

# Validated National Policy Format

(After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Level of Validation)

**National Policy Formulation Process Standardization**

**Validation Workshop**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Venue: Salon Araliya, Hotel Galadhari, Colombo 01**

## Suggested National Policy Format for Validation

1. Policy Name
2. Effective Date
3. Introduction
  - I. Background
  - II. Need
  - III. Purpose & Context
  - IV. Rationale
4. Policy Principles
5. Policy Statements
6. Policy Goals
7. Applicability & Scope
8. Policy Implementation
  - I. Strategies
  - II. Responsibility & Authority
  - III. Monitoring & Evaluation
9. Glossary

Annex: List of related policies

## Suggested National Policy Format for Validation

### Explanations of Some Elements

#### 1. Policy Name

*Clearly State the Name of the Policy.*

#### 2. Effective Date

*Indicates when the policy comes into force. This would be possible only after the Cabinet approves the policy. Until such time, it could be the "Target Effective Date".*

#### 3. Introduction

##### I. Background

##### II. Need

##### III. Purpose & Context

##### IV. Rationale

*Provide an **introduction** and **background** information as to why there is a **need** for the Policy. This is important as it allows the reader to see the Policy in a wider **context** and understand the **rationale** behind it.*

*Background, indicating any **reasons**, **history**, and **intent** that led to the creation of the policy, which may be listed as motivating factors.*

*The **purpose** of the policy will have to be clearly stated here.*

*If based on a directive from the Government, it should also be stated.*

*Clear linkages should also be established between the policy goals and achievement of government development objectives. This information is often quite valuable when policies must be evaluated or used in ambiguous situations.*

#### 4. Policy Principles

*The reason why the policy exists.*

*A policy is not formulated unless it is thought to be necessary or to have a benefit.*

*The **policy exists for a purpose** and this may be often expressed in the form of an "**underpinning principle**".*

*Outlines why the government is issuing the policy, and what its **desired effect** or **outcome** of the policy should be.*

*Principles and Statements have very **clear distinction**.*

*Principles are the "**Basis or Beliefs**" of the action or thinking ..... even if there is no strong scientific proof or data.*

*Upon "**believing**" in these principles, then the Policy Makers "**State**" what they **commit themselves to pursue**"*

***Statement** here becomes a "**clear message** announced to the audience saying that this is **what we want**"*

*Policy Principles are equivalent to the vision statements in corporate or strategic plans.*

#### 5. Policy Statements

*This is the key statement of the **Government's position**.*

*The **intent** of the policy should be stated in this section in the form of **simple** and **concise** statements.*

*The policy statement is used to designate a **straightforward statement or declaration** on a particular topic or topics.*

*Policy statements should aim to be **reasonably brief** and they should **have longevity** (i.e. not subject to continual amendment).*

*Keep the statements **general** enough in order to allow for **flexibility** and accommodation to unanticipated circumstances. Such statements usually are **short and concise** and do not include **background information or discussion relative to the policy**.*

*In general, these statements should **govern or guide the action** that will be taken.*

*It should state what is to be done, and **not** how it will be done.*

*Procedural or operational statements and excessive details should be **avoided** if possible.*

*A policy statement generally would **not quote facts and figures** developed by outside sources and would not utilize a bibliography.*

*Principles and Statements have very **clear distinction**.*

**Principles** are the "Basis or Believes" of the action or thinking ..... even if there is no strong scientific proof or data. Upon "believing" in these principles, then the Policy Makers "State" what they **commit themselves to pursue**" Statement here becomes a "clear message announced to the audience saying that this is what we want"

**Note:** Any analytical work and useful information on the policy statements may be forwarded when submitting the draft proposal for assessments by the Department of National Planning (NPD)

## 6. Policy Goals

Following on from the Underpinning Principle, a policy will also have "goals".

These goals describe the range of **desired outcomes** or what is to be achieved by implementing the policy.

A policy goal is a **broad statement of intent providing guidance for action**.

However the policy might have several goals not necessarily directly connected with the underpinning principle.

