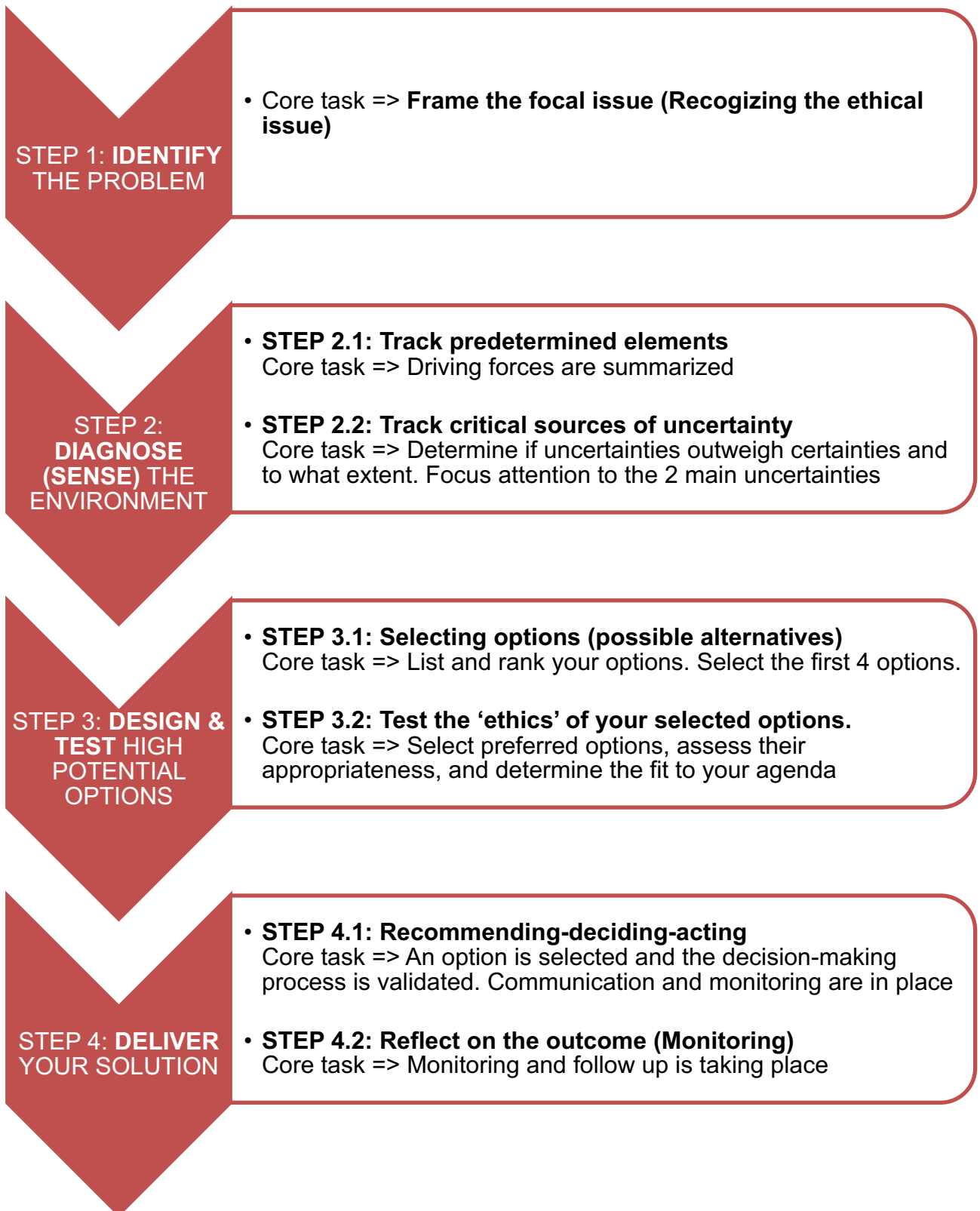


# **FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL DECISION- MAKING**

## DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK



## STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE ETHICAL ISSUE

- Define the **focal issue** for which the ethical decision is required. Framing the challenge(s) that the organization/government faces, and the importance of the issues at stake
- **Evaluate the need for a decision and the risk of not acting** (“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”—Even if it is broken, what evidence do you have that you can fix it?)
- **Understand complexity** and systems dynamics. **Assess the environment:** Are you dealing with a simple, complicated, complex, or chaotic system? (in a non-simple environment, the rapid response may be dangerous). Which individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? (Stakeholders’ mapping)

