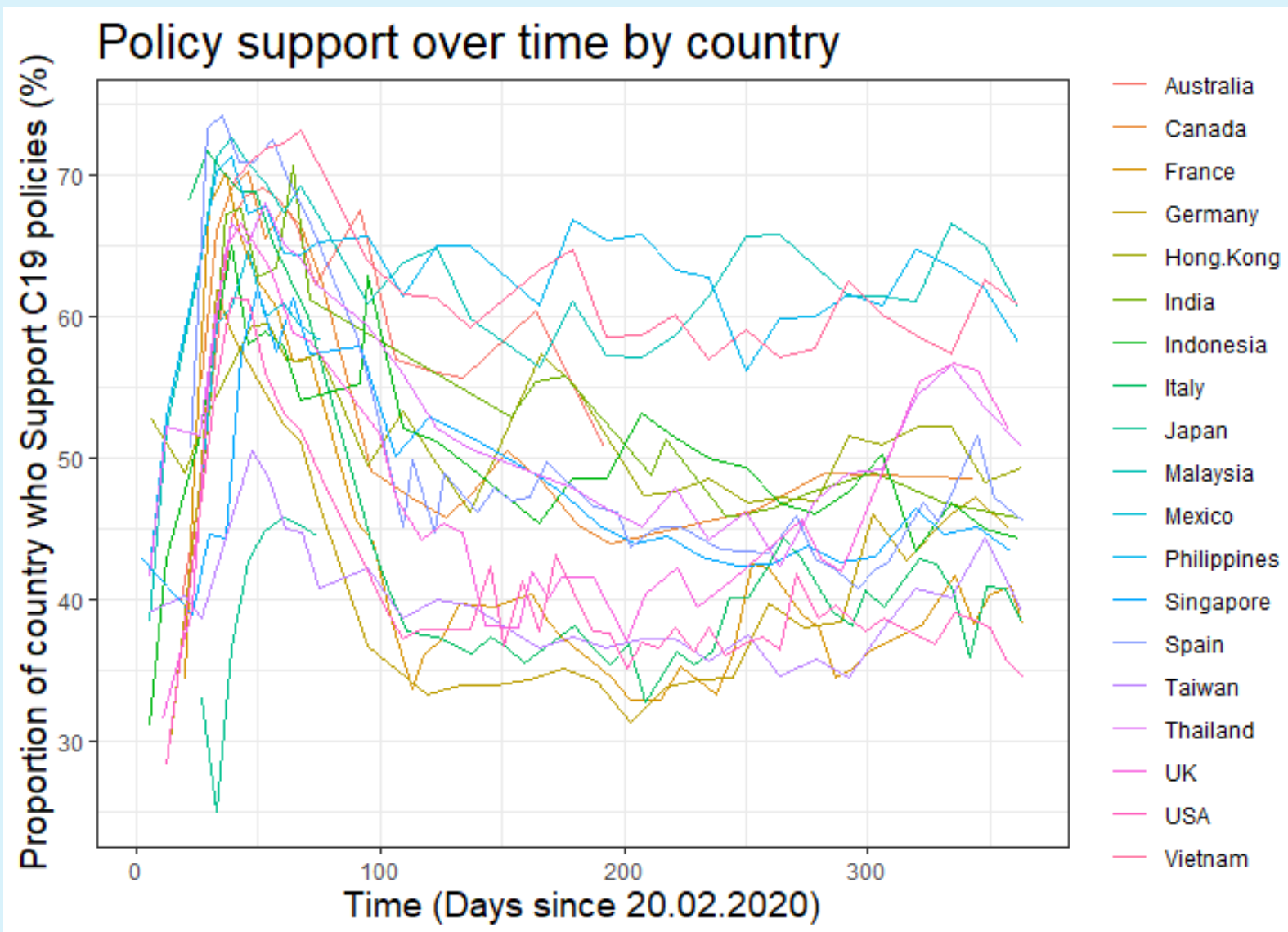








# Support for Covid-19 policies over time



# Why policy support matters

## Lack of public support prevented life-saving alcohol policy (UK)

Alcohol minimum unit pricing:

Home Office Minister stated the govt had consulted on it

“and we heard what people say...: 34% of those who responded backed a 45p minimum unit price, but 56% had disagreed.”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-23346532>

## Minimum alcohol pricing plan shelved

17 July 2013



Multi-buy deals will not be banned, the government says

The government has shelved plans to introduce a minimum price for a unit of alcohol in England and Wales.

