

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR POLICY ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Brief but comprehensive and easy-to-follow and understand guidelines will assist in firmly installing the policy analysis and management framework into the entire organisational structure of government. The guidelines are designed to improve the quality of policy analysis, lessen misunderstandings about the framework, promote a joint-ownership approach between the centre of government and its agencies, and those who will use the policy framework once it is in place.

An example of the contents of policy analysis and management guidelines are given below:

1. Ensure links with decision-making processes

Policy analysis can be an important stage in policy formulation as it improves the quality of policy intervention and the budget process to support priorities and savings. Appropriate policy measurement instruments address issues that are significant for political, budgetary, management and other strategic reasons.

Objectives of policy analysis determine location, methodology and use of evaluation. Policy analysis should be tailored to the characteristics of a policy intervention and the methodology should suit the objectives of the intended policy.

Planning improves policy analysis since it includes objectives, criteria, data collection and methods.

2. Foster policy analysis and management culture

Support for policy analysis is demonstrated through the willingness of politicians, policy managers and central government agencies.

Demand for policy analysis needs to be generated, specified and articulated by internal and external stakeholders. Policy analysis without ownership by stakeholders is unlikely to have an effect. Institutional barriers to policy analysis, such as internal resistance, can be reduced through consultation, aiming at creating mutual trust.

The government can support a policy analysis culture that encourages innovation and adaptation to a changing environment. The basic message should be that to stay relevant, organisations need to continue learning from analysis and feedback about the results.

Training and professional dialogue, competent analysts, well-informed permanent secretaries and ministers, and enlightened and enthusiastic users all contribute to policy analysis culture.

3. Enhance credibility

Factors influencing credibility include the competence and credibility of the policy analysts; mutual trust between the analysts and those whose work is analysed; consultation and involvement of stakeholders; and processes for communicating the findings and conclusions.

Professional and ethical standards, and methodological quality of policy analysis (encompassing issues such as relevant criteria, adequate evidence and reliable and clear findings) also have an effect on the credibility of policy analysis. Quality assurance and open and frank dialogue can improve credibility by exposing and rectifying potential weakness in policy development and management.

4. Managing policy analysis activities strategically

Organisation of policy analysis should correspond to needs and priorities in different policy areas. It may be appropriate to systematise and institutionalise policy analysis in key policy areas where the costs of collecting data is high and information limited.

Central government agencies play an important role in managing the policy analysis and development process; however, the actual policy analysis and development can be decentralised to different actors at all levels of government.

Development of policy analysis and management skills in different organisation ensures the necessary range of analytical methods and perspectives (e.g. drawing from both internal and external analysts), and that each policy analysis is designed in accordance with its unique set of issues related to objectives, focus, credibility and intended use.

Special funds for financing policy analysis and development can serve as an important incentive for analysing public policies; however, they may also serve to encourage use of policy analysis when other performance management approaches may be more appropriate.²⁵