

Policy Office Capability Framework

1. The purpose of this capability framework

This capability framework identifies the essential behaviors, attitudes, actions and skills for policy officers of entry, mid and managerial levels. It identifies the outcomes for a training program focused on developing skills and knowledge necessary for the efficient operation of a policy office.

This framework can also-

- ❖ assist the definition of positions and relevant competencies when creating a policy unit or individual policy positions. Not every capability will be relevant to each position); and
- ❖ provide a potential basis for uniform standards of competence in public policy across Ministries within a government.

2. Functions of a policy office

The typical functions of a policy office are-

- ❖ **conducting policy research and providing decision-making support.** This function involves managing data repositories, conducting research and knowledge management within the Ministry and with external state and non-state actors and proposing policy recommendations to the Minister;
- ❖ **contributing to national policy formulation.** This function involves cooperating closely with other policy units across the government to promote a 'joined up' whole-of-government policy approach and advising on the operational implications of policy decisions;
- ❖ **implementing stakeholder engagement.** This function involves implementing internal and external stakeholder engagement to facilitate participation and knowledge-sharing in the policy formulation and implementation processes;
- ❖ **providing strategic advice on policy implementation and evaluation.** This function involves working closely with the Ministry's monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to gauge the progress and outcomes of policies and to produce recommendations that identify areas for policy adjustments.

3. The capability framework

Personal Qualities		
Team player Flexible problem-solver Pursues tasks to timely completion with energy and drive Exercises tact, discretion and professional integrity Seeks feedback from others and adjusts personal and working style accordingly Treats all stakeholders with respect and without bias Computer and internet skills		
Technical capability		
Strong knowledge of a professional field related to the policy subject matter of the Ministry. For example, in addition to the below capabilities, a policy office dealing with economic policy should also have micro and macro economic capabilities such as understanding and assessing the impact of policies and policy options on production costs, prices, wages, resource allocation, consumer behavior, income, employment, investment, interest rates etc		
Policy office capabilities		
Entry level	Mid level	Management
Capability 1. Leadership and management		
Meets deadlines	Delivers effective outcomes against operational plans and assists in the formulation of the operational plan of the policy office	Proposes and implements organizational strategies to position the Ministry to meet current and future challenges
		Proposes issues requiring a policy response and criteria for the selection of policy options
Capability 2. Machinery of government and the public policy process		
Understands the roles and functions of government, including the legislative and executive decision-making processes	Applies knowledge of government and the legislative and executive decision-making processes in policy development	Provides strategic advice on the development of legislation and policy and their pathways through the executive and legislative decision-making processes
Understands the public policy cycle	Applies knowledge of the public policy cycle	Ensures government legislative and policy principles and standards are communicated and applied
Understands the different policy instruments and how they are used	Applies appropriate instruments in policy development	Seeks to ensure that policy instruments align across government
Understands how policy is systematically translated into	Assists in the identification of project deliverables, tasks,	Advises on project deliverables, tasks, resource allocation,

and implemented by programs and projects	resource allocation, budgets and risks with regard to policies developed	budgets and risks with regard to policies developed
Understands monitoring and evaluation principles and methodologies	Monitors policy implementation, identifies areas for review, evaluates and reports on the impact of policy.	Proposes policy revision based on monitoring and evaluation outcomes
Capability 3. Strategic co-ordination		
Understands the government's priorities and how they impact on policy	Understands cross-jurisdictional and whole-of-government issues	Advises and supports cross-jurisdictional, whole-of-government and Ministry agendas.
Understands policy issues as they apply to the Ministry	Understands the policy perspectives of government, stakeholders and Ministries and identifies the political dimensions of a policy	Provides highly developed advice on the political dimensions of a policy agenda
Capability 4. Research and analysis		
Distinguishes between opinion and fact, collects data, undertakes basic research and distils key issues for policy consideration	Analyses and reviews literature and data (quantitative and qualitative), identifies their relevance to policy issues and draws logical conclusions from it	Synthesizes the technical, stakeholder and political dynamics surrounding policy, and analyses long-term trends to recommend the optimal policy direction for the Ministry
Understands the application of decision analysis methods and the use of policy tools	Employs decision analysis methods and selects appropriate policy tools	Promotes evidence-based policy decision-making
Capability 5. Stakeholder engagement		
Coordinates stakeholder meetings	Actively engages with stakeholder networks	Strongly proficient in networking in government and stakeholder forums to facilitate their engagement
Understands the role of stakeholders in public policy formulation and implementation	Builds consensus with stakeholders regarding policy	Establishes productive working relationships in situations where interests are competing and proactively manages conflict
Capability 6. Communication		
Writes in simple non-emotive language using correct grammar and style and creates basic policy documents using appropriate templates	Writes and edits concise, accurate and logical policy documents in an easy to understand style	Proposes the policy communication agenda and direction
Attends meetings and contributes to them	Uses active listening skills and encourages participation	Articulates the Ministry's policy position

	from others	
Prepares simple communication messages under guidance	Communicates effectively with technical specialists	Exercises skill in dealing with decision-makers and their immediate staff