Minister Jeremy Browne said the policy would remain "under consideration" but there were fears the change would hit responsible drinkers.

A ban on multi-buy promotions has been rejected but sales will not be allowed below the cost of alcohol duty and VAT.

# Why policy support matters

## Public support influenced implementation and adherence (Atlanta US)

Community members with local businesses advocated for better enforcement and adherence to policies + introduction of new policies

- Existing policies prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors and ticketing alcohol-related violations
- New policies to reduce number of premises who could sell alcohol and change last orders from 4am to 2.30am

<https://health.gov/news/202005/regulating-alcohol-outlet-density-buckhead-communitys-efforts-reduce-violent-crime#ref3>

[https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2015/14\\_0317.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2015/14_0317.htm)

## Regulating Alcohol Outlet Density: The Buckhead Community's Efforts to Reduce Violent Crime

🕒 Posted on May 20, 2020 by ODPHP

Legal and policy approaches can be important tools for achieving healthier communities. A new report—*The Role of Law and Policy in Reducing Deaths Attributable to Alcohol to Reach Healthy People's Substance Abuse Goals in the United States*—provides evidence-based information and identifies priority areas that can help communities achieve Healthy People objectives.



### Challenge: High alcohol outlet density in Buckhead contributing to violent crime

In the United States, excessive alcohol consumption results in about 88,000 deaths every year, making it a major cause of preventable death in the country. Excessive alcohol use (e.g., binge drinking) is also linked to many other health and social issues—including family problems, unemployment, and violent crime.<sup>1</sup>

In the Buckhead community of Atlanta during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of on-premises retail alcohol outlets, like bars and clubs, grew significantly. At the same time, the neighborhood experienced several high-profile homicides<sup>2</sup>—and residents complained about noise, litter, traffic, underage drinking, and other problems.<sup>3</sup>

### Strategy: Enforce liquor laws and regulate on-premises alcohol outlet density

In response to alcohol-related problems, a group of Buckhead residents and business leaders pushed for strict enforcement of liquor laws and a reduction in on-premises alcohol retailers in the community.



# Why policy support matters

## Public support allowed stricter alcohol policies (Sydney AUS)

Two teenagers killed as a result of alcohol-fuelled violence:

- ✓ Petition with 140,000 signatures
- ✓ Street protests
- Lockout law: customers not allowed entry after 1.30am
- Sales of alcohol restricted/banned after 3am

<https://essentialvision.com.au/measures-to-address-alcohol-related-violence> ). <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/dec/10/sydney-lockout-laws-kings-cross-resets-as-community-calls-for-self-regulation>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-21/one-punch-laws-to-tackle-sydney-alcohol-fuelled-violence/5210740>

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/thomas-kelly-hundreds-protest-against-alcohol-related-violence-20131119-2xsf2.html>

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/barry-ofarrell-announces-tough-laws-to-combat-alcoholfuelled-violence-20140121-315wg.html>

## Sydney's lockout laws: Kings Cross 'resets' as community calls for self-regulation

The area's nightlife economy has been hit hard by prohibition-style restrictions on bars, clubs and music venues after two 'one-punch' deaths. Promoters, politicians and campaigners debate the issue at the 2014 Electronic Music Conference

● Barry O'Farrell's new 'one-punch laws' will not serve justice



Neon signs light up Darlinghurst Road in Kings Cross. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

**A** decade ago I worked as a part-time bartender for a nightclub, dead in the heart of Kings Cross. It was a decently paid job for a university student, and my way of playing a role - however small - in Sydney's energetic, underground music scene.

# Why policy support matters

There are three main reasons why public support for policies matters and why it should be measured:

1. High policy support enables policy adoption
2. Incorporating public views into policy making can improve trust and government-public relations
3. High policy support can increase adherence and compliance with policies

