



Thinking About an Enduring Commitment: 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 approach within an existing Enduring Commitment (i.e., Chicago Commitment, Journalism & Media) 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

<i>IDEAL</i>	IS THE VALUE INCONTROVERTIBLE? Why is philanthropic support important in this space? Is there an opportunity to contribute to change or improvement? Does it have truly significant implications for people and society?
<i>LONG TERM COMMITMENT</i>	WHY ENDURING? Does the Foundation have unique nontransferable assets that can be used or leveraged to generate changes or improvement in this particular space over a longer period of time?
<i>GOAL [ASPIRATIONAL GOAL HERE]</i>	WHY IS IT/COULD IT/MIGHT IT BE FEASIBLE? Is it achievable with defined resources? What are the factors, trends or conditions that increase confidence that the strategy can be implemented? That it can achieve the goal? Does it capitalize on Foundation knowledge, experience, expertise or standing?
<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>ACTION</i>	WHAT IS THE STRATEGY? [MACARTHUR GOAL HERE] What action, approach, or strategy for MacArthur is proposed? What will it take? Why is it feasible? What is the degree of possibility? Does it reflect ambition? Does it reflect independent thinking or willingness to take a contrarian view? Does it fill a gap? Does it leverage others' actions or resources? Is it likely to achieve important outcomes and contribute to 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>UNKNOWNNS</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?