## **Improving Policy System Capability**



The Policy System Framework helps government organisations to better understand the system in which policy is made and to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The framework provides a common language for teams and organisations to reflect on their policy system and a structure to facilitate improvement conversations.

### Inputs and resources

This pillar relates to the fundamental inputs and resources that policy teams need access to do their work.

#### **Practices and processes**

This pillar relates to the internal processes and practices that set the parameters for how policy teams work together and with others.

Policy system capability

#### People and relationships

This pillar relates to the people who are involved in the policy making process and how they are involved.

#### **Culture and context**

This pillar is about how the internal departmental culture and wider external context impacts the policy making process.

The tool is not a 'how to' or 'best practice' guide. Instead, it's designed to prompt reflection and conversations, and to support organisations to develop strategies and priorities to improve that system. It covers four main pillars: inputs and resources, practices and processes, people and relationships, culture and context.

The framework is for everyone seeking to improve policy system capability. It can be used as a self-assessment tool to facilitate conversations within the organisations.

The design of the framework is based on research including interviews, workshops and ethnographic exercises conducted with over 100 civil servants across government in 2022. For any questions related to the framework, please email the UK Policy Profession Unit:

Enquiries.MAILBOX@policyprofession.gov.uk

# **The Policy System Framework**



Inputs and resources	Processes and practices	People and relationships	Culture and context
Availability of time	Problem definition and objective setting	Team set-up including multi- disciplinary working	Level of diversity
Availability of resources	Embeddedness of equalities and environment considerations	Governance and connection to leadership	Level of inclusion
Access to and use of diverse evidence	Knowledge management and sharing	Relationships with supporting professions or expertise	Empowerment of staff
Access to (shared) tools	Cross-government and cross- sector collaboration	Involvement of citizens or end-users	Degree of openness and transparency
Political priorities and ministerial commitment	Approach to monitoring and evaluation	Engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners	Appetite for risk-taking
Possibilities for upskilling	Long-term planning and future thinking	Relationship with ministers and SpAds	Approach to creativity, innovation, problem-solving
	Embeddedness of (digital) delivery considerations		Impact of wider political and societal factors
	Adaptability and change management		



1	Inputs and resources		Policy Profession
1.1	Availability of time		The extent to which teams have sufficient time to meet the requirements of their work.
1.2	Availability of resources	>	The extent to which teams are sufficiently resourced to meet the requirements of their work.
1.3	Access to and use of diverse evidence		The extent to which teams have access to relevant and diverse data and evidence to inform policy development and delivery.
1.4	Access to (shared) tools		The extent to which teams have access to shared (digital) tools that are fit for purpose and facilitate collaboration.
1.5	Political priorities and ministerial commitment		The extent to which teams have a good understanding of ministerial priorities.
1.6	Possibilities for upskilling		The extent to which people have access to a range of relevant opportunities for upskilling and professional development.



2	Processes and practices	Policy Profession
2.1	Problem definition and objective setting	The extent to which teams have clear objectives and a good understanding of the problem they are trying to solve.
2.2	Embeddedness of equalities and environment considerations	The extent to which equalities and environment considerations are well understood and integrated into the policy development process.
2.3	Knowledge management and sharing	The extent to which knowledge documentation, management and sharing processes are fit-for-purpose and consistently followed.
2.4	Cross-government and cross-sector collaboration	The extent to which collaboration with other government departments or sectors is open, positive and effective.
2.5	Approach to monitoring and evaluation	The extent to which evaluation and monitoring considerations are well understood and integrated early on in policy development.
2.6	Long-term planning and future thinking	The extent to which long-term planning and future thinking are sufficiently integrated into policy development and delivery processes.
2.7	Embeddedness of (digital) delivery considerations	The extent to which delivery considerations are well understood and integrated early on in policy development.
2.8	Adaptability and change management	The extent to which teams are equipped to adapt in moments of crisis or to changing priorities.



3	People and relationships  People and relationships		
3.1	Team set-up including multidisciplinary working	The extent to which teams are set up to meet the requirements of their work (e.g. clear roles, options for multidisciplinary working).	
3.2	Governance and connection to leadership	The extent to which governance processes are supportive and facilitate policy development and delivery effectively.	
3.3	Relationships with supporting professions or expertise	The extent to which collaboration with other professions (e.g. analysts, legal, commercial) or expertise is positive and effective.	
3.4	Involvement of citizens or end-users	The extent to which policy users (e.g. citizens or customers) are involved in policy development and decision-making.	
3.5	Involvement of stakeholders and delivery partners	The extent to which diverse groups of external stakeholders are involved in policy development and decision-making.	
3.6	Relationships with ministers and SpAds	The extent to which working relationships with ministers and SpAds are positive and effective.	



4	Culture and context		Policy Profession
4.1	Level of diversity		The extent to which teams are made up of people from diverse backgrounds.
4.2	Level of inclusion	>	The extent to which teams are inclusive and integrate the views and experiences of people from diverse backgrounds.
4.3	Empowerment of people		The extent to which people feel supported to speak up, make decisions and take actions appropriate for their level or grade.
4.4	Degree of openness and transparency		The extent to which decision-making processes are open and transparent.
4.5	Appetite for risk-taking		The extent to which people feel supported to take risks and test new ideas in the policy making process when it's appropriate to do so.
4.6	Approach to creativity, innovation, problem-solving		The extent to which people are supported to bring in creativity or innovative problem-solving approaches into the policy making process.
4.7	Impact of wider political and societal factors		The extent to which people have a good understanding of the wider political and societal context and how this can impact their policy work.