Table 1: System complexity mapping

	CONTEXT	TASKS	DANGER SIGNALS	RESPONSE TO DANGER SIGNALS
SIMPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeating patterns and consistent events</li> <li>- Clear cause-and-effect relationships evident to everyone; right answer exists</li> <li>- Known knowns</li> <li>- Fact-based management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sense, categorize, respond</li> <li>- Ensure that proper processes are in place</li> <li>- Delegate</li> <li>- Use best practices</li> <li>- Communicate in clear, direct ways (if necessary at all)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complacency and comfort</li> <li>- Desire to make complex problems simple</li> <li>- Entrained thinking</li> <li>- No challenge of received wisdom</li> <li>- Overreliance on best practice if context shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create communication</li> <li>- Stay connected without micromanaging</li> <li>- Don’t assume things are simple</li> <li>- Recognize both the value and the limitations of best practice</li> </ul>
COMPLICATED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expert diagnosis required</li> <li>- Cause-and-effect relationships discoverable but not immediately apparent to everyone</li> <li>- More than one right answer possible</li> <li>- Known unknowns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sense, analyze, respond</li> <li>- Create panels of experts</li> <li>- Listen to conflicting advice</li> <li>- Fact-based management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experts overconfident in their own solutions or in the efficacy of past solutions</li> <li>- Analysis paralysis Expert panels</li> <li>- Viewpoints of nonexperts excluded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage external and internal stakeholders to challenge expert opinions to combat entrained thinking</li> <li>- Use experiments and games to force people to think outside the familiar</li> </ul>
COMPLEX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flux and unpredictability</li> <li>- Elements of surprise</li> <li>- No right answers; emergent instructive patterns</li> <li>- Unknown unknowns</li> <li>- Many competing ideas</li> <li>- A need for creative and innovative approaches</li> <li>- Adaptive problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Probe, sense, respond</li> <li>- Create experiments that allow patterns to emerge</li> <li>- Increase levels of interaction-communication</li> <li>- Use methods that can help generate ideas: Open up discussion; stimulate attractors; encourage dissent and diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temptation to fall back into habitual, command-and-control mode</li> <li>- Temptation to look for facts rather than allowing patterns to emerge</li> <li>- Desire for accelerated resolution of problems or exploitation of opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be patient and allow time for reflection</li> <li>- Use approaches that encourage interaction so patterns can emerge</li> <li>- Manage starting conditions and monitor for emergence</li> </ul>
CHAOTIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High turbulence</li> <li>- No clear cause-and-effect relationships, so no point in looking for right answers</li> <li>- Unknowables</li> <li>- Many decisions to make and no time to think</li> <li>- High tension</li> <li>- Pattern-based leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Act, sense, respond</li> <li>- Look for what works instead of seeking right answers</li> <li>- Take immediate action to reestablish order (command and control)</li> <li>- Provide clear, direct communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applying a command-and-control approach longer than needed</li> <li>- “Cult of the leader”</li> <li>- Missed opportunity for innovation</li> <li>- Chaos unabated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up mechanisms (such as parallel teams) to take advantage of opportunities afforded by a chaotic environment</li> <li>- Encourage advisers to challenge your point of view once the crisis has abated</li> <li>- Work to shift the context from chaotic to complex</li> </ul>

- **Ask:** “How should I approach this problem if I want to exercise leadership effectively? Is this an adaptive or technical challenge? Are there underlying assumptions in my thinking about this problem that could prevent me from diagnosing the situation accurately and coming up with better intervention options?”
- **Determine the preferred outcome.** Gain support early on for the mission objective: What to accomplish in short-, medium-, and long-term? **Be solution-oriented and not problem-oriented** (“To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail”)
- Decide what is the **time available to reach the decision** and who are the stakeholders to be involved – Are you in the domain of rapid action?
- **Sum up** by clarifying both the systemic problem and your leadership dilemma in the situation

Core task => Frame the focal issue.

