

Strategic Plan

January 2008 to December 2010
(as updated in December 2007)



policy forum

Making Policies Work for People in Tanzania!

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Introduction

When Policy Forum Members met in 2003, they agreed on the following mission and vision.

Vision:

Policy Forum is an independent body that envisages a future where policy processes are participatory and involve the broad-based engagement of all sectors of society, including NGOs and the people they work with, in an accountable, empowered, informed and informing manner, at all stages in the policy process and at all levels of society.

Mission:

Policy Forum will encourage NGOs to work together to open up and influence policy processes that improve the lives of all people, especially those who are socially disadvantaged and impoverished, in order to empower them to self-organize and become part of a social movement for change.

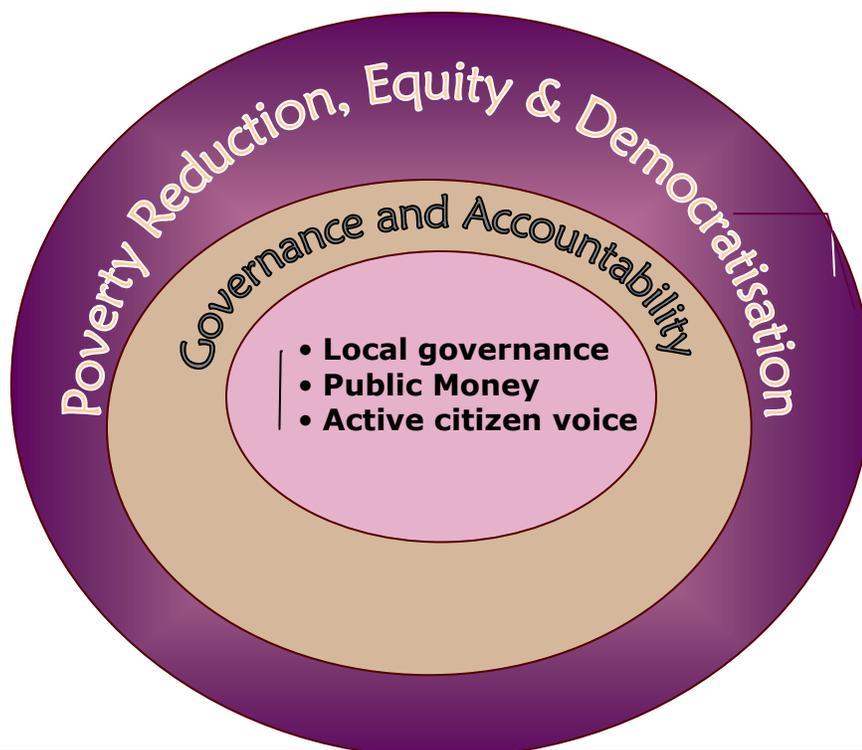
The above mission and vision have been the cornerstone of the work of Policy Forum during the current Strategic Plan for the years 2003 to 2006 and will continue to underpin the work of Policy Forum over the next 3 years.

New Strategic Direction

Policy Forum seeks to achieve its mission and objectives through a concerted strategic approach. This is reflected in the vision and mission statements as well. Key overarching features of the strategy are as follows:

1. The main focus will continue to be to make policies work for people, especially for the poor, and for policy processes to be opened up and be made more transparent, democratic, participatory and accountable. Accordingly, attention will be paid to bridging the persistent gaps between policy and practice, and between national level policy making and the experience of quality of life at the community level.
2. Even though the main focus of activity will continue to be poverty reduction, equity and democratization, the exclusive focus on engaging with policy processes that are largely outside of our control has now shifted. In order to have a greater influence over the achievement and impact of our activities we will gradually shift towards more independent analysis and monitoring of policy developments that is not exclusively linked to our participation in government-led policy processes. Although we will still continue to seek strategic and selective engagement with key policy initiatives, this will no longer be the primary focus of our activities.
3. Within the Poverty Reduction, Equity and Democratization framework, ***governance and accountability*** will be the underpinning pillar on which all Policy Forum activities will be based. In recognition of the fact that this pillar can cover a limitless number of activities, we will limit the activities undertaken by Policy Forum to the following 3 areas in order to maintain our focus and define our strategic boundaries:
 - a. **Local Governance:** This will include the regional, council and sub-council levels and will concentrate on strengthening the link with citizens.
 - b. **Public Money:** The focus here will be on issues relating to the acquisition, use and monitoring of money used for the activities of government on behalf of citizens. The aim will be to enable citizens to be better informed and to be empowered to achieve greater and more meaningful influence over the acquisition and management and use of public money.
 - c. **Active Citizen Voice:** Activities will be aimed at empowering citizens to have a real influence over how they are governed and how their resources are used. The aim will be to amplify voice by raising awareness on key issues in the area of governance and accountability, improving access to information for Tanzanian citizens and those who represent their interests within and outside of Government. To enable organized civil society to build its capability to more effectively contribute to a social movement for positive change in the lives of all Tanzanians, particularly those who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged.
4. At the root of Policy Forum's new strategic focus will be greater equity in the use of public resources and to increase resources used to empower poor and vulnerable people to emerge from poverty permanently.

