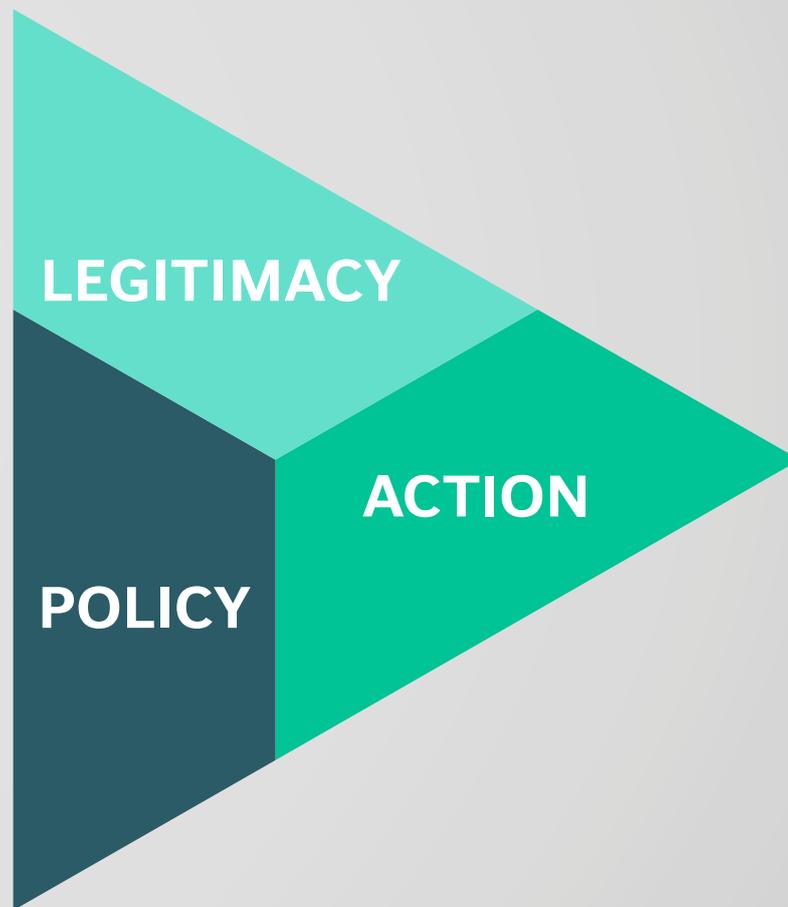




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