## STEP 2: DIAGNOSE (SENSE) THE ENVIRONMENT

- Conduct **extensive information hunting** on the environment (Encourage active listening, dissent, and diversity of points of view). Remember that the situation should not be outside your control, and exogenous shocks must be anticipated.
- **Focus on systemic rather than** personality variables to appreciate the problem.

### STEP 2.1: Track predetermined elements

- **Summarize the predetermined elements:** Slow-changing phenomena, the linear trend over a significant period, little interconnectedness among variables, no significant risk of inevitable collision...
- Conduct a **complete diagnostic of existing and obvious key driving trends.** Focus attention at national/regional/global levels: checklist of social, economic, political, security, technological, and environmental forces that may impact the decision-making, etc.
- What are the **key barriers** to your desired outcome?

Table 2: Driving forces

	POLITICAL FACTORS	ECONOMIC FACTORS	SOCIAL FACTORS	OTHER FACTORS (LEGAL, CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, TECHNOLOGY, SECURITY...)
GLOBAL	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.
REGIONAL	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.
NATIONAL	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.
LOCAL	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.	- Factor 1 - Factor 2 - Etc.

Core task => Driving forces are summarized

**STEP 2.2: Track critical sources of uncertainty**

- **Ask** the following questions:
  - o Do I know enough to make a decision?
  - o What facts are not known?
  - o Are there any hidden issues?
- **Summarize the critical sources of uncertainty:** unclear and unsupported trends, causal relationship challenging to establish with many variables involved, no historical background data, no comparison possible
- **Assess critical vulnerabilities:** high risk versus low risk, the likelihood of the vulnerability to occur

Table 3: Key uncertainties

KEY UNCERTAINTIES	LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY (1-4)	POSSIBLE OUTCOMES	POSSIBLE MITIGATION ACTIONS?
NAME IT	Disclose level of uncertainty	- Outcome 1 - Outcome 2 - Etc.	- Mitigation action 1 - Mitigation action 2 - Etc.
NAME IT	Disclose level of uncertainty	- Outcome 1 - Outcome 2 - Etc.	- Mitigation action 1 - Mitigation action 2 - Etc.
NAME IT	Disclose level of uncertainty	- Outcome 1 - Outcome 2 - Etc.	- Mitigation action 1 - Mitigation action 2 - Etc.
NAME IT	Disclose level of uncertainty	- Outcome 1 - Outcome 2 - Etc.	- Mitigation action 1 - Mitigation action 2 - Etc.

Note: Use the following terminology:

- Level 1: Low-impact uncertainty
- Level 2: Medium impact – low likelihood uncertainty (few discrete end states with estimable probabilities)
- Level 3: Medium impact – medium likelihood uncertainty (defined by limited key variables)
- Level 4: High impact – medium/high likelihood (True ambiguity with many dimensions of uncertainty)

Core task => Determine if uncertainties outweigh certainties and to what extent. Focus attention on the two main uncertainties

## STEP 3: DESIGN & TEST HIGH POTENTIAL ETHICAL OPTIONS

### STEP 3.1: Selecting options (alternatives) available to you

- **Investigate all possible options available to you.** Begin looking at past analogies to determine if they help shape how they look at, judge, and act on the problems. (often, analogies do not fit or are improperly applied to contemporary situations)
- With the facts and the stakeholders in mind, **determine your portfolio of possible and relevant moves**, e.g., determine your current posture: taking a big bet, seeking a compromise (even rotten?), adapting or right to play later?
- **Choose the 2-4 best options** that you think might be the best thing to do in these circumstances (disregard options that would not be suitable to your agenda because of too high vulnerabilities or lack of fit to your preferred posture)

Table 4: Option generation

OPTIONS	SHORT DESCRIPTION	POSTURE	OPTIONS RANKING
NAME IT	A few bullet points	Select among following (with short explanation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shape</li> <li>- Require adaptive work</li> <li>- Big bet</li> <li>- Right to play later</li> </ul>	Give a rank to options (1 being the preferred one)
NAME IT	A few bullet points	Select among following (with short explanation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shape</li> <li>- Require adaptive work</li> <li>- Big bet</li> <li>- Right to play later</li> </ul>	Give a rank to options (1 being the preferred one).
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Core task => List and rank your options. Select the first four options.

