

Developing policies and manifestos for a liberal party

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Chapter 1:

Identifying themes and issues



1(a) Themes and Issues

- What are themes?
- What are issues?
- What is the difference?

Themes: broad groupings of policy, based on values and objectives of the party.

Issues: specific concerns of the electorate (things in the public's mind).



1(a) Themes and Issues

(example from DA policy set in 2009)

Themes

Open society	Governance
Opportunity society	Agriculture and Land Reform Economic Education Sports Tourism Innovation (Science and Technology and HE&T)
Caring society	Health Housing Social Development
Safe society	Criminal justice Rural safety policy
Efficient society	Communications Environment & Energy Public Service Transport
The society that has a place for all	Arts & Culture
South Africa and the World	Defence Foreign policy



1(a) Themes and Issues

(examples of issues that the DA is driving)

- Corruption and wasteful expenditure:
 - R230 million on building the President's Palace at Nkandla
 - Ministerial perks
 - Public servants doing business with the state
- Empowerment/ redress:
 - B-BBEE that only benefits a few connected cronies
 - Burdensome regulations that are bad for jobs and growth



1(b) Identifying themes

The manifesto shows our voters:

Our principles → what we **believe** in

Our priorities → what we **care** about

Our positions → where we **stand** on key issues

Our plan → what we will **do** in government

What are the things
that you care about
as a party?



1(b) Identifying themes

(the DA's "open opportunity society")

- **An Open Society** is one in which every person's rights and freedoms are enshrined in and protected by the constitution.
- **An Opportunity Society** is one in which every person has the wherewithal - the resources, opportunities and power - to take advantage of the rights and freedoms enshrined in the constitution. In an Opportunity Society your prospects in life are not determined by your demographics or the circumstances of your birth, but by the talent and effort brought to bear on the opportunities you enjoy.
- **A Society that is For All** is one in which every person is equal before the law, no one suffers unfair discrimination and every person is given the opportunity to succeed, if necessary through corrective action designed to overcome the legacy of apartheid.



1(c) Liberal dos and don'ts

- Maximise individual freedom
- Equality
- Social justice
- Improving quality of life
- Human rights

Beware of:

- Goals that exclude
- Practices that intervene with individual freedom
- Policy that prevents the development of a strong, market-driven economy



1(d) DA example

- Open Opportunity Society for All
- Example: Job creation
 - Growth is key, thus: develop policy to overcome obstacles to growth
 - Interventions should rely on the market (incentives). For example: the Youth Wage Subsidy
 - Can match with strong support mechanisms
 - Primary objective remains: creating an *enabling* environment for growth



Chapter 2:

Researching and writing a factual, costed manifesto



2(a) Research process

- **Background research:**
 - The South African situation
 - Key policy challenges
 - Policy alternatives (what do they do in the rest of the world to solve this problem; can this work for us?)
- Incorporate DA **Congress resolutions** (2010 and 2012)
- Input from **DA Shadow Minister** (and their working group where this is in place)
- **External stakeholder** meetings:
 - Relevant NGOs and Think Tanks
 - Business
 - Key individuals
- Input from **our governments** (City of Cape Town and Western Cape Government)



2(b) Writing

- **Decide on a writing process:**
 - General reading
 - Decide on structure/ themes
 - Populate with what you know
 - Fill the gaps
- **Structure example:**
 - What is our vision of this policy area
 - What are the key challenges
 - How would the DA realise its vision and address these challenges in government (our “policy offer”)



2(c) Dos and Don'ts

- **Beware of:**
 - “Laundry lists”
 - Ideals/ objectives, without clear plans on how you will get there
 - E.g. “We will improve transparency in tender processes” versus “We will improve transparency in tender processes by allowing the public to attend tender committee meetings”
- **Costing discipline:**
 - Think through the potential financial implications of all proposals
 - DA prepares an Alternative Budget every year to show how we will use the available tax money to implement our policies

2(c) Dos and Don'ts (continued)

- Challenges and potential solutions

Untested ideas

- Propose pilot programmes
- Cite examples of where it has been effective

Affordability

- Project-based funding rather than “grants”
- Lower guaranteed funding and more earmarked funding for specific purposes

Consistency

- Policy consistency across different policy documents = you need at least one person who has read them all!

