

1. Impact Assessment and Appraisal: Guidance Checklist for Policymakers

(London, Cabinet Office, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2002)

What is it?

Policy decisions need to be informed by taking account of key issues and the needs of different groups, in order to deliver a fairer, more inclusive and more competitive society. The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit has compiled a web-based checklist that helps policymakers identify these issues and highlights available tools to help policymakers provide effective advice to ministers.

When is it used?

This guidance checklist is for use when you are first thinking about a policy proposal, as part of your ongoing work, and at the end of the policy process.

How does it work?

The checklist helps you to 'screen' for the potential impacts of your proposal by providing access to the most up-to-date guidance. If you decide that the issue or impact assessment is appropriate to your work you can just click on the underlined word for more detailed guidance. In most cases this will start with a summary page and a contact point in the relevant department or unit before leading into the main guidance. The list of impacts is not comprehensive, but covers most of the ground.

The following list summarises some of the methods and tools used by the UK Government for policy evaluation:

- **Costs and broad appraisal issues:** What are the broad objectives? These tend to be defined in economic and equity terms. The Treasury's Green Book provides useful guidelines on setting objectives. (see Tool 4)
- **Impact assessment**
 - Value for money: Will it affect the cost to the public and the quality of goods and services?
 - Access: Will it affect the public's ability to get hold of the goods or services they need or want?
 - Choice: Will it affect consumers' choice of goods and services?
 - Information: Will it affect the availability of accurate and useful information on the goods or services?
 - Fairness: Will it have a differential impact on some individuals or groups of consumers?
- **Regulatory impact assessment:** What impact does the policy have on businesses or the voluntary sector? (see Tool 5)
- **Public sector impacts:** What impact does your policy have on the public sector?
- **Quality of life:** In simple terms, this is sustainable development, including:
 - Social progress which recognises the needs of all.
 - Effective protection of the environment.
 - Prudent use of natural resources.
 - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- **Scientific evidence:** What does the balance of evidence suggest?
- **Risk, public health and safety:** What are the implications for the public (including vulnerable groups and the environment)?

- **Legal issues:** Is the policy legal?
- **Treaty obligations:** Is the suggested policy compatible with existing treaty obligations?
- **Devolved administration:** How does policy relate to the constitutional position and remits of devolved administrations?
- **Environmental appraisal:** Will there be an adverse impact?
- **Area implications:** Would the policy affect either directly or indirectly different groups of people living in different parts of the country (e.g. rural areas)?
- **Policy appraisal for equal treatment:** Would the policy affect either directly or indirectly different groups of people, for example, women, disabled people, older people, those from different ethnic groups?

Source and further information

Policyhub website: Impact Assessment and Appraisal: http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/bpmaking/impact_assessment_and_appraisal.asp