

# DISTILLATE: A Decision-Support Web Tool

**Final workshop of the DISTILLATE programme  
European Economic and Social Committee  
Brussels  
Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

**Charlotte Brannigan  
TRL**

## Introduction/Overview

The focus of the Organisational Delivery project:

1. Understand barriers between local authority officers and external stakeholders and suggest ways in which these may be overcome
2. Suggest solutions to internal barriers in LA policy cycle, leading to more sustainable outcomes in decision making and implementation
3. Increase uptake of evidence-based approaches (*i.e.* of rigorous Design & Implementation Support Tools...)

## The purpose of the Decision-Support Web Tool

DISTILLATE has produced 18 products

9 tools; 9 guidance documents

But how can local authority practitioners be encouraged to use them?

The Web-Based Tool is designed to help them identify the products which are particularly relevant to the decisions which they are taking

## Overview/Design brief

- Where possible, completely open access
- Presents information in as clear a way as possible
- Currently presents only what DISTILLATE has worked upon, but could be expanded to link to other tools and guidance
- Allow users go through the whole decision tree and then be presented with a 'shopping cart' of tools to suit their needs



# Key Stages

- Schemes or Strategies
- Do you have sufficiently high quality information to make an informed decision on...
  - Objectives, indicators and targets
  - Problem assessment
  - Possible instruments
  - Assessing the effects of instruments
  - Barriers
- Depending on answers, may be a sub-set of questions for the user

# Opening Page – Introduction to DISTILLATE and purpose of the tool



**DISTILLATE Decision Making Tool - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://localhost:2207/GUI/Index.aspx> Go

## DistillATE Decision Making Tool

Distillate has a range of tools that are designed for use at high level strategic policy decision support.

[Add additional text here about purpose of this tool]

This tool will ask a series of questions based on the scheme or strategy.

**Instructions**

- First of all you will be asked for some general details about the scheme/strategy (e.g., scheme/strategy name)
- Secondly you will be asked to specify the nature of task (i.e., a scheme level design or strategic policy design)
- The rest of tool will ask you a series of questions related to the scheme or strategy. Each subsequent question may depend on the answer to the previous question. The question numbers indicate the number of questions per stage.
- Finally, the tool will process your answers and product a printable report containing a list of recommended tools that may assist with your assessment.

Select 'Begin Process' to start the decision making process.

Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved.

Done Local intranet

# User enters scheme or strategy details



**DISTILLATE Decision Making Tool - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://localhost:3682/GUI/TaskInfo.aspx> Go

## DistillATE Decision Making Tool

### Strategy/Scheme Information

Please add the the following information about the strategy/scheme being assessed.  
This will then appear at the beginning off the report.

Date Assessed	17/01/2008
Strategy/Scheme Title	<input type="text" value="Sample Project"/>
Reference No. (if any)	<input type="text" value="200/A"/>
Assessed By	<input type="text" value="Charlotte Brannigan"/>
Additional Details	<input type="text" value="First assessment."/>

Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved.

Done Local intranet



User answers a series of yes and no questions about the scheme or strategy



Pathway indicating user's progress

Stage and question number

User selects answer

A screenshot of a web browser window displaying the DistillATE Decision Making Tool. The browser title is "DISTILLATE Decision Making Tool - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://localhost:2207/GUI/Questions.aspx?QuestionID=19". The main content area features the DistillATE logo and the title "DistillATE Decision Making Tool". On the left, a vertical sidebar lists six stages: Stage 1: Objectives, Indicators and Targets (highlighted in blue), Stage 2: Problem Assessment, Stage 3: Possible Instruments, Stage 4: Assessing Effects of Instruments, Stage 5: Barriers, and Stage 6: Strategy. The main content area displays "Stage 1 - Question 1 of 2" and "Strategy: Objectives, Indicators and Targets". Below this, a question is posed: "Do you have sufficiently high quality information to make an informed decision on objectives, indicators and targets?". Two radio buttons are provided: "Yes" and "No". The "No" radio button is selected, indicated by a red arrow. A "Next" button is located to the right of the radio buttons. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: "Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved." The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "Local intranet".

**DISTILLATE Decision Making Tool - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://localhost:2207/GUI/Questions.aspx?QuestionID=32> Go

# DistillATE Decision Making Tool

Stage 1:  
Objectives, Indicators  
and Targets

Stage 2:  
Problem Assessment

Stage 3:  
Possible Instruments

**Stage 4:  
Assessing Effects of  
Instruments**

Stage 5:  
Barriers

Stage 6:  
Strategy

**Stage 4 - Question 4 of 4**  
**Strategy: Assessing Effects of Instruments**

Do you need assistance is assessing the distributional impacts?