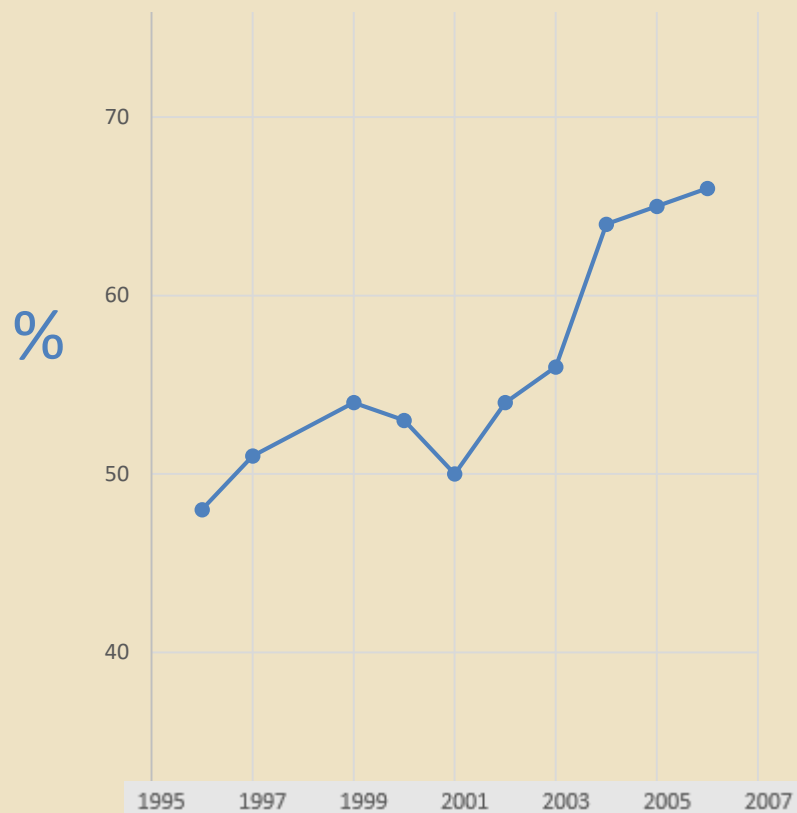




# Enables policy adoption

## Case study: the Smoking Ban, UK (2007)

Support for banning smoking in pubs



# Improves government-public relationships

Methods for integrating the public into policy making:

1. Surveys measuring support for policies
2. Interviews/focus groups exploring support for policies
3. Citizen assemblies to generate policy proposal
4. Open consultations with the public/stakeholders about proposed policies
5. Referenda





# Increases compliance with the policy

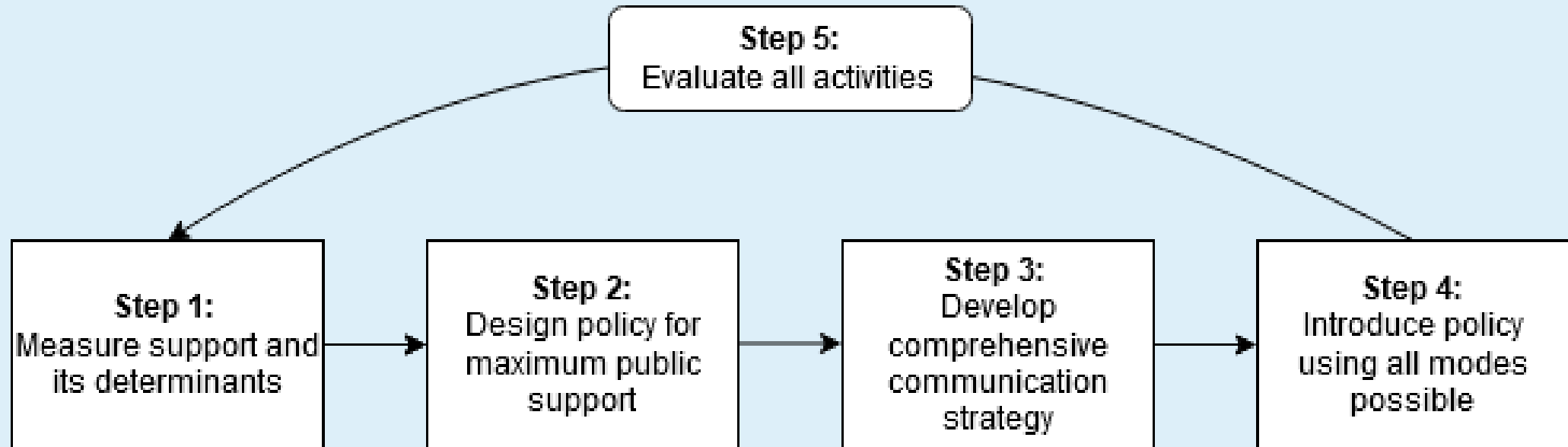


How can we  
maximise policy  
support?