An illustration of Policy Forum's new strategic focus can be seen in the diagram below:



Making Policies Work for People in Tanzania

5. PF seeks to make the policy engagement of each member stronger and more effective, rather than to replace or subsume it. PF will convene, stimulate and facilitate Its members will be primarily responsible using the support and output provided by the network and the secretariat to enhance their individual and collective advocacy work. A new Policy Unit will be set up within the Secretariat. This unit will be a resource to Policy Forum Members and its purpose will be to strengthen the quality of civil society's impact on and contribution to policy-making, implementation and monitoring.
6. While advocacy on specific issues remains the primary role of the members, the Secretariat will proactively network in order to identify opportunities to influence policy, to build strategic alliances with key stakeholders, and to advocate on general issues of principle in governance and accountability. Members of the secretariat may from time to time participate in discussion of specific issues. However, the purpose of this engagement will be to remain in touch with policy issues and developments, to build a network that will strengthen policy engagement, to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of policy engagement by civil society and to initiate and propose ways in which to capitalize on strengths and to address the weaknesses.
7. Policy Forum members will decide annually on the primary areas of focus. In doing so, they will be guided by the general areas of focus described in sections 2 and 3 above. However, members should be able to draw on the Policy Forum secretariat for support, advice and information within agreed parameters to support their specific advocacy

strategies. In offering this support, Policy Forum will prioritize those areas that provide the greatest contribution to the achievement of its strategic goals.

8. A primary focus of the new approach is to provide a consistent and expanding base of knowledge and expertise that can bring increased depth to the advocacy of Policy Forum members. For this reason, it is important to prioritize the time and resources to build a growing and consistent body of accessible knowledge that can be used by members. Policy Forum would not be able to do this without a clearly prioritized strategic agenda to take this forward. However, the secretariat should also enough flexibility within this to remain relevant to its primary stakeholders and will strive as far as possible to accommodate institutional lesson-learning, emerging changes in advocacy needs of members, and the changing policy environment. It should be noted though, that while there will always be pressure to react to immediate demands, the strength of civil society will come from the longer term evolutionary process and this will be the main focus of Policy Forum's work.
9. Finally, it is important that we set ourselves targets for each year so that we can have a basis for evaluating the impact of our work. These targets are an aspiration towards which we will strive. However, they will also be dependent on external factors that are outside of our control. We will remain cognizant of the need for flexibility within and across these targets to enable growth and institutional learning. The targets are outlined in [Annex 1](#).

In view of the above, the overall objective of Policy Forum has been slightly revised and reads as follows:

Overall Objective: Policy Forum seeks enhanced democratic, transparent and accountable governance and improved quality of life of the Tanzanian people, including effective protection for human rights, through strengthening the capacity of NGOs to influence key policy decisions relating to poverty reduction, equity and democratization and other key policy issues as may be determined by the Forum from time to time.

To support the new overall objective, the four objectives of Policy Forum will also change in line with its new strategic direction. The new objectives will be as follows:

Objective 1: The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.

Objective 2: Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely used in targeted advocacy strategies to policy makers, the media, civil society, the academic community and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.

Objective 3: The capability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is progressively enhanced.

Objective 4: Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.

Activity Description

The activities of Policy Forum have been revised in order to be better aligned to its current objectives. In order to give the new strategy time to take root and for the strategy to be concretized into properly functioning institutions with real people, 2007 has been a transitioning year. During this year, Policy Forum did not seek funding outside of its membership and used the year to strengthen itself institutionally, to ensure that it gathered the necessary human, material and financial resources to enable it to move in the current strategic direction, and to establish and embed strong and appropriate systems for the management of these resources. The actual implementation of this strategy will begin in 2008, once it is appropriately resourced and supported. While efforts will be made to ensure that all activities are carried out as soon as possible, the feasibility of this will depend on the achievement adequate levels of staffing and availability of resources at any given time. The activities planned for the planning period of 2008 to 2010 are articulated as follows:

Objective 1: The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.

- 1.1 *Analytical think pieces:* PF will produce and publish 4 to 6 policy briefs per year in English and Kiswahili. The purpose of these briefs will be to provide analysis of certain current and relevant policy issues and/or developments from a perspective that has its roots “on the ground” but that is targeted towards policy decision-makers and stakeholders who have an interest in policy dialogue. The aim of these briefs is to be used by PF members to strengthen their advocacy and by other interested stakeholders to strengthen the knowledge base for key policy issues and deepen policy dialogue. Half of the briefs produced will relate to agreed pre-planned policy topics specifically relating to PF areas of focus. The remaining briefs will be prepared on demand by groups of members who may require additional analysis to assist them to prepare for their sector policy dialogues or to enrich their contribution to a topical policy issue.
- 1.2 *Production of preliminary analysis and commentaries on demand to assist members or groups of members with analysis to inform their advocacy:* Part of the role of the Policy Unit within the Secretariat will be to provide members with some analytical support to inform their advocacy work. This will be done within agreed parameters and based on their availability and priorities at the time the work is required. This analytical work will not be primarily for publication but to contribute to the general contribution of civil society to policy formulation, analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Criteria for choosing which activities the Secretariat is able to support in this way will be developed in and agreed with PF members. However, some examples of the type of support provided in this way would be:
 - Contributing to the preparation of commentaries for annual sector or policy reviews.
 - Initiating and/or contributing to preparation for major stakeholder consultations.
 - Proactively preparing analysis and briefings aimed at improving the quality of civil society’s contribution to policy dialogue from a community perspective
- 1.3 *Proactive Participation in the budget process:* Policy Forum will continue to support its members’ participation in the budget process. The aim of this participation will be to

enhance budget transparency, to initiate and encourage public debate on budgetary allocations, to highlight issues of integrity within the budget process, and to participate proactively in key accountability mechanisms within the budget process, such as the annual Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Review (PEFAR). This activity will be led by the Budget working Group of Policy Forum.