Yes

No

Next

Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved.

Done Local intranet

User is presented with a personalised output report based on selected answers



A screenshot of a web browser window displaying the "DistillATE Decision Making Tool" report viewer. The browser's address bar shows "http://localhost:3682/GUI/ReportViewer.aspx". The page title is "DistillATE Decision Making Tool". The main content area is titled "Recommendations" and features a toolbar with "Save" and "Print" icons. Below the toolbar, there is a section titled "Recommended DISTILLATE Products for Sample Project". This section is divided into two parts: "Scheme/Strategy Details" and "Assessment Results". The "Scheme/Strategy Details" section provides information about the "Sample Project", including the scheme name, reference number, assessor, date, and other details. The "Assessment Results" section lists recommended products organized by problem area, such as "Scheme-Level: Objectives, Indicators and Targets" and "Scheme-Level: Problem Assessment".

Save

Print

Overview of scheme/strategy details

Recommended DISTILLATE products organised by problem area

# Sample PDF report



## Recommended DISTILLATE Tools for Sample Project



### Scheme/Strategy Details

The following information describes this scheme:

**Scheme/Strategy Name:** Sample Project  
**Reference No.:** 2001A  
**Assessed By:** Somebody  
**Date Assessed:** 15 Feb 2008  
**Additional Details:**

### Assessment Results

The following tools may assist in assessing this scheme/strategy:

#### Strategy: Objectives, Indicators and Targets

- C1 Guidance: On The Selection And Use Of Indicators
- C2 Enhanced Indicators For Measuring Productivity And Competitiveness

#### Strategy: Problem Assessment

- B2 An 'Outside The Box' Accessibility Strategy Planning Tool
- C1 Guidance: On The Selection And Use Of Indicators
- C2 Enhanced Indicators For Measuring Productivity And Competitiveness
- C3 On The Integration Of Indicators And Monitoring Across Sectors
- D1 A Guidebook On Ways Of Overcoming Barriers To Partnership: Working
- E2 Guidance: To Funding Agencies

#### Strategy: Possible Instruments

- B1 A Konsult-Based Strategy Option Generator
- B2 An 'Outside The Box' Accessibility Strategy Planning Tool
- C1 Guidance: On The Selection And Use Of Indicators
- C3 On The Integration Of Indicators And Monitoring Across Sectors

Below the overview of assessment results, a description of each product will be given, including a link to Guidance documents, or details on how to obtain software/tools

### Tool Information

Details of the tools described in the previous section are listed below:

#### B1 A Konsult-Based Strategy Option Generator

KonsULT is a web based knowledgebase which provides an assessment of the potential contribution to policy of some 40 transport and land use policy instruments, based on both a first principles assessment and a review of case studies. It has been developed to enable users to interrogate KonsULT to identify the subset of instruments which are likely to be the most useful in a specified context. The output from this can then be used to create packages of policy instruments. The Strategy Option Generator is accessible to practitioners through the KonsULT webpage (url below). The policy packages add-on is currently available as an .xls file available from Charlotte Kelly. Using this tool, practitioners can focus on objectives, problems or performance indicators, specify their relative importance, indicate the overall strategy which they wish to pursue and identify the context in which they are working. The option generator will then use the assessment scores for each instrument in KonsULT to identify those instruments, which are likely to contribute most. These tasks are completed through a series of linked pages that the practitioners work through. The result is a list of policy instruments that best fit the information inputted by the practitioner (e.g. [1]). This output can be saved. The policy package add-on uses the policy instrument list created by the practitioner in KonsULT and combines it with information from either a synergy or barrier matrix to create a list of ranked packages of two instruments.

#### Contact Details

- Web: <http://www.konsult.leeds.ac.uk/new/private/level2/filter.php>  
- E-mail: Charlotte Kelley - [C.E.Kelly@ts.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:C.E.Kelly@ts.leeds.ac.uk)

#### B2 An 'Outside The Box' Accessibility Strategy Planning Tool

This project has developed techniques and procedures to encourage the development of a much wider range of solutions to accessibility problems, both transport and non-transport based, which take account of the perspectives of the end users as well as the providers. This includes comprehensive consideration of problems associated both with local access on foot (to shops, GP surgeries, bus stops, etc.) and sub-regional access to services using public transport. It takes into account typical scheduling problems that people face, rather than just considering access to individual service types.