2(c) Dos and Don'ts (continued)

- Opportunities

Learn from smart parties from around the world

- Read the manifestos of established liberal parties (e.g. Liberal Democrats in UK)

The most difficult questions

- Get together party members with an interest in the theme/ issue
- Brainstorm ideas (even the crazy ones!)

Keep it simple

- Policies are meant to give general direction, not solve every detail (make sure you “pitch” ideas at more or less the same level).

2(d) DA example

- **DA Alternative Budget**
 - What are our priorities?
 - How much will they cost?
 - Which government programmes will we cut to fund our policy proposals?
 - OR: how will we grow the economy to get additional government income (through tax and other channels)

Chapter 3:

Internal party consultation



3(a) Party consultation

Phase	Activities	Involvement
Initial meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on existing policy • Consider relevant congress resolutions • Identify policy gaps and research requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow ministers • Policy office • Policy Committee
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address research gaps • Consult with external stakeholders (where relevant) • Prepare draft policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy office • Shadow ministers
Draft policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft policy presented to Shadow Ministers and Policy Committee • 2nd draft prepared for comment • Final draft signed off by Shadow Ministers and Policy Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow ministers • Policy office • Policy Committee
Party input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed-off draft prepared as Green Paper • Green Paper circulated to party for comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy office • Party structures
Input considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input considered and incorporated where relevant • Changes signed off by Shadow Ministers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow ministers • Policy office
Federal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy presented to Federal Council for approval • Once approved, the policy is accepted as a DA policy white paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal chairperson



3(b) Intra-party democracy

- Strong party structures, with **opportunities** to make input
- Not all input is made equal: you must have one person who is **ultimately responsible** for the policy (e.g. Shadow Minister in the relevant portfolio)
- Breaking **deadlocks**: A Policy Committee which includes the senior leadership must have the final say if there is disagreement on a specific issue



3(c) Dos and Don'ts

- Challenges and potential solutions

“you never asked”

- Formal records of consultation opportunities
- Face to face can work better to resolve disagreements

Limited understanding

- Interaction to resolve uncertainty

Different voices

- You need consultation, under strong leadership, to get buy-in

3(c) Dos and Don'ts

- Opportunities

Building
consensus

- Progressive clarity on the party's position

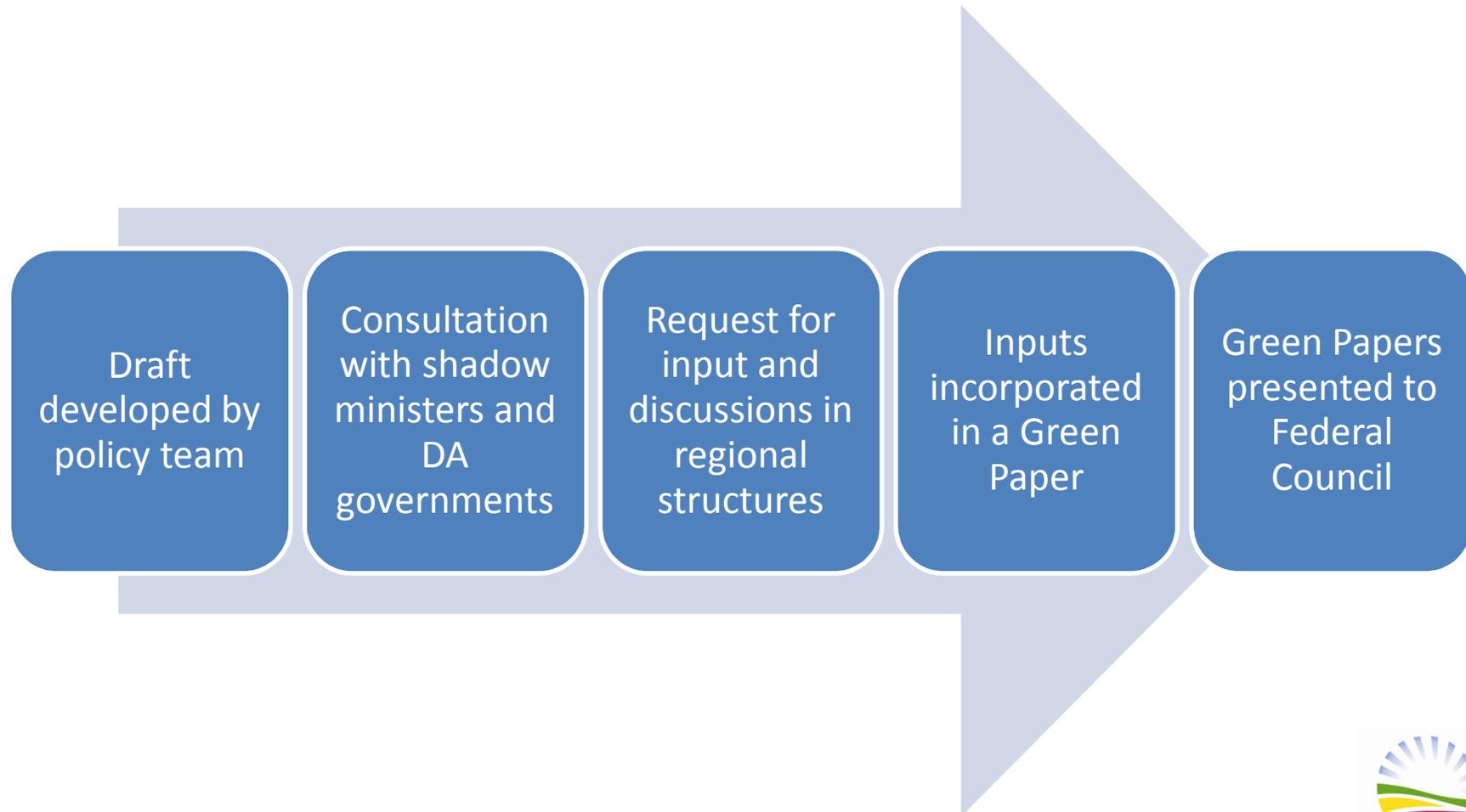
Identify the
“policy wonks”