- 1.4 *Public Expenditure Tracking Project:* Policy Forum will, in collaboration with other interested stakeholders, set up a public expenditure tracking mechanism to 1) enable individuals and NGOs working at district and, primarily, at sub-district levels to track public money and 2) to create an avenue through which this information will be consolidated, accessed, analyzed, and used to advocate for positive change. In collaboration with interested stakeholders, Policy Forum will facilitate regular and progressive capacity building that will enable NGOs operating at community level to conduct public expenditure tracking studies (PETS) in a simple yet systematic way that involves community members in the actual tracking. The primary aim is to generate greater community interest in the way public money is allocated and used within their communities and to facilitate access to relevant and understandable information that can be used to hold leaders to account at that level. Where appropriate, mechanisms and methodologies will be standardized so that information produced can be comparable across communities and districts as well as over time to assess whether the use of public money has improved. As a result, while community-level PETS findings should be useful primarily for community and district-level planning, budgeting and monitoring; it will also be producing a growing body of evidence that is comparable across districts and regions that can be used in national level policy making. This activity has already begun and will continue to be led by the Local Governance Working Group of Policy Forum.
- 1.5 *Major governance related study:* Policy forum members will collaborate to conduct at least one major governance-related study per year. The nature of this study will be determined by interested members. However, some possible topics could be:
- A major independent study on budget transparency
 - A study that demystifies the local government machinery and identifies what works, what does not, and why; how civil society can contribute to ensure that the system is more accountable to the client.
 - A major piece of research on the quality of civil society engagement and how this can be improved.

Objective 2: Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely disseminated to policy makers, civil society and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.

- 2.1 *Development and maintenance of an interactive website:* Policy Forum will develop and maintain a creative and interactive website including an intranet section for use by members and an open section for use by the general public. Primary target audiences for use of the website will be Policy Forum members, the media, other members of civil society, Government officials and their technical advisers, universities and research institutions, students of higher learning institutions (secondary school and above), individual researchers and consultants in the field of public policy.
- 2.2 *Production and dissemination of short eye-catching and visual illustrations of current policy issues:* The secretariat will explore the possibility of producing a regular entertaining and visual account of topical policy issues emerging from the work of Policy Forum and its members. These may take the form of a photo essay or a cartoon strip that appears regularly in print media.

- 2.3 *Popularization of policy documents:* Policy Forum will, either solely or in collaboration with others, produce popular versions of up to 4 key policy documents during each year of this strategy. This will take the form of simplified booklets in plain Swahili language and will be convened and taken forward by members and/or groups of members with support from the Secretariat.
- 2.4 *Monthly Breakfast Debates:* We will continue to collaborate with HakiElimu to conduct monthly People and Policy Breakfast Debates on the last Friday of each month. This year we will aim to broaden the scope of these debates by proactively encouraging the participation of a wider range of stakeholders. Efforts will be made to encourage attendance by stakeholders from academic institutions (both students and academic staff), different parts of Government, relevant private sector associations, trade unions and faith-based groups. To do this we may wish to consider varying the nature of these debates from month to month in order to experiment with different ways of enhancing quality constructive debate among different stakeholder groups.
- 2.5 *Regular communication with members:* Regular communication with members will continue and will be improved in the following ways:
- 2.5.1 Policy Forum will produce a quarterly electronic newsletter in English and Kiswahili that will be published on the website and sent out electronically to all PF members and partners. This may be increased to monthly by 2008 when the Policy Unit is in place and fully oriented if it is assessed that there is a need to do so and the capacity exists. It may include short interesting articles on topical policy issues, a policy or governance-related cartoon strip series, a calendar of events and any other innovative ideas for that are identified to make policy information more accessible.
- 2.5.2 The Secretariat will send out monthly information packs to all up-country members and quarterly information packs to members in Dar es Salaam, containing relevant policy information and reports, the PF Newsletter, minutes of meetings.
- 2.5.3 Monthly meetings of Policy Forum members will continue. A primary focus of their organization will be to examine ways in which Policy Forum could be made more relevant to its up-country members in particular. Organization of monthly meetings will also be examined with a view to enabling up-country members to contribute more actively to the content of our policy work. We will seek to identify creative ways to do this.
- 2.6 *Strategic use of the media:* Policy Forum will make strategic use of broadcast and print media improve awareness, understanding and mutual responsibility in governance and accountability at all levels of society. To achieve this aim, Policy Forum will develop a strategy within the first quarter of 2007 for the strategic use of media for each of its advocacy objectives. This strategy will be reviewed by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee every 6 months and updated to ensure that lessons are learnt and that it remains effective and relevant. The strategy will take account of past experience of Policy Forum and its members in their use of the media and its impact and implications. It will focus on the key strategic changes that Policy Forum would like to see within each of its target audiences and will aim to choose the most effective way to achieve and sustain these changes. All engagement with the media by Policy Forum will adhere to strict media ethics and care will be taken to safeguard, support and enhance the independence of the media at all times. Below are some suggested ways to do this. However, it should be noted that these are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and Members and the Secretariat are encouraged to look for

innovative ways in which to use all avenues available to them, including the media, to achieve Policy Forum objectives.

