

Agency Policy Capability Leads

17 May 2017



Purpose and intent

The Policy Project (PP) brings agency policy capability leads (people nominated by their department as responsible for building policy quality and capability) together to:

- Hear about and contribute to Policy Project work-in-progress
- Share experiences of using the Policy Project improvement frameworks and tools in their agencies
- Reveal common ‘pain points’ and challenges for lifting policy capability that might be tackled collectively.
- Share their promising practices that could be spread across the policy community – ‘steal with pride’.
- Build a network to sustain the sense of collaboration and collective impact across the policy community.

This was the second of the Policy Capability Leads workshops. The intention is meet on a regular basis – every two months. Next meeting scheduled for 2 August.

Participants

Rachel Voller
LINZ

Sandra Preston
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TSY

Apologies

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MoE

Peter Brunt
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Megan Anderson
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Policy Project team

Sally Washington
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What we discussed



Updates on the Policy Project work programme

- Upgrade of the Policy Quality Framework and new supporting tools
- What we will do with the Policy Workforce Survey results
- Co-design of a 'Start Right' tool/concept.
- Work to date on a Methods toolkit for policy practitioners



Downloads

- Report back on the Tier 2 policy leaders' workshop on **Policy Stewardship** (26 April). Helen Potiki shared her insights from the session.



Sharing practice, asks and offers

'Steal with pride, share with abandon'

- Rachel Voller on LINZ' use of the Policy Capability Framework for assessing and building policy capability.
- Asks and offers from MoT, MfE, and Stats.



Policy project updates

A refreshed Policy Quality Framework and new supporting tools

- Tier 2 policy leaders endorsed a refreshed the Policy Quality Framework. The changes make the PQF easier to use and interpret.
- The Policy Project has developed a guide and easy to use templates for reviewing and assessing policy papers including:
 - Ex-post assessments: Guide on panels and processes for assessing the technical quality of papers and a companion ex-post assessment template.
 - A peer review template for reviewing draft advice

To note, Treasury has recently advised agencies on reporting against policy advice appropriations. The guidance refers to the PQF as a robust framework for assessing the technical quality of policy papers. The PQF will similarly be referenced for reporting policy quality in the Treasury's Policy Measurement Exercise (for the 12 agencies required to complete the survey).

Policy workforce – survey results and next steps

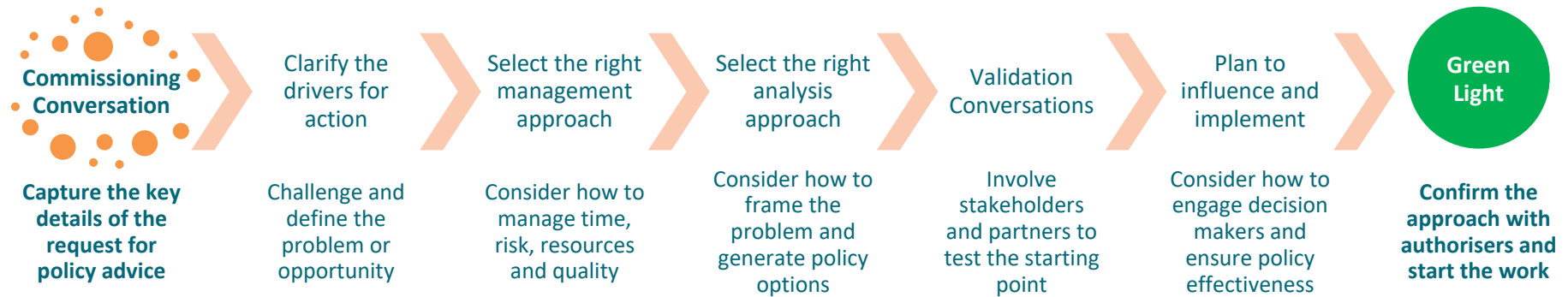
Thanks to everyone for completing the policy people capability online survey. The PP will produce a report from the results and share with the group. The results will also feed into broader work on people capability in the BPS2 programme (including the development of a policy career board). A number of agencies are using the Policy Skills Framework tools for recruitment and performance round discussions. Let us know if you want to hear from early adopters.



Let us know if you want to be put in touch with early adopters of any of the PP frameworks or want to connect with a potential 'buddy' e.g. partner up on policy quality assessments.

'Start Right' to prime for quality

Experience shows that small, early interventions can drive bigger improvements in policy quality. Start Right encourages better conversations between the commissioner and those doing the work, and investment in exploring and confirming 'the right approach' before leaping into action.



Benefits of Start Right

- **Focus** through up-front consideration of all relevant factors
- **Clarity** through shared understanding of the rationale for approach within policy teams and fewer 'lost in translation' moments
- **Speed and Timeliness** through reducing unnecessary work
- **Challenge** through free and frank advice underpinned by strong analysis and constructive critical thinking

Co-designing Start Right – progress to date

A working group is shaping Start Right's form and function. TSY RQT, MfE, MoJ, MoH, MBIE, DIA, MSD, MPI, Customs and SUPERU are members. So far the working group have resolved that that guidance and products related to the commissioning conversations should:

- emphasise the behaviour of those engaged in the policy project (from senior executives to analysts) and constructively challenging the policy problem through transparency on the desired measures of success and impact.

We also want the guidance and products on the mandate/green light to:

- scale, but stay focused on small and medium sized projects in Release One
- be designed as much for the commissioner as the policy managers and staff
- give equal weight to all elements of the Start Right analysis domains, rather than being overly focused on project management.

