

Public policy

is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver desired outcomes, which means changes in the real world. The 'real world' is constantly changing and this has resulted in the movement towards greater use of evidence in policy design, making and implementation.

The foundation of public policy is composed of national constitutional laws and regulations. Furthermore, it includes both judicial interpretations and regulations which are generally authorized by legislation. Public policy is considered strong when it solves problems efficiently and effectively, serves and supports governmental institutions and policies, and encourages active citizenship.

Public policy focuses on the decisions that create the outputs of a political system, such as transport policies, the management of a public health service, the administration of education system and the organization of a defence force.

A part of public policy is also concerned with evaluating decision-making in governments and public bureaucracies.

Public policy making can be characterized as a dynamic, complex, and interactive system through which public problems are identified and resolved by creating new public policy or by reforming existing public policy.

Public problems can originate in endless ways and require different policy responses (such as regulations, subsidies, import quotas, and laws) on the local, national, or international level. The public problems that influence public policy making can be of economic, social, or political nature.

The Government holds a legal monopoly to initiate or threaten physical force to achieve its ends when necessary. And especially in times of emergency quick decision making is needed.

Public policy making is an exhausting and time-consuming 'policy cycle'.

The basic stages of policy cycle are as follows:

- a problem is identified,
- a policy response is formulated,
- the preferred solution is then selected and implemented,
- and finally the policy is evaluated – the evaluation stage takes an in depth look into what can be learnt from the process as a whole, whether the original problem has been solved, and if not, what is recommended as an alternative course of action. Thus, policy makers return to the very first step - the identification.

The large set of actors in the public policy process, such as politicians, civil servants, lobbyists, domain experts, and industry or sector representatives, use a variety of tactics and

tools to advance their aims, including advocating their positions publicly, attempting to educate supporters and opponents, and mobilizing allies on a particular issue.

Many actors can be important in the public policy process, but government officials ultimately choose public policy in response to the public issue or problem at hand. In doing so, government officials are expected to meet public sector ethics and take the needs of all people into account.

Public policy areas are, for example, these ones:

- Child and Family Policy
- Cultural Policy
- Economic Policy and Public Finance
- Education Policy
- Energy, Environmental, and Science Policy
- Health Policy
- International Policy
- Social Policy
- Urban Policy