- 2.6.1 One way to use the media more strategically will be to allocate a section of the Policy Forum website specifically for information that is of relevance to the media. We will also inform all key media editors of any updates to this section on a regular basis. This section will also be printed into media packs that will be delivered to news agencies from time to time for dissemination to the major media outlets.
- 2.6.2 In order to promote public debate enhanced by quality media coverage of policy issues, those radio and television programmes that develop innovative ways to incorporate policy issues into their programming need to receive adequate support to secure their sustainability. For this reason, Policy Forum may wish to sponsor one or two such programmes. This will also increase Policy Forum's influence with the media and assist in building a constituency within the media for the issues that are of strategic importance to the network.
- 2.6.3 Another way might be to focus on monthly themes and use the print and broadcast media to draw public attention to a certain policy issue during which time we could use a weekly newspaper column, a radio/TV talk show, our issue guide series and, where appropriate, our monthly Breakfast debates to discuss a single policy issue. The aim would be to discuss the positive and negative aspects of the issue, what is being done about it, the various options for addressing the issue and the pros and cons of each. This would build public awareness and provide a foundation to spark balanced public debate on the issue of choice. The idea is to gradually push for an environment that encourages the public to voice considered and informed opinions on policy issues more freely and that the enhanced public voice will make it easier for policy makers to gauge true public opinion on the issue at hand.

Objective 3: The ability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is enhanced.

- 3.1 *Enhanced participation of non-Dar based Members:* Policy Forum aims to achieve an expanded role for members to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the work of Policy Forum. To do this we plan to support the participation of members not based in Dar es Salaam by funding attendance of one representative from all member organizations based outside Dar es Salaam to one monthly meeting per quarter. We aim to take advantage of the presence of these Policy Forum members by using this time for orientation, to report on progress during the previous quarter, and to enable members to participate in at least one other activity, such as a Breakfast Debate or a relevant Policy Consultation. The secretariat will lead in convening and organizing these meetings. During the remaining 2 months in each quarter, Policy Forum members will determine whether or not they happen by proposing agenda items. If agenda items are not proposed by members, there will be no meeting during these months.
- 3.2 *Support for PF members to effectively institutionalize policy work within their organizations:* Policy Forum will continue to collaborate with and support existing partner policy networks at regional level. The network will also seek to enhance policy advocacy among its members by supporting comprehensive social accountability

monitoring within Policy Forum Working Groups and with a few additional partner networks, yet to be identified. A comprehensive account of how this will be done is included in an addendum to this strategy.

- 3.3 *Orientation sessions for new members and networks twice a year:* Policy Forum will conduct orientation sessions for new and potential members. These will be incorporated into the quarterly member monitoring meetings outlined above. .
- 3.4 *Systematic documentation of advocacy experience to contribute to institutional learning:* The PF Secretariat will produce a series of short accounts documenting real civil society advocacy experience at least twice a year. The purpose of this will be to systematically document experience in advocacy in civil society over time. The document will describe the experience, what issues/circumstances were faced by those involved, how the issues or circumstances were addressed, and what lessons can be learnt from this experience in terms of future advocacy. These documented experiences will be sent to members and will be posted on the PF website. Over time it is hoped that periodic evaluation of these experiences will help to strengthen individual and collective advocacy. They will also serve as evidence to support general advocacy on the quality of civil society engagement with policy processes and what needs to improve among all parties concerned in order for civil society's interaction with other development stakeholders to be productive and fruitful.
- 3.5 *Creative use of IT for learning:* Policy Forum will seek to expand the reach of its capability enhancement activities as far as possible. The use of technology is increasing within civil society and we will aim to encourage CSOs to use this phenomenon to enhance and expand the reach of their advocacy work. The primary tool for this will be the PF website initially. However, in future other innovative means may be considered.

It is anticipated that as CSOs become more accustomed to using the internet interactively for work, they will make greater use of the vast amount of information and extensive number of tools available on-line in other areas of their work. Policy Forum will work with others in civil society to look into creative ways to increase the use of IT for communication and advocacy in Tanzania as access is expanded.

Objective 4: Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.

- 4.1 *Strategic and selective policy engagement:* In line with our new strategic direction, we will seek to ensure that we engage only on those issues that are most likely to achieve Policy Forum objectives and that we choose the methodology and entry point for our engagement strategically to strive towards maximum influence and the most sustainable impact. In an effort to ensure that we remain focused and do not spread ourselves too thin, Policy Forum will agree on priority areas for strategic influencing at the beginning of each year. While maintaining flexibility to address important issues that may arise during the year, the agreed priority areas will guide the Forum's continuous policy engagement choices throughout the year.

The resources and time invested in engaging with a particular policy process will be directly related to the anticipated sustained impact the PF investment as well as the potential to build constructive alliances and relationships that could assist in furthering future advocacy objectives.