**STEP 3.2: Test the ‘ethics’ of your selected solutions**

- You must be able to judge whether your selected choice architecture improves individual and societal welfare and anticipate and combat attempts by other parties to exploit decision-making errors in ways that decrease welfare
- Determine the moral principles involved in testing options. Evaluate the selected options from different ethical perspectives, for instance:
  - o Which action will produce the most good and do the least harm? (The Utilitarian Approach)
  - o Which action respects the rights of all who have a stake in the decision? (The Rights Approach)
  - o Which action treats people equally or proportionately? (The Justice Approach)
  - o Which action serves the community as a whole, not just some members? (The Common Good Approach)
  - o Which action leads me to act as the person I should be? (The Virtue Approach)
  - o Other: Explain
- **Decide if your option evaluation approach provides enough support for a fair decision.** If not, test other option(s)

Table 5: Scoring your ethical posture

OPTIONS	UTILITY	RIGHTS	JUSTICE	COMMON GOOD	VIRTUE	SCORE
NAME IT						
NAME IT						
NAME IT						
NAME IT						

Note: Give an estimated score between 0-10 (0 = Low value, 10 = high value). Then add it up.

Core task => Select preferred options, assess their appropriateness, and determine the fit to your agenda.

## STEP 4: DELIVER YOUR SOLUTION

### STEP 4.1: Recommending-deciding-acting

- **Formulate a justification for the final decision**, e.g., Build the narrative, summarize arguments, recognize shortcomings, anticipate objections, explain rationale and criteria for selecting a course of action(s)
- Make sure the **decision will enable the organization/government to learn and take practical actions (understanding the adaptive challenge)**. How responsive is your leadership/shareholder to change (inner dynamics and openness of decision-makers to change)?
- **Ask**: “What resources did you have to manage this system?”
- **Communicate internally and externally**, as appropriate. Be ready to answer tough questions about your decision and be accountable (Keep in mind: Many ethical situations are uncomfortable because we can never have all the information. Even so, we must often take action).
- Assess who will be involved in the **dissemination (communication plan)**: External recipients, press and media, lobbying...
- Prepare a message (a well-written brief story capturing the complexity and leaving lasting messages)

Core task => An option is selected, and the decision-making process is validated. Communication and monitoring are in place.

### STEP 4.2: Reflecting on the outcome (Monitoring)

- **What were the results of my decision?** What were the intended and unintended consequences? Would I change anything now that I have seen the consequences?
- **Define an assessment and monitoring protocol/mechanism** that will help track shifts in the environment and adjust strategy accordingly
- Make sure to carefully and imaginatively **select leading signposts** and know how to feed them to get feedback and early signs of potentially significant change.
- **Follow up with leadership** to ensure the organization becomes more agile in dealing with adversity.

Core task => Monitoring and follow-up are taking place.



## Some questions to take into account

### Utility

- Does this action produce the most good and do the least harm for all who are affected? What good and what harm will or may result?
- How will I measure a good outcome? Happiness? Financial or social impacts? Others? How will my action affect the resources everyone must share, such as the environment?
- Does this action best serve the community as a whole, not just some members? Will this option be equally to everyone's advantage? While the potential harm from this action may affect only a few people, is the harm so great that it would outweigh the good this action might bring to many others?

### Rights

- Does my action best respect the rights of all who have a stake? Does it respect the dignity of others?
- If I take this action, am I treating others simply as a means to an end?
- Does the action hurt or help others secure a minimum level of well-being?
- Could I have some prejudice or interest that makes me favor one person over another?
- Am I treating each individual the same way, or is there a valid reason to treat someone differently?

### Justice

- Does this action treat people equally or proportionally?
- Does it give each person affected his or her due?
- Could I have some prejudice or interest that makes me favor one person over another?
- Am I treating each individual the same way, or is there a valid reason to treat someone differently?

### Virtue

- Does this action improve the conditions of economic and social life over time? Does it allow everyone to thrive and get a better posture in the future?
- Does this option lead me to act as the sort of person I want to be? What character traits would I be exhibiting if I chose this action? Honesty or deceit? Compassion or selfishness? Prudence or irresponsibility?
- What habits of character would I be developing if I took this action? What would a person I respect say about this choice?