A tool kit for policy practitioners

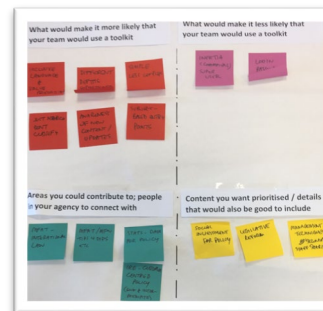
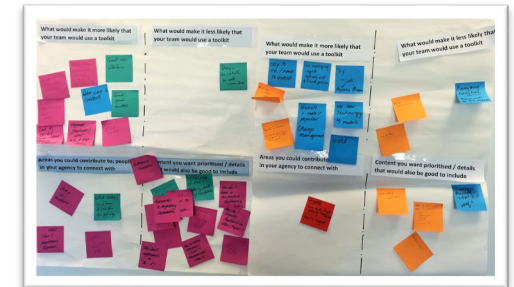
The Policy Project is working on a digital tool kit that is accessible to the public sector and targets policy professionals. We are aiming for a resource that:

- is current and complete. It will start with new methods (design thinking, behavioural insights), but will be built up to encompass the traditional tried and tested methods as well as the 'next new'
- marries the familiar with the new, introducing methods using anchors that are familiar to policy practitioners (processes, tasks and themes)
- can be added to – much like a well-managed Wikipedia page there will be an easy way for agencies to feed case studies, lessons learned and new resources
- becomes a place for agencies to share key resources that can help or influence other agencies

'Tool sheets' will focus on:

- **Light descriptions** of themes or methods that are easy to digest
- **Information about when to use** or not a tool or approach, including strengths and weakness, and effort and expertise
- **Connectors and contacts** you can engage with, case studies and 'experts' (we can build this up together over time)
- **Links to resources** that have more detail 'how to' guidance

We discussed what would make us more or less likely to use a tool kit



Does your agency have expertise in a particular method? Contact the Policy Project to discuss how you can contribute to the tool kit.

Policy Stewardship – Tier 2 workshop report back

On 26 April Policy leaders (Tier 2s and strategic advisors) came together to discuss policy stewardship. How does policy stewardship relate to other forms of stewardship? What would we be doing if we were doing it well? What might need to change in the system to incentivise and enable good policy stewardship?

Read more about the Policy Stewardship workshop [here](#).



Helen Potiki from the Ministry for Women, shared her insights from the session.

Helen noted that the session provided an important opportunity to connect across the system – something that is needed if we are to address long term issues (most of which also cut across agencies and even sectors).

Helen also reflected on the recent SSC-hosted Leadership Summit and asked what the call for a public service 'spirit of service' means for policy advisors.

For policy advisors the 'spirit of service' must include policy stewardship; lifting our sights from delivering now to also better serve future generations.

Helen Potiki, Ministry for Women

'Steal with pride' – sharing practice, asks and offers

LINZ experience of applying the Policy Capability Framework

LINZ reviewed their policy operating model to address a perceived gap between work demand and capacity.

They used the **Policy Capability Framework** (PCF) as an assessment tool. An independent external reviewer carried out an initial review. Rachel Voller, LINZ' Group Manager, Policy and Frameworks then facilitated an internal self review with her policy managers. They conducted a deeper dive into current and future capability, setting aside a half day offsite to work through the detailed 'lines of inquiry' from the PCF. Their findings enabled them to prioritise improvement initiatives as part of an overall policy improvement road map.

Thanks to Rachel for sharing LINZ' experience and lessons.

Lessons learned

- Celebrate our successes
- Prioritise within this – no need to focus on all areas at once
- Traditionally we've focussed on any one component in the framework. A comprehensive checklist really helps
- Management buy-in within my team
- No one size fits all – need to consider the value add and role for your policy group in the sector and organisation

Managers have given positive feedback. They have fed into business improvement plans. They 'own the changes'.

Rachel Voller, LINZ

Source: Rachel's slides

'Steal with pride' – sharing practice, asks and offers

Quick shares	Ministry contact
<p>Using open data for policy workshop (26 June TBC) Policymakers sometimes struggle to see how data can be used. The workshop will share some re-usable solutions (design patterns) that help government policymakers to see how data could be used to create impact.</p>	<p>Statistics NZ Rochelle.Stewart-Allen@stats.govt.nz</p>
<p>Policy Plus MfE has been doing some deep thinking on how they can help shape agendas, advise with greatest impact using evidence and data, and look beyond traditional policy frameworks. MfE will share their journey and promising practice at our next session.</p>	<p>Ministry for the Environment glen.wigley@mfe.govt.nz</p>
<p>Strategy 101 MoT wants to develop a 'Strategy 101' for the public sector. Capacity to develop strategy is a sub-set of strategic thinking. MoT would welcome input on learning objectives, content and demand for this skill.</p>	<p>Ministry of Transport greg.campbell@mot.govt.nz</p>
<p>Policy to Legislation Seminar – 11 July 2017, 9am to 1pm PCO and the Office of the Clerk will jointly host this seminar. A session on the steps involved in developing policy into legislation is followed by interactive workshops. It will be aimed at those who are new to the process of drafting policy for legislation, who support their Minister progressing a bill through the House, or who want to know more about how the legislative process works.</p>	<p>Parliamentary Counsel Office ooc.education@parliament.govt.nz</p>

Next steps

- Participants confirmed their interest in regular sessions to build the group as an ongoing community of practice. The preference is to meet once every 2 months.
- Next meeting – 2 August (invites will be sent out closer to the time).
- Let us know what topics you would find most useful to discuss with peers. Email: policy.project@dpmc.govt.nz
- Keep an eye on our website – we regularly add new material: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project>

Thanks to everyone for sharing their insights, challenges and promising practices. It was a rich and robust discussion.

We look forward to the next session.

– The Policy Project team