- 4.2 *Collaboration with others:* In order to learn from others and to expand the reach of knowledge gained within Policy Forum to a broader constituency within civil society, the Secretariat will use part of its expanded capacity to participate more fully and more meaningfully in those activities of its members and like-minded partners including other networks (eg. TANGO, TEN/MET, FemAct, SAHRINGON, MISA-Tan) that are likely to further the strategic objectives of Policy Forum. This collaboration will also assist to strengthen solidarity within civil society and coordination of our respective activities in order to move more effectively towards a social movement for positive change. Policy Forum will also seek to expand its network of partners and will investigate the possibility of further collaboration with academic institutions, trade unions, faith-based organizations, professional associations, national and local elected representatives and other current or potential stakeholders in national development.
- 4.3 *Local and international networking:* Policy Forum members and the Secretariat will continue to seek strategic alliances with those who may assist in enhancing our influence to achieve Policy Forum objectives. This will include those within the country (such as the donor community, international institutions, the private sector) and those outside the country given that we are working in an increasingly globalized world and that often situations within the country are influenced by one or more externally driven factors. PF will also take advantage of opportunities for international lesson-learning and information sharing through collaborative links with like-minded institutions and strategic exchange visits.

Amendments to Policy Forum Structure

In order to implement the above plan, certain changes are required to the originally envisaged structure of Policy Forum. These changes have been made after thoroughly reviewing the implementation of activities during the last 2 years and incorporating actions to address the lessons learnt during this time. The rationale for these changes is as follows:

1. Much of the policy work done at the national level is disconnected from the on-the-ground reality. While we have nice-looking strategies and policies at the top, so far they have limited impact on the people whose livelihoods they are meant to improve. A key role of national civil society is to analyze and understand the dynamics of the problem and advocate for interventions with real impact. However, capacity of CS organizations at national level to fulfill this role is remains limited. With the new setup, the Policy Forum offers its members an opportunity to address this capacity gap.
2. While upon conception it had been envisaged that PF would be a facilitative and coordinating body with a set of agreed objectives that would be taken forward largely by the member organizations, it has become apparent that much of this has not been achieved. Some activities, having been planned with great enthusiasm and often considerable momentum during initial stages, tended to decline during implementation, especially in busy times when members were forced to favor their other programmes. As a consequence a number of planned activities were not or were only partially implemented, resulting in under-spending. Although this dynamic is evident in many other networks, it seriously compromises effective planning and budgeting and could eventually undermine our reputation as a serious participant in the national policy processes.
3. There was always a general recognition that organizational capacity of members (staff time, skills in the face of competing organizational priorities) to engage in policy issues was limited. It had been envisaged that member organizations, appreciating the importance of coordinated policy engagement in the achievement of their organizational goals, would invest in the necessary capacity and that these competencies were readily available on the job market. However, many PF members have expressed difficulties in making these types of organizational changes, given the current pressures on them to prioritize other areas that potentially have a more immediate impact on their existence and sustainability as organizations. Those members who did manage to make these changes have found it difficult to identify and attract people with the necessary skills.
4. A strong comparative advantage of PF has been the quality of its analytical input into policy processes. Though the aim was to have wide engagement in a number of policy processes, in reality this has been largely focused around specific events and was driven by a proportionately small pool of members. It is now being recognized both within and outside Policy Forum that at this moment we do not have the capacity to make the continuous and sustained investment in broad analysis, monitoring and policy engagement, but rather that we need to focus and maximize strategic choices in order to have a real impact on policies and their implementation while consistently maintaining the standard we have in effect set for ourselves through our previous work.

New Secretariat Structure

The purpose of the Secretariat as articulated in the original Policy Forum Strategy and Programme Proposal 2003-2006 is:

“to act as a clearinghouse for information and to facilitate and support the engagement of its members in the policy processes. It also recruits new members and promotes their wider and more coordinated participation in policy processes. It is, however, the members (and groups of members) themselves who will largely initiate activities and implement them. In short the NPF convenes, stimulates and facilitates, but it is its members who are responsible for action and implementation.”

This will continue to be the purpose of the Secretariat in this new structure with one addition. In order for the wider participation of CSOs to have a real impact on the improvement of livelihoods for the poor, the engagement needs to be not only wider but better. Inputs from civil society need to be more informed and supported by higher quality and more rigorous analysis. This was a part of the original PF strategy, but it was envisaged that the qualitative aspects would be the responsibility of members and not that of the Secretariat except for the limited facilitative role it would play in enabling members to undertake capacity building activities. The pooled power approach would increase the responsibility of the Secretariat in this area and its capacity would therefore need to be strengthened to perform this additional role.

- a. In 2006, Policy Forum proposed began to implement a new approach which was popularly termed by members as ‘pooled power’. This approach aimed at expanding the Secretariat to make it more relevant to members and to enable members to enhance their own policy and budget advocacy. Now that the pooled power for 2 years, number of lessons are emerging from our current approach. These lessons and a strategy for beginning to address them are articulated in an addendum to this Strategic Plan. The addendum also includes some changes to the staffing structure that will enable the secretariat to be more proactive in engaging members in the work of Policy Forum. The aim is for Policy Forum to become a hub for strategic policy analysis within civil society.

