



Thinking About a Big Bet: Guiding Questions

During the Thinking phase, staff consider the myriad factors that will influence and form the basis of the strategy. A Director is responsible for leading a group of designated staff through a process of exploring key questions, with sufficiently broad thinking and learning, to draft a strong case statement for a potential strategy. The results of this thinking form the basis for a Big Bet to be reviewed and considered for endorsement by Leadership and the Board.



Product resulting from this process: Strategy Case Statement or Conceptual Framework

Guiding Questions

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| <i>PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY</i> | IS IT PROFOUND? Does it affect a large number of people? Is it longstanding or seemingly intractable? Is it new or emerging with truly significant implications for people and society? |
| <i>GOAL [BIG ASPIRATIONAL GOAL HERE]</i> | IS IT AUDACIOUS? Is it bold? Does it require risk? |
| <i>CHALLENGE</i> | WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE IT? Resources; will; time; commitment; leadership; collective action; evidence; changes in behavior, policy or practice; other? What would success look like? |
| <i>MOMENT IN TIME</i> | WHY NOW? Are forces converging? Is a window of opportunity opening or closing? Are leaders emerging? Is the cost of inaction compelling? |
| <i>ACTION</i> | WHAT IS THE BIG BET? [MACARTHUR GOAL HERE] What action, approach, or strategy for MacArthur is proposed over what timeframe? What will it take? Why is it feasible? What is the degree of possibility? Will it affect a large number of people? Does it reflect ambition? Is it creative, original or unconventional? Does it reflect independent thinking or willingness to take a contrarian view? Does it require risk? Does it fill a gap? Does it take advantage of a significant opportunity? Does it leverage others' actions or resources? Is it likely to achieve significant, sustained impact? Is it intended to achieve the goal or make substantial, but essential, progress toward it? What is the Foundation's value-add? What would success look like? |
| <i>RATIONALE</i> | WHY IS IT/COULD IT BE/MIGHT IT BE FEASIBLE? What are the factors, trends or conditions that increase confidence that the big bet can be implemented? That it can achieve the MacArthur goal? Does it capitalize on Foundation knowledge, experience, expertise or standing? |
| <i>UNKNOWN</i> | WHAT IS NOT KNOWN? What must be known before proceeding? What will need to be known over time to ensure achievement of the goal? |