THE PUBLIC IMPACT FUNDAMENTALS FRAMEWORK

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL
To help policymakers cut through the complexity of achieving public impact and fulfil their potential to deliver positive change, we went on a mission to find out what drives policy success.

We spoke to people at all levels in government from around the world, consulted leading academics, and analysed hundreds of case studies to understand what makes policies successful.

There are three things that appeared again and again in effective policies: **Policy, Legitimacy** and **Action**. These are the three fundamentals of public impact.

- **Policy** the design quality of the initiative.
- **Legitimacy** the deep reservoir of support for the initiative necessary for the government to be effective.
- **Action** the successful translation of the idea behind an initiative into real-world effect.

To help policymakers embed these Fundamentals in everything they do, we created the Public Impact Fundamentals framework. This framework unpacks what lies behind **Policy**, **Legitimacy** and **Action** - identifying the key elements that need to be in place to increase the likelihood of a policy being successful.
The Public Impact Fundamentals diagnostic tool was designed to help you improve the impact of a government initiative by assessing whether the key drivers of policy success are in place.

1. **CHOOSE**
Choose a government initiative to diagnose that has been implemented in the past, is currently being rolled out or is under consideration by government.

2. **ASSESS**
Use the Public Impact Fundamentals framework to assess whether the key elements that typically lead to impactful policies are in place.

3. **IDENTIFY**
Use your assessment to identify which elements to target in order to improve performance, maximising the chance of your initiative achieving greater public impact.

Want to learn more about how we’ve used the Fundamentals framework to assess other government initiatives?

To read about more than 300 examples of the Public Impact Fundamentals framework being applied to policies, programmes and plans from around the world, visit our Public Impact Observatory at [centreforpublicimpact.org/observatory](http://centreforpublicimpact.org/observatory) – the largest database of case studies assessed for impact in the world.
STEP 1
CHOOSE YOUR INITIATIVE

CHOOSE THE INITIATIVE YOU WANT TO DIAGNOSE

What initiative have you selected?
This could be a government policy, programme or plan that has been implemented in the past, is currently being rolled out or is under consideration by government.

Now that you’ve selected your initiative, over the next few pages we’ll guide you through an assessment of the initiative against the nine elements of the Public Impact Fundamentals framework.

What’s the initiative trying to achieve?
Briefly outline the challenge the initiative is trying to address.

What impact has the initiative achieved?
If you have this information to hand, briefly outline what the initiative has achieved so far. Think about whether the initiative has been successful. Has it met its objectives?
POLICY: CLEAR OBJECTIVES

The extent to which objectives are clearly defined.

Supporting questions
- Were specific objectives set?
- Do the objectives clearly address the problem the initiative is trying to tackle?

Possible sources of information
- Implementation plan or blueprint
- Government report or press release
- Explanatory text to legislation
- Organisation publications
- Articles/case studies/reports on initiative

Your assessment (please tick)

- STRONG
  Clear objectives set.

- GOOD
  Objectives set but are not entirely clear.

- FAIR
  Objectives set but are too high-level and/or don’t fully address the problem.

- WEAK
  No objectives set.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
POLICY: EVIDENCE

The extent to which the best available evidence was taken into consideration when designing the policy initiative.

Supporting questions
- Did policymakers draw on relevant evidence of similar initiatives or trials implemented elsewhere?
- Did the experience of similar initiatives support the chosen intervention?
- Was the supporting evidence from reliable sources?
- Was the initiative trialled before being rolled out?

Possible sources of information
- Organisation publications
- Government report or press release
- Feasibility studies
- Initiative blueprint
- Articles/case studies/reports on the initiative

Your assessment (please tick)
- STRONG
  Strong evidence in favour of the selected approach.
- GOOD
  Broadly positive evidence in favour of the selected approach.
- FAIR
  Some evidence existed for and against the selected approach.
- WEAK
  No evidence used or evidence base did not support the initiative.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
POLICY: FEASIBILITY

The extent to which the initiative is workable in terms of resources and time, and is not hindered by significant technical, legal or operational challenges.

Supporting questions
- Were budgetary needs assessed and sufficient financial resources allocated?
- Were appropriate staffing needs assessed and sufficient human resources allocated?
- Were implementation timeframes realistic?
- Were legal concerns evaluated and addressed?
- Were any large feasibility challenges left unaddressed?

Possible sources of information
- Organisation publications
- Budget papers
- Parliamentary reviews and enquiries
- Audit reports
- Initiative blueprint or implementation plan
- Articles/case studies/reports on the initiative

Your assessment (please tick)

- STRONG
  Initiative highly feasible with no real challenges left unaddressed.

- GOOD
  Initiative considered to be feasible with a few manageable challenges.

- FAIR
  Some doubts over the feasibility of the initiative, with some challenges left unaddressed.

- WEAK
  Initiative not feasible with given resources and major challenges were not addressed.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
LEGITIMACY: PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

The extent to which the public supports the initiative and its objectives, and trusts the institutions involved to act competently and in the wider public interest when executing the initiative.

Supporting questions
- Does the public support the overall objective being pursued?
- Does the public have confidence in the institutions responsible for delivering the outcome?
- Does the public support the specific initiative being implemented to achieve the outcome?

Possible sources of information
- Election results
- Opinion polls
- Surveys
- Academic studies

Your assessment (please tick)

- **STRONG**
  Public strongly support the initiative and its objectives, and have great trust in the institutions involved.

- **GOOD**
  Public broadly support the initiative and its policy objectives, and broadly trust the institutions involved.

- **FAIR**
  Public neither strongly support nor distrust the initiative, its policy objectives and/or the institutions involved.