- Rely on those who show an interest in and talent for policy development

The beauty of
a deadline

- Election provide a great opportunity to motivate party structures to become involved in developing/interrogating policy

3(d) DA Example



Chapter 4:

Communicating on the Manifesto



4(a) Communicating your ideas

*Who are you
talking to?*

- Importance of polling (what do voters care about);
- Can use outside research (opinion polls; census data etc.)
- Media analysis (what are key voter concerns)

4(a) Communicating your ideas (continued)

*Talk when
someone is
listening*

- Use specific news events or issues that are in the public's mind to present your party's proposals to address/ improve
- Launch policy documents
- Manifesto launches (your promise to the voters)

4(a) Communicating your ideas (continued)

The manifesto

- Ideas must be presented in a clear and simple manner, explaining to voters what you will do in government to improve their lives
- Make sure that voters know what your vision is for the country
- What is your “brand promise”? (DA has developed a “Brand and Communications Guide” to guide communication on policy and other issues)

4(b) Communicating to target groups

- Choice of spokesperson is important (who will connect with this group)
- Understand your audience (what is important to them, what do they want from their government)
- Make sure that you have an offer for them (look at your policy set and consider what your offering to, for example: the youth, mothers, families, the unemployed, the working class, business owners, people with disabilities, the elderly)
- Engage with the representative bodies of specific interest groups (e.g. Business Councils or Education Activists)



4(c) Dos and Don'ts

Dos (+)	Don'ts (-)
Simple, clear, targeted (manifesto and very simple leaflets)	Don't try to solve the whole world's problems in one statement or manifesto; know what voters care about
Equip spokespersons with "frequently asked questions"	Don't underestimate voters, as they will hold you to your promises
Decide on your key messages and emphasise them as much as possible	
On message, in volume, over time	
Use all the available media (including: radio, TV, print, social media/ networks)	
Engage with <i>audiences</i> (communities, interest groups)	

4(d) DA example

- **RACRO** message for 2014 campaign:
 - **R**: Reassure (we won't bring back apartheid)
 - **A**: Acknowledge (there has been positive change since 1994)
 - **C**: Corruption/ Cronies (this government is not working for you)
 - **R**: Reassure (we will keep fighting the legacy of apartheid and underdevelopment through land reform, social grants and empowerment programmes)
 - **O**: Offer (what will a DA government do for you)
- **Know Your DA Phase 1 and Phase 2**

