Writing Effective Public Policy Papers

A Guide for Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe

Eóin Young and Lisa Quinn
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.

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Gábor Péteri
LGI, Research Director
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If readers have comments or feedback on this book, please contact us at eoin@bos.org.yu or lisa@bos.org.yu

Authors: Éóin Young and Lisa Quinn

Centre for Academic and Professional Advancement
Belgrade Open School
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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).