

SFJPDPS2.4.5

Assess a policy area and the need for policy development



Overview

This unit is all about establishing a clear view of a policy area in order to make a reasoned judgement and recommendation on the needs for any change and development. It involves research processes to make sure that all relevant factors have been considered before making recommendations that lead to active development work. Above all, this establishes whether there is a case for a move away from the status quo.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 define clearly and agree the boundaries of the policy area to be considered and any specific exclusions from the assessment
- P2 identify the source of the initiative and its significance and priority to its political owners
- P3 analyse the policy landscape by researching a range of sources and engaging with specialists and experts
- P4 collate evidence on the causes and extent of the policy issue or driver
- P5 identify adjacent or associated policy areas that may impact on or be affected by policy development
- P6 assess the extent to which the policy issue may be addressed by market forces and the case for government intervention
- P7 carry out comparative studies of how the issue is addressed in other countries or organisations
- P8 identify key stakeholders and organise consultation to establish the appetite for change
- P9 identify legal, regulatory, national and international constraints that may impact on changes that are being considered
- P10 assess the case for moving away from the status quo
- P11 make clear recommendations regarding the case for and against initiating further work scoping proposals for policy development

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 specific legislation, regulation, governance and cultural requirements that relate to the nation or region to which the policy will apply
- K2 that the policy formation process involves continuous engagement and partnership with a range of stakeholders meaning that those in policy functions must coordinate and on occasions take the lead but must also constantly seek to ensure that there is full stakeholder engagement
- K3 how policy boundaries are defined and how they relate to departmental mandates
- K4 how the political significance and priority influences the approach to assessment of a policy area
- K5 the different ways in which policy development can be initiated and the likely political impact of each source
- K6 different sources of information about current policies and the importance and likely influence of each source
- K7 how to make the best use of the knowledge and expertise of specialists
- K8 the political factors that make some policy initiatives more influential than others
- K9 how to identify links between adjacent or associated policy areas
- K10 how a case is made for government intervention or for leaving a policy area to market forces
- K11 how to identify the most appropriate international and organisational comparisons to apply to a policy area
- K12 consultation methods to gauge initial public appetite for policy development
- K13 key legal, regulatory and international constraints on policy development
- K14 how to assess evidence for or against policy development
- K15 how to present recommendations for development of firm proposals for policy development or for retention of the status quo

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Additional Information

Behaviours

The policy function role demands a high level of professionalism and general professional behaviour that should be taken as read. The most important behaviours that will help you achieve effective performance in this unit are:

Communicating

1. You present information clearly and concisely in order to promote understanding of the key principles.
2. You listen carefully to opinions about the need for policy change.

Building relationships

3. You identify and build relationships with stakeholders who have special connections with the policy area under review.

Problem solving and decision making

4. You challenge the status quo constructively and seek viable alternatives.

Focusing on results

5. You focus attention on policy outcomes and specifics that are essential to success.

Acting ethically

6. You show sensitivity to internal and external politics that impact on the area under consideration.

Acting strategically

7. You give full consideration to the policy landscape when forming recommendations for further work.

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