

# WHAT IS GOOD ANALYSIS?

Good analysis evaluates and transforms raw data into descriptions, explanations, and judgments (or conclusions) that help decisionmakers take action.

It gives readers the who, what, when, where, how, why, and *so what* of the issue – providing an accurate snapshot of what is known (and not known) and assessments of

- what’s causing or driving the situation – the “drivers”
- the importance of and trends within each driver
- potential outcomes, with some estimation of probability
- possible “wild cards,” if any
- the implications for readers’ interests

*Just as a good doctor goes beyond treating the symptoms of a disease, a good analyst knows that effective, strategic policy depends first and foremost on understanding the causes of the problem.*

## Analytical Model

- Identify drivers
- Identify trends
- Weight drivers and interaction within trends
- Identify scenarios
- Identify wildcards
- Assess implications

## Double-value

- Transparency of analysis empowers policymaker
- Drivers are at the heart of good policymaking

The model works best when the analyst ...

- Examines the quality of all information, including the strengths and weaknesses of various sources
- Remains aware of the differences between an analytical judgment and an opinion
- Controls biases
- Identifies assumptions and channels them into the richness of the product
- Develops hypotheses and, like a scientist, tests them rigorously
- Remains open to new information and new possibilities (while still being able to make judgments)

*Good analysis educates ... is transparent ... is policy-relevant ... is dynamic.*