- **WEAK**
  Significant public distrust of the initiative, its policy objectives and/or institutions involved.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
LEGITIMACY: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The extent to which relevant stakeholder groups have been engaged and are supportive of the policy objectives and the chosen approach.

Supporting questions
- Do stakeholders support the initiative?
- Were stakeholders engaged in the development and implementation of the policy?
- Are stakeholders lobbying in favour of the initiative?

Possible sources of information
- Stakeholder press release
- Consultation strategies and plans
- Outcome reports from consultation processes
- Submissions from lobby groups or industry associations
- Surveys

Your assessment (please tick)

- **STRONG**
  - Strong support from all key stakeholders, who have been engaged throughout development and implementation of the policy.

- **GOOD**
  - Solid support from the majority of stakeholders, who have been engaged in the development and implementation of the policy.

- **FAIR**
  - Tentative support from some stakeholders, with limited opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of the policy.

- **WEAK**
  - Majority of stakeholders are opposed.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
LEGITIMACY: POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The willingness of politicians and other leaders to spend political capital in support of the initiative and its objectives.

Supporting questions
- Is the initiative a political priority for the government?
- Is there cross-party support for the initiative?
- Where is active opposition coming from?

Possible sources of information
- Speeches from politicians
- Party manifestos
- Press releases
- Transcripts of parliamentary debate
- Opinion from political actors in newspapers and online

Your assessment (please tick)

- **STRONG**
  Strong support from political leadership and from across the political spectrum.

- **GOOD**
  Solid support from political leadership and the majority of political actors.

- **FAIR**
  Tentative support from some political actors.

- **WEAK**
  Important political actors are actively opposed.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
ACTION: MANAGEMENT

The extent to which management mechanisms and systems are in place to ensure progress is made.

Supporting questions
- Is it clear who is accountable for implementing the initiative?
- Are appropriate people and processes in place to support implementation?
- Are key risks identified and managed?
- Is there use of data to drive intelligent decision-making?

Possible sources of information
- Organisation publications
- Implementation plan and methodology
- Audit reports and parliamentary enquiries
- Articles/case studies/reports on the initiative

Your assessment (please tick)

[ ] STRONG
Strong mechanisms in place to ensure progress is made.

[ ] GOOD
Good mechanisms in place to ensure progress is made with only minor weaknesses.

[ ] FAIR
Some mechanisms in place to ensure progress is made but with significant weaknesses.

[ ] WEAK
No obvious mechanisms or systems in place to ensure progress is made.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
ACTION: MEASUREMENT

The extent to which attempts have been made to ensure that public impact is measured and the resulting data has been used to improve the initiative.

Supporting questions
- Are effective data collection functions incorporated into the design and execution of the policy?
- Do the indicators capture the objectives of the policy?
- Is the impact of the initiative consistently monitored?
- Are the findings used to adapt the initiative when necessary?

Possible sources of information
- Organisation publications
- Programme evaluations
- Implementation plan and methodology
- Audit reports and parliamentary enquiries
- Articles/case studies/reports on the initiative

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.

Your assessment (please tick)

- **STRONG**
  Comprehensive indicators identified at the outset and tracked over time, with the results used to assess progress and redefine the approach.

- **GOOD**
  Comprehensive indicators identified at the outset and tracked over time, but not used to inform the implementation or redesign of the initiative over time.

- **FAIR**
  Indicators identified at the outset but not tracked over time and/or incomplete.

- **WEAK**
  No attempt made to measure impact.
### ACTION: ALIGNMENT

The extent to which the actors required to make change happen are aligned in the pursuit of the initiatives’ objectives.

#### Supporting questions
- Are there different interests among implementing actors?
- Are the relevant actors cooperating effectively?
- Are the main actors incentivised and motivated to execute the initiative?

#### Possible sources of information
- Organisation publications
- Implementation plan and methodology
- Audit reports and parliamentary enquiries
- Articles/case studies/reports on the initiative

#### Your assessment (please tick)

- **STRONG**
  The actors required to make change happen share a full alignment of interests.

- **GOOD**
  The actors required to make change happen are partially aligned in their interests but have no significant areas of disagreement.

- **FAIR**
  The actors required to make change happen are partially aligned in their interests, with significant areas of disagreement.

- **WEAK**
  The actors required to make change happen do not share an alignment of interests.

Using the supporting questions, your knowledge of the initiative and any available sources of information, rate how the initiative performs against this element of the framework.
The Fundamentals Map illustrates the areas of strength and the areas for improvement that need to be targeted in future.

The larger the ‘public impact web’, the more likely an initiative is to achieve public impact. Elements closer to the centre of the map are potential targets to improve the initiative’s performance.

We’ve mapped out an example below.

The Fundamentals Map can be also used to track performance over time, or compare and contrast multiple initiatives to understand why one performed better than another.

We’ve included an example below.
Now that you’ve assessed your initiative against the Public Impact Fundamentals framework, you can design action plans to target any weaknesses and maintain the initiative’s strengths.

**What are the initiative’s strengths? What can you do to maintain these strengths?**
Looking at the Fundamentals Map, which elements scored highly? Briefly detail some actions you could take to maintain the rating of elements that performed strongly.

**What are the initiative’s weaknesses? What can you do to rectify these weaknesses?**
Looking at the Fundamentals Map, which elements rated poorly? Briefly detail some actions you could take to improve the rating of elements that performed poorly.
Whether you’re a public servant working in government, a foundation or an international organisation, and you want to find out more about the Public Impact Fundamentals framework or how we can help you use it, please do get in touch.

We want to make achieving public impact in policymaking easier for those who have the power to change things for people everywhere.

Join the conversation
info@centreforpublicimpact.org
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