Risk Management and Opportunities

The following risks were identified and the expected outputs have been modified to try to mitigate/address these risks:

Risk 1: The Secretariat might become too internally focused and may lose its connection with PF members, with non-Dar-based CSOs or with its constituent communities.

Mitigation Strategy

- a. The PF Governance structure as articulated in its Strategy and Programme Proposal is very clear about the role of the Secretariat. This role will not change except that qualitative aspects will be added to it. It is also clear from the expected outputs that the main focus is the PF members and the role of the Secretariat is to support the members. It will be easier for members to hold a strengthened Secretariat to account for delivery of stated PF goals, since capacity should no longer be an issue. PF’s role in relation to non-Dar based members is clearly articulated in the above Expected Outputs. PF links to communities via its members. This has always been the case. If PF members and member groups are

firmly grounded at constituent and community level then PF's link to the community will be strong as long as its link to its members is strong.

- b. The Addendum to the Strategic Plan also addresses this risk by ensuring that the secretariat continues to focus its work through the Policy Forum membership.

Risk 3: Unless there is an explicitly articulated connection with members and unless PF work builds on, contributes to, and strengthens the work of members, PF could be seen to be competing with its members.

Mitigation Strategy

- a. The relationship between the Secretariat and PF members is clearly articulated in the PF Governance Structure and is elaborated above. This will continue to apply.
- b. PF members will develop a strategy which will govern the work of the Secretariat. This will give members the opportunity to focus the work of the Secretariat to tasks which add value to their work and therefore should not be in competition with them but will enhance and strengthen the work they do. Members will also use quarterly meetings to monitor the work of the secretariat more closely and express any concerns they may have.
- c. While the new strategy aims are enhancing the work of those members that most need its support, Policy Forum will develop criteria for identifying strategic partner networks, particularly for its social accountability monitoring, that does not duplicate the work of its members.

Risk 4: We might not be able to mobilize the resources or to recruit the right people in order to reinvent ourselves in this way.

Mitigation Strategy

We are already negotiating agreements with potential funding partners and there is quite a lot of interest in funding our new strategic approach. We believe that this new approach will enable us to more effectively reach the goals articulated in our original Strategy and Programme Proposal which has been acceptable to our donors until now. We do not anticipate that funding requirements will increase but will instead be realigned to better meet our original mission and objectives.

Identifying the right people might be a challenge. However, to recruit such people as a shared resource is a more viable strategy than for each member organization to attempt to recruit its own policy officer. This way all members can have access to this scarce resource, competition for policy officers will be reduced and the benefits will be multiplied.

Organizational Aspects

History of PF

As a result of the 2001 Consultative Group Meeting, which was the first meeting of this kind in Tanzania to include participation from civil society, it was assessed that there was a need for a more coordinated approach within civil society to better manage its participation in policy processes. A group of civil society organizations involved in advocacy came together in March 2002 to discuss how to better coordinate their engagement with Government. During this meeting a group of NGOs, agreed to meet on a regular basis to discuss policy issues and share information, hence the birth of the Policy Forum, or PF as it is commonly known.

Since then, a range of actions were coordinated through the forum. The PF participated with 80 NGOs in the Consultative Group meeting 2002 and in the PER 2003. Statements were prepared, presented and published on both occasions, which are attached to this document. The PF has been a platform for exchange and strategizing on the new NGO Act December 2002. The Forum has created space for NGOs to participate in various key policy processes, such as PRS, PER and various sectoral policy processes. Together with HakiElimu, Policy Forum organizes the popular 7.30 debates: People and Policies, which is broadcasted on National Television on a monthly basis. The Forum has links with a variety of development stakeholders on policy related issues.

When the value of such a network became apparent to the members, PF members met again in February 2003 for a strategic retreat to establish a way forward for the Forum and its activities. This meeting defined the mission, vision, and objectives which characterize the essence and purpose of PF. An outline of the activities of the Forum for the next 3 years was agreed. Now that the first 3 years have been completed, the lessons learnt from the first 3 years provide a strong basis for the Strategy for 2007 to 2009 as is articulated in this document.

Legal Status

Policy Forum was registered under the Companies Ordinance as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital in October 2006. The mandate of the organization and its governance structure are spelled out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The secretariat is the first point of contact for PF. Its revised purpose and role is articulated in the section entitled 'Amendments to the Policy Forum Structure beginning on page 13 of this document. Prior to registration the financial and, to a certain extent, the administration aspects of Policy Forum were administered by HakiElimu through a contractual agreement between HakiElimu and the Policy Forum Steering Committee. This Agreement came to an end in December 2006 and with effect from January 2007, the Policy Forum secretariat is performing these functions.

Governance

Policy Forum is open to national and international NGOs (including NGO networks) operating in Tanzania that have an interest in and commitment to influencing policy from a pro-poor and human rights perspective. Membership requires active participation in PF activities. For the platform to remain effective, members are convinced that a wide base of actively involved NGOs is a pre-condition. This principle is reflected in the value that is given to the Annual General meeting, a meeting of the General Assembly (or all members of PF) that takes place once a year and is the highest decision-making body of the Forum. Members also meet on a

monthly basis. This meeting is more informal and is used by members to plan, strategize and update each other of current activities, to share relevant information and to plan the way forward.