# A 5-step process for **maximising** policy support



# Step 1

## Measure support and its determinants

- Perceived policy benefits (to them, or to society)
- Perceived policy harms/costs (to them, or to society)
- Beliefs about the existence/severity of the problem the policy is targeting
- Perceived fairness of the policy
- Trust in government
- Social and cultural norms





# Step 2

## Design policy for maximum public support

- Public involvement in policy design
- Evaluating the acceptability of different policy types
- Valuing policy effectiveness
- Earmarking



# Step 3

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## Develop effective communication strategy

- **Problem awareness, eg:**
  - Highlighting prevalence of alcohol use
  - Highlighting the consequences of alcohol use
- **Cause-solution matching, eg:**
  - Highlighting the reasons why alcohol use is high
  - This should align with the policy solution
- **Policy benefits, eg:**
  - Evidence that a policy will reduce alcohol consumption by X%
  - This reduction should lead to reduced violent crime, hospital admissions etc
- **Public involvement, eg:**
  - Members of the public and key stakeholders were consulted during policy development
- **Endorsement, eg:**
  - This policy is recommended by WHO, by health charities, by cross-party politicians, etc



# Step 4

## Introduce policy using all modes possible

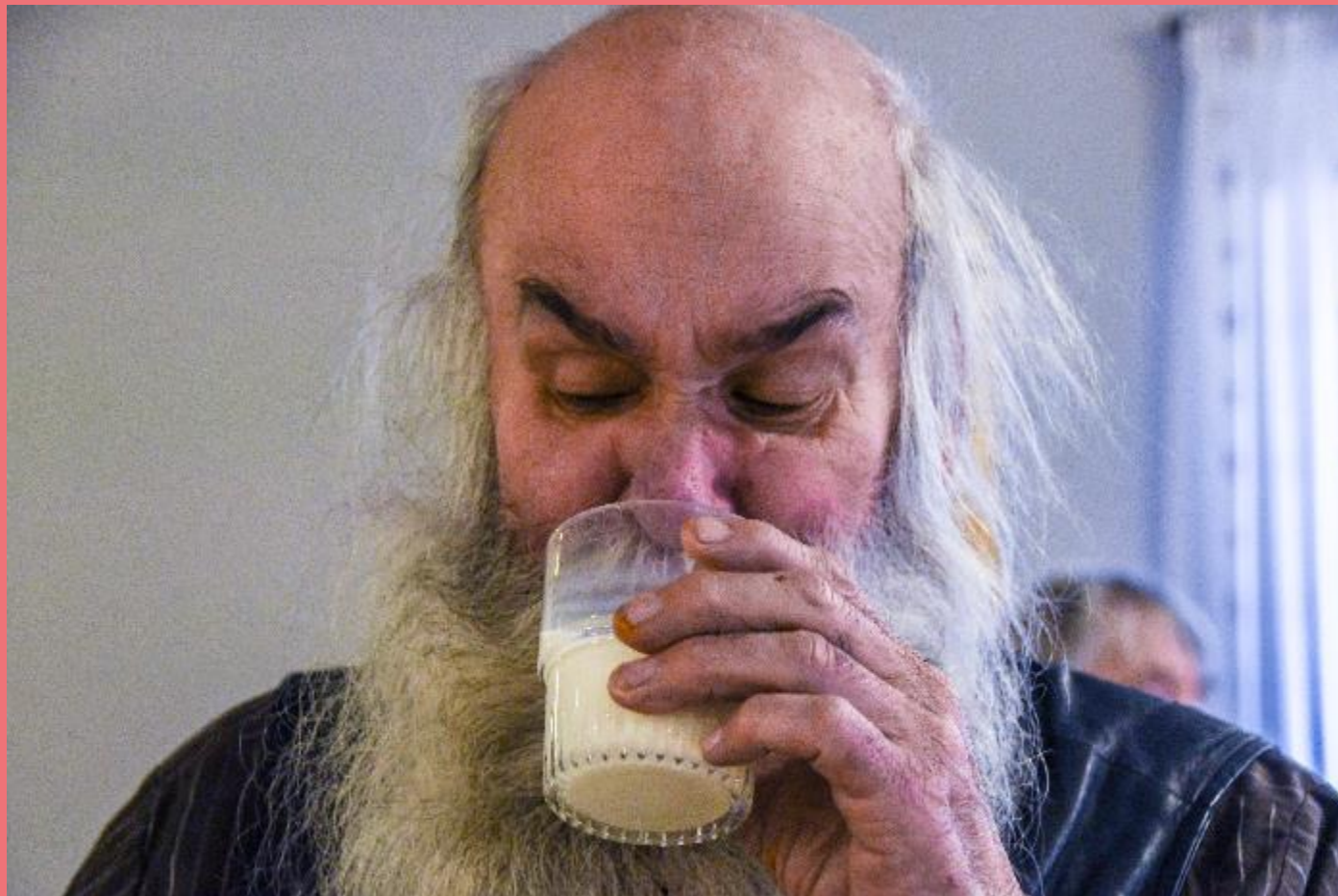
- Working with positive community voices as advocates.
- Training key stakeholders.
- Informing the media.
- Working with businesses.
- Developing information to make sure the policy requirements are clearly understandable.