When there is a need to write a policy where none existed before, a worthwhile and appropriate place start by determining the underpinning principle and formulating goals.

There is always confusion about the difference between Goals and Objectives but they are not the same.

**Measurability** is always considered to be an important principle in setting objectives.

Objectives are usually **linked to one or more operational units** and are typically **short term**.

It is perfectly possible to write a policy that does not have measurable objectives and it will serve the country's need. Goals are probably sufficient enough.

Policy Objectives is the written guidance contained within the policy that helps the reader understand what they have to do in order to adhere to the policy.

This written guidance needs to **very well worded, unambiguous and clear**.

## 7. Applicability & Scope

Describes who the policy **affects** and which actions are **impacted** by the policy.

The applicability and scope may expressly exclude certain people, organizations, or actions from the policy requirements.

Applicability and scope is used to focus the policy on only the **desired targets**, and avoid unintended consequences where possible.

## 8. Policy Implementation

### I. Strategies

Strategies describe very broadly **how** policy goals can be achieved.

This is the detailed statement about **how to give effect to the policy statement**.

It is the 'how to' section that provides the standard way a matter must be handled.

**Note:** Strategies under "Policy Implementation" should not be mistaken as the strategies for the implementing of various activities, projects and programmes to meet the policy goals.

### II. Responsibility & Authority

Indicates which parties and organizations are **responsible** and have the **authority** for carrying out individual policy statements.

**Note:** It is advisable to avoid assigning the responsibility and authority to parties and organizations that are of short-term nature.

### III. Monitoring & Evaluation

Provides details on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans, clearly indicating the schedules and responsible parties. Policy Proponent and the Organization that has the authority and the responsibility of implementing the policy may carry out the M&E to assess the effectiveness of the policy after period of 3 to 5 years and use the findings at the next round of policy amendment. However, Department of National Planning (NPD) has the sole responsibility of carrying out the M&E either independently or in collaboration with the policy proponent.

**Note:** Monitoring & Evaluation under "Policy Implementation" should not be mistaken as the Monitoring & Evaluation for the implementing of various activities, projects and programmes to meet the policy goals.

## 9. Glossary

Provide definition for terms that have particular meaning or have a need for some interpretation related to the particular policy (i.e. unique to that policy).

Provide **clear and unambiguous** definitions for terms and concepts found in the policy document.

It should be used **sparingly** and it is not necessary to define common terms or to list terms where the meaning is self-evident. Policy authors should ensure that terms are used **consistently** across the policy suite and the Glossary function in the Policy system will progressively be developed and populated for that purpose.

## Annex

Provide a list of existing policies that have some relevance to the current policy.

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### Note

The followings may be useful at the assessment of the policy at the concept stage as well as the draft policy stage;

#### Overview of the Issue / Problem

- Include a clear description of the issue that needs to be addressed, including its implications if left unaddressed.
- Clearly identify the **root causes** of the issues.
- Wherever possible, provide **current trends** and literary reviews on similar cases (national or international).

#### Current Policy Options / Approaches

- Describe the options and approaches that are currently used to address the issue.
- A critique of the limitations or shortcomings of the current approaches should be stated.
- Describe why and how the current approaches are failing in a concise and succinct manner.

#### Recommended Options / Approaches

- List the range of **alternative** options recommended for addressing the issue.
- The **advantages** and **disadvantages** of each alternative should be clearly stated.
- Suggested approaches should be clear on whether they are targeted at the **root cause** of the issue or its **symptoms**.
- The most preferred alternative should also be identified.
- If any of the alternatives require changes in existing legislations or regulations it should be clearly stated.

#### Legislative Compliance

- State all existing legislations and regulations that **support** the current policy options or approaches.
  - All existing legislations should be reviewed to ensure contents within the proposed policy **do not conflict** with those legislations.
  - State if there are any **limitations** with the current legislations or regulations in addressing the issue.
  - Note:** The above may be forwarded when submitting the draft proposal for assessments and may not necessarily appear in the policy document.
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