PF activities are overseen by a Steering Committee, currently made up of seven officials elected by the General Assembly to serve for 2-year terms. A Chairperson who is elected from among the members of the committee heads the Steering Committee supported by a Vice Chairperson. In line with the organizing principle that Policy Forum is a Tanzanian initiative, and both inspired and led by Tanzanians, the majority of the steering committee members represent Tanzanian NGOs, as does the chairperson.

Members of PF may organize themselves into Working Groups around key policy issues or key sectors of interest to the group. This allows for further specialization and targeted action. There are currently 2 working groups that are specifically convened and led by Policy Forum and these are:

- A Local Governance Working Group
- A Budget Working Group

Several options were considered including contracting out financial services to an external company. In the end, the most cost-effective option is to hire someone to perform this role with the support of the other 2 support staff within the Secretariat. It is yet to be determined whether this is a full time or a part time post and the option of possibly sharing this resource with another organization is being considered.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring activities will be done regularly to ensure that activity implementation and expected outputs are delivered in a timely manner and at acceptable standards. Policy Forum will develop a monitoring and evaluation plan, based on the targets listed in [Annex 1](#), to set up specific tools with monitoring indicators and data collection plans. Apart from regular monitoring, annual and semi-annual narrative reports will be developed and accompanied by financial reports. These will be shared with Policy Forum members, partners and donors and will be available on demand from the Secretariat. At the end of the funding period an evaluation of the strategy will take place. Policy Forum accounts will be audited externally on an annual basis by a reputable auditing firm.

Financial Management

Consistent with Tanzanian Law, Policy Forum accounts will be managed in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards. Our accounts have been audited by an internationally recognized audit firm for the last three years and have consistently received a clean report. In the spirit of transparency, our audit reports are publicly accessible to members and partners and can be obtained on request from the Secretariat Office.

While financial management support is required at a higher level now that we no longer have access to financial support from HakiElimu, the number of transactions within Policy Forum does not warrant a full time additional post. Several options have been considered to address this issue, including employing a part time Finance Officer to be shared with another organization. It was eventually agreed that Policy Forum would enter into a contract with a local accounting firm on a long term basis to help to set up rigorous and functioning systems for financial and administrative management and control, to act as internal auditor and test the systems for weaknesses on a quarterly basis, to provide extra support to the Coordinator and Finance and Administration Officer prior to and during the external audit and to provide

strategic advice to the coordinator relating to financial and administration management throughout the year on an as needed basis.

Institutional Growth

While Annex 1 articulates a number of annual targets that will serve as outcome and impact indicators of this strategy, this section describes the strategic vision of Policy Forum as an institution and provides an outline of its institutional goals over the next three years. These goals attempt to give some structure to the direction the institution will take while maintaining the flexibility that is required for an advocacy network to remain relevant to its members and to the environment in which it works. The following paragraphs describe the strategic direction of Policy Forum as an institution outlining its evolutionary process over the next three years.

Year 1: January to December 2008

This year will be the institution-building phase in which the groundwork is laid for the provision of reliably consistent information and support to members from the secretariat. It is also the year in which strategies to deepen relationships networks and strategic alliances are clearly defined and initiated. In many ways this will be a year of intensive learning. The new Policy Unit will be in place within the first quarter of 2008. The first half of 2008 will be largely used for recruitment, orientation and team-building to ensure that the team works in an integrated fashion to reach the network's strategic goals. During the first year, the secretariat will also make a final decision on the agreed pieces of work that will be produced on a regular basis. This will form the foundation of the body of knowledge to be gathered that will deepen and strengthen advocacy over time. This will be an introspective year primarily and the network's public profile will take a back seat initially in order to build a team that has the necessary grounding to sustain and build the reputation of the network and in order to allow enough space for the network to mature into a body that cannot be easily ignored.

Year 2: January to December 2009

We anticipate that this is the year in which institutions interested in policy issues, both public and private, begin to pay more serious attention to the approach taken by Policy Forum. The academic community, both students and staff, will begin to approach Policy Forum regularly for policy information and use the network to disseminate policy-related information. Members and staff will be invited to speak to students as guest lecturers more often. Policy Forum moves from an institution that is known in development circles to an institution that is known more widely by the Tanzanian public both within and outside of Dar es Salaam. Demand for membership should increase at this time not because of increased marketing on the part of members or the secretariat but because its reputation speaks for itself. Policy Forum should become established during this time as a resource centre for policy analysis and information from a civil society perspective. Members should be able to approach the secretariat with a request that the secretariat will either be able to provide information from within or direct the member to an appropriate source where the information requested can be obtained.

Year 3: January to December 2010

This is the first year in which any real impact in the work of Policy Forum on institutions and the public is likely to become apparent. It should be noted, however, that Policy Forum and its members on their own would not be able to bring about the types of changes that would lead to the fundamental changes we are trying to achieve in our objectives. Achievement of this is likely to be a combination of various factors, including but not limited to an enabling environment for citizen/state negotiation, relatively free public access to policy information, and an incentive structure at all levels of government and service delivery institutions that favors public accountability. Provided the necessary preconditions are in place, the work of Policy forum is likely to have some clearly visible impacts.