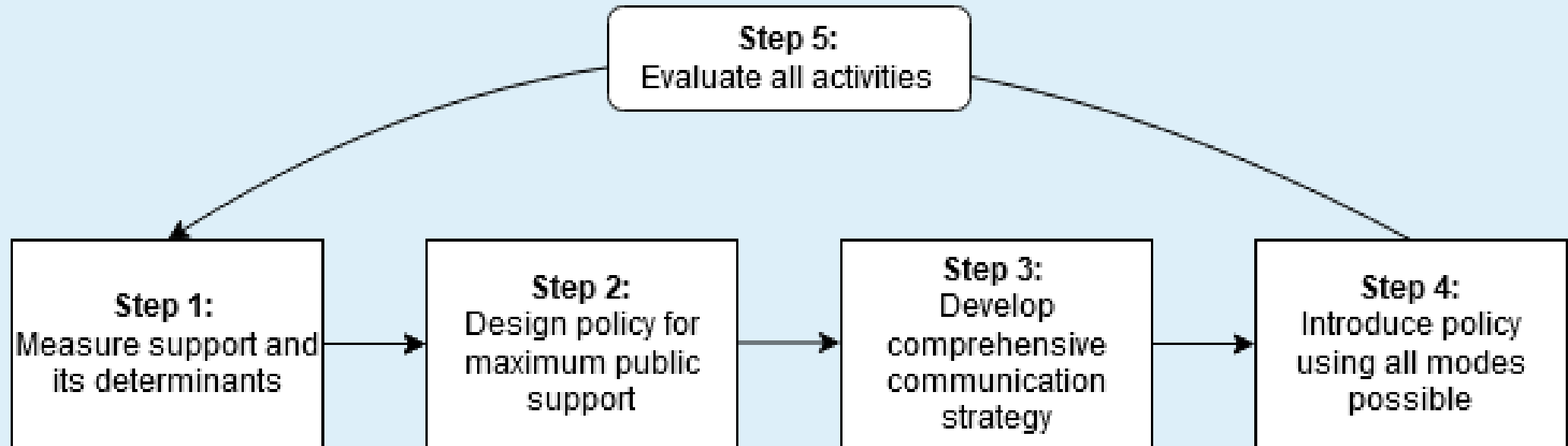
# Step 5

## Evaluate all activities

- Continuously monitor public acceptance – how it changes over time, and who is more supportive/opposed to it
- Monitor behavioural compliance
- Monitor enforcement



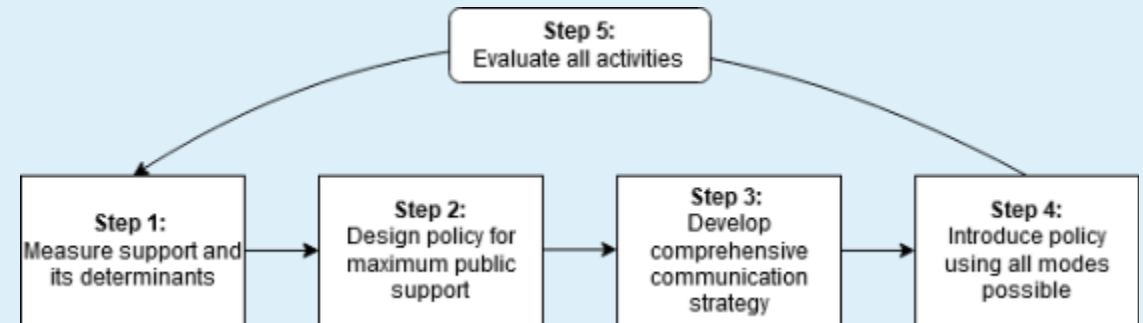
# A 5-step process for **maximising** policy support





# Key take-aways

- ✓ Public support is critical for 1) gaining political momentum for the policy; 2) people's sense of trust and fairness; and 3) the success of the policy after implementation.
- ✓ All stages of policy development and implementation can influence public support. There is evidence to guide policy makers in how public support is best taken into account.
- ✓ Using behavioural science insights can contribute to wider efforts to ensure that policies can be successful, save lives and increase well-being for all.



# Thank you

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