

# Writing Effective Public Policy Papers

*A Guide for Policy Advisers  
in Central and Eastern Europe*

Eóin Young and Lisa Quinn

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM INITIATIVE  
OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

*Address*

Nádor utca 11.  
H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

*Mailing address*

P.O. Box 519  
H-1357 Budapest, Hungary

*Telephone*

(36-1) 327-3104

*Fax*

(36-1) 327-3105

*E-mail*

lgprog@osi.hu

*Web Site*

<http://lgi.osi.hu/>

First published in 2002

by Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute Budapest

© OSI/LGI, 2002

ISBN: 963 9419 39 7



TM and Copyright © 2002 Open Society Institute



Local Government  
and Public Service  
Reform Initiative

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Copies of the book can be ordered by e-mail or post from LGI.

Printed in Budapest, Hungary, July 2002.

Design & Layout by Createch Ltd.

## FOREWORD

In recent years, we at the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI), Open Society Institute -Budapest, have started to gradually move towards new forms of international development. Beyond traditional action-oriented, grant-giving and capacity-building activities, we are actively involved in policy design and policy-making. Consequently, we are working with new partners and our outputs have also been modified: LGI commissions more policy papers, provides grants for members of our professional networks to implement comparative and applied policy research, and we cooperate with international organizations in policy formulation and training.

In Central and Eastern Europe we are faced with special problems: English is the second language of our partners and targeted policy-makers, but it is widely used as a common form of communication. Policy paper writers very often have to present their ideas both in local languages and in English when communicating with foreign investors, donors and advisers.

Our objective with these guidelines is to provide support for policy paper writing. This is a handbook which can also be used as a reference guide. But, as it is built on the extensive literature of policy research, policy paper writing and publishing, it could also be the basis of training courses on policy paper writing.

We hope that policy analysts, applied and academic researchers will find this publication useful. Both for LGI and the potential beneficiaries of our projects, it is vital to improve the quality of future publications. Studies, reports, articles and books should be presented in a form which is generally accepted by the policy-making community and by the target audience of policy advisers.

This publication fits into LGI's "Public Policy Initiative," which was designed to support think tanks and policy-makers in the region. This program provides management advice and professional support to newly established policy institutes. We believe that these policy paper writing guidelines will help these policy centers as well as our other partners as well as benefit our colleagues in the policy trends in the region.

LGI is very grateful to *Eóin Young* and *Lisa Quinn* for their excellent work in writing and editing this publication. We have received professional advice and comments from *José de Barros*, *Petra Kovács*, *Péter Radó* and *Viola Zentai* during the preparation of the guide. The previous work of *Sarolta Kérészy* and *Éva Figder* also contributed to the development of this publication.

Gábor Péteri  
*LGI, Research Director*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Researching the public policy community of Central and Eastern Europe and the nature of policy papers was central to developing this guide. Hence, the authors would like to express gratitude to the following individuals from LGI who generously gave us their time and helped to shape and inform the content of this book: Gábor Péteri, Petra Kovács, José de Barros, Viola Zentai and Tom Bass. We would like to thank the World Bank for giving us permission to use extracts from sample policy papers in this book for the purpose of analysis. Finally, we are grateful to Judit Kovács for the design and layout of this book.

If readers have comments or feedback on this book, please contact us at [eoin@bos.org.yu](mailto:eoin@bos.org.yu) or [lisa@bos.org.yu](mailto:lisa@bos.org.yu)

**A u t h o r s :** Eóin Young and Lisa Quinn

*Centre for Academic and Professional Advancement*

*Belgrade Open School*

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The Public Policy Community .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	2.1 Defining Public Policy .....	5
	2.2 Members of the Public Policy Community .....	6
	2.3 From Political Science to Policy Science .....	8
	2.4 Policy Science as an Applied Discipline .....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>The Policy-making Process .....</b>	<b>12</b>
	3.1 The Policy Cycle .....	12
	3.2 Role of the Policy Paper in the Policy-making Process .....	16
	3.3 Disseminating Your Policy Ideas .....	17
<b>4</b>	<b>The Policy Paper: An Overview .....</b>	<b>18</b>
	4.1 Different Types of Policy Papers:	
	Policy Study and Policy Analysis .....	19
<b>5</b>	<b>The Policy Paper: Structural and Textual Elements .....</b>	<b>22</b>
	5.1 Outlining Your Paper .....	23
	5.2 Title .....	24
	5.3 Table of Contents .....	27
	5.3.1 List of Tables and/or Figures .....	29
	5.4 Abstract or Executive Summary .....	31
	5.5 Introduction .....	36
	5.6 Problem Description .....	42
	5.6.1 Constructing the Problem Description:	
	Structure and Argumentation .....	43
	5.6.2 Constructing the Problem Description:	
	Text and Argumentation .....	49

5.7 Policy Options .....	58
5.7.1 Constructing the Policy Options: Structure and Argumentation .....	59
5.7.2 Constructing the Policy Options: Text and Argumentation .....	68
5.8 Conclusion and Recommendations .....	71
5.9 Endnotes .....	78
5.10 Bibliography .....	80
5.11 Appendices .....	81
5.12 Index .....	83
<b>6 Publishing Your Policy Paper .....</b>	<b>85</b>
6.1 Targeting Your Writing to a Specific Publisher .....	85
6.2 Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission .....	86
6.3 Submitting Your Manuscript .....	93
6.4 Working with Your Editor towards Publication .....	94
<b>7 Concluding Remarks .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Sample Introductions .....	97
Appendix B: APA Citation Guidelines .....	102
Appendix C: Language Usage Editing Checklist .....	106
<b>References .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Figures</b>	
Figure 1.1: Overview of the Structure of the Guide .....	2
Figure 2.1: The Public Policy Community from the Policy Adviser’s Perspective .....	7
Figure 2.2: The Disciplinary Framework .....	9
Figure 3.1: The Policy Cycle .....	12
<b>Tables</b>	
Table 4.1: Differences between Policy Papers in the Fields of Policy Study and Policy Analysis .....	20

In developing policy and assessing program effectiveness, policy makers are required to make decisions on complex issues in areas that involve significant public risks. In this context, policy makers are becoming more reliant on the advice of experts and the institution of expertise. This paper provides a guide to assessing who is and who is not an expert in the technical aspects of public policy debates, by providing a framework of levels of expertise. It also notes the importance of identifying the specific fields of expertise relevant to the issue in question. The main focus is on scientific and technical areas, but the issues raised also apply in other domains. It then examines the problem of how non-experts can evaluate expert claims in complex, technical domains. Writing policy papers is a challenging process which requires a bird's eye view and a systemic perspective which examine the current situation and ask several basic questions: WHY. Why is it necessary to update or develop a policy. The vision of improving human resources and fostering excellence among public servants, requires us to examine a wealth of issues and operational challenges that may arise, first of all through "human lenses" oriented towards the needs of the individual and the public servant, as if in a utopian world without constraints. Current Public Policy Papers. ACP Policies & Recommendations. Store. ACP public policy papers summarize and dissect published research and discussion on current issues involving clinical practice, medical education, bioethics, and health care financing and delivery, and make specific recommendations for internists, patients, and policy makers. Read about ACP's public policy development process. Learn more about where ACP stands on important and timely issues: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).