Composition of PF Steering Committee as at 30 June 2007

	Name	Position
1	Hebron Mwakagenda, The Leadership Forum (DSM)	Chairperson
2	Maimuna Kanyamala, Kivulini (Mwanza)	Vice Chairperson
3	Theofrida Kapinga, TACOSODE (DSM)	Member
4	Andrew Williams, Tanzania Natural Resources Forum (Arusha)	Member
5	Frederic Kwame, Oxfam GB (DSM)	Member
6	Rose Mushi, Actionaid (DSM)	Member
7	Vacant	Member
8	Gertrude Mugizi, Coordinator PF	Secretariat

Annex 1: Annual Targets

Targets for 2007: The Groundwork Phase

Objective 1: *The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.*

1. Analysis on key policy issues is available for use by civil society organization for collective and individual advocacy.
2. Information on basic public expenditure at local level is increasingly accessible to members of the public and to policy makers in an understandable format and can be used by policy makers to assist in decision-making and improvements in budget allocation.

Objective 2: *Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely used in targeted advocacy strategies to policy makers, the media, civil society, the academic community and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.*

1. Public debate on policy issues is beginning to move to a level where there is a deeper understanding of the reasons why certain situations exist, what measures are being taken to address them, what alternative measures could be taken, and the pros and cons of each.
2. Media demand for and use of information from Policy Forum in reporting on substantive issues begins to increase.

Objective 3: *The capability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is progressively enhanced.*

1. Civil Society from outside of Dar es Salaam are beginning to take a more active interest in key national policy issues due to an increased understanding of their relevance to the strategic goals of their various strategic goals.
2. Stakeholders within and outside of civil society recognize the work of Policy Forum for its simplicity, accessibility, relevance and rigor and increasingly use it to support their advocacy.

Objective 4: *Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.*

1. Issues related to civil society engagement with government and the current environment for this engagement are documented and specific occurrences, both positive and negative, are consistently recorded to build a body of institutional knowledge that can be used in future to enhance strategic advocacy.
2. The collaborative constituency currently emerging within civil society on key policy issues of common interest is strengthened to enhance and augment the common voice on these issues within the policy dialogue.

Targets for 2008: The Institution-building Phase

Objective 1: *The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.*

1. The Policy Forum secretariat is well placed to meet much of the increasing demand for Policy Forum both from within and outside of civil society and from both urban and rural areas. Policy analysis and information is shared widely, consistently and in accessible formats.
2. Information from the growing number of upcountry partner networks feeds consistently into Policy Forum analysis and output. Likewise, CSOs outside of Dar es Salaam now produce information based on certain agreed basic standards that enable it to be used in analysis and to have a greater impact on the policy processes.

Objective 2: *Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely used in targeted advocacy strategies to policy makers, the media, civil society, the academic community and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.*

1. The public takes a greater interest in the acquisition and use of public money due to increased availability and accessibility of information in the public arena, and its voice becomes difficult to ignore.
2. Reporting on Policy issues, debate within the media, and letters to the Editor begin to show a deeper understanding of the true nature of policy making and what it could be if a different approach was taken.

Objective 3: *The capability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is progressively enhanced.*

1. The profile of Policy Forum and its members is raised among development stakeholders due the rigorous, accessible and relevant policy information that is consistently produced and readily available to members and partners.
2. Networks and coalitions begin to form organically outside of Dar es Salaam around key policy issues that are of relevance to their members.

Objective 4: *Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.*

1. Civil society access to policy dialogue is now governed by an enabling and supporting formal agreement between the Government and civil society.
2. Interaction and collaboration between Policy Forum and the academic community increases.

Targets for 2009: The Beginnings of a Social Movement

Objective 1: *The implications and impact of policies and their implementation are analyzed, monitored independently, and the resulting information is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.*

1. A growing number of NGOs engage in strategic policy advocacy as their primary tool for achieving their organizational goals.
2. Civil society analysis increasingly influences policy choices made by national and international decision-making bodies in relation to Tanzania
3. The local academic community takes a greater interest in the work of Policy Forum through increased commentary and critique but also through a shift in its research agenda which becomes increasingly in line with publicly identified policy problems.

Objective 2: *Analysis and monitoring information produced by Policy Forum is widely used in targeted advocacy strategies to policy makers, the media, civil society, the academic community and the general public in a manner that is accessible, interesting, relevant and useful to the intended target audience.*

1. There should be an increase in the sophistication of the work of the media in relation to policy issues.
2. Parliament should become less willing to accept proposals that are either not well thought-through or not well explained for fear of being held to account by their constituents.
3. Self-initiated and organized community-level public expenditure tracking should begin to take root while increased autonomy in the allocation use of funds at lower levels leads to more proactive contribution of citizens in local level planning budgeting and monitoring.

Objective 3: *The capability of civil society organizations to understand, to monitor, and to strategically, proactively and effectively engage with and influence national and local policy processes is progressively enhanced.*

1. Regular, consistent and substantive feedback on the social impacts of policy is made widely and consistently available to the public and begins to inform policy making, implementation and monitoring.
2. Monitoring information and the methodology for its collection is systematized so that it is comparable across the country and can be tracked over time.

Objective 4: *Active participation by Policy Forum as a network in national policy processes is selective and strategic in order to enhance the quality of engagement and to engage where impact is most likely to be achieved.*

1. The policy agenda is increasingly set by civil society through their enhanced analytical and negotiation ability.
2. Government begins to engage with civil society on a more substantive level and not only or even necessarily as representatives of the public.