The techniques involve interactive workshops, both with local residents and with groups of planners in transport, public health, environmental strategy, land-use, and local authority corporate policy units.

The aim is to identify barriers to accessible service provision, and - where appropriate to encourage cross-sector working to overcome them.

This project has developed a range of tools and procedures to identify the nature and causes of accessibility problems experienced by different disadvantaged groups, at scales ranging from local to regional, and to encourage a wide range of innovative solutions, both transport and non-transport based. Some tools are designed for use in professional workshops, while others are used with local residents in focus groups. For residents, the tools include the use of schematic map bases, which respondents fill in with details of their own trips, scale maps with overlays showing existing service provision, and checklists and prompts to assist in the generation of options. For professionals, there is an accessibility planning exercise that can be used to explore different service delivery strategies, and the consequences for various user groups. In both cases, account is taken of the typical scheduling problems that people face through the use of a spreadsheet tool. Work has been carried out in parallel with this work to explore the distributional impacts of different patterns of service provision (see the 'Tools for representing and appraising the distributional impacts of the accessibility planning strategies of different agencies' poster).

#### Contact Details

- Web: <http://www.distillate.ac.uk/outputs/products.php>  
- E-mail: Peter Jones - [PeterJones@transport.uci.ac.uk](mailto:PeterJones@transport.uci.ac.uk)

#### C1 Guidance On The Selection And Use Of Indicators

This product provides a guide to practitioners to support the development of a monitoring strategy that supports their objectives, allows them to assess the on-going implementation success and to communicate this to the public and elected members. Monitoring can be used to support a range of functions from auditing money spent through counting what is delivered to assessing the impacts this has had on outcomes such as road safety and air quality. It can also be used to communicate to a range of stakeholders from internal decisionmaking processes through public engagement to politicians as part of the increasing public accountability agenda. The question is therefore, what to measure for what purpose and how to make the best out of what is measured?

The guide reviews the different types of indicators and where they are best applied. It also then looks at how the many different indicators that could be chosen can be linked together. Our research suggests that monitoring is often under-resourced and is very much the "art of the possible". The guide therefore also provides advice on how to prioritise a suite of indicators to measure from a fuller but ultimately unaffordable set.

The guide has already been applied in one major conurbation in the UK and it has been found to identify gaps and overlaps. It has also provided a basis for building partnerships with other organisations that might impact on the indicators and for communicating the rationale for monitoring with local politicians.

#### Contact Details

- Web: <http://www.distillate.ac.uk/outputs/products.php>  
- E-mail: Greg Marsden - [G.R.Marsden@ts.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:G.R.Marsden@ts.leeds.ac.uk)

#### C2 Enhanced Indicators For Measuring Productivity And Competitiveness

This guide provides an audit tool for the assessment of the suitability of indicators for use in a monitoring strategy. Some indicators are specified by central government with associated measurement methodologies or data sets (such as the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on the roads). Inevitably such indicator sets will not fully capture the range of outcomes which a local or regional authority is interested in (e.g. historic cities might wish to measure the quality of their urban environments which may not apply to a rural authority). There is substantial experience from transport and other sectors to suggest that it is far too easy to select an indicator with good intentions but to find that the data is actually too difficult to collect or that the indicator distorts rather than captures the main outcomes that are trying to be measured. The problem is therefore, how do we select robust and meaningful indicators?

The guide presents the findings of a literature review on good and bad practice in indicator selection and provides a five step audit tool which can be applied to any indicator which is being considered. The five steps address the key characteristics of a good indicator:

- Is it clearly defined?
- Is the indicator largely controllable by management actions?
- Is it measurable?
- Will it respond to policy interventions in a reasonable time frame?
- Is it easy to understand and communicate?
- Two case studies are presented which demonstrate the tool's application.

#### Contact Details

- Web: <http://www.distillate.ac.uk/outputs/products.php>  
- E-mail: Greg Marsden - [G.R.Marsden@ts.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:G.R.Marsden@ts.leeds.ac.uk)

# Future Considerations

- Potential for connecting with other existing tools and guidance (outside of DISTILLATE)
- Ongoing maintenance and funding of the tool
  - DISTILLATE funding due to end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

Questions?

Contact:

**Charlotte Brannigan, TRL**

cbrannigan@trl.co.uk

01344 770263

**John Forrester, SEI**

john.forrester@sei.se

01904 432893

[www.distillate.ac.uk](http://www.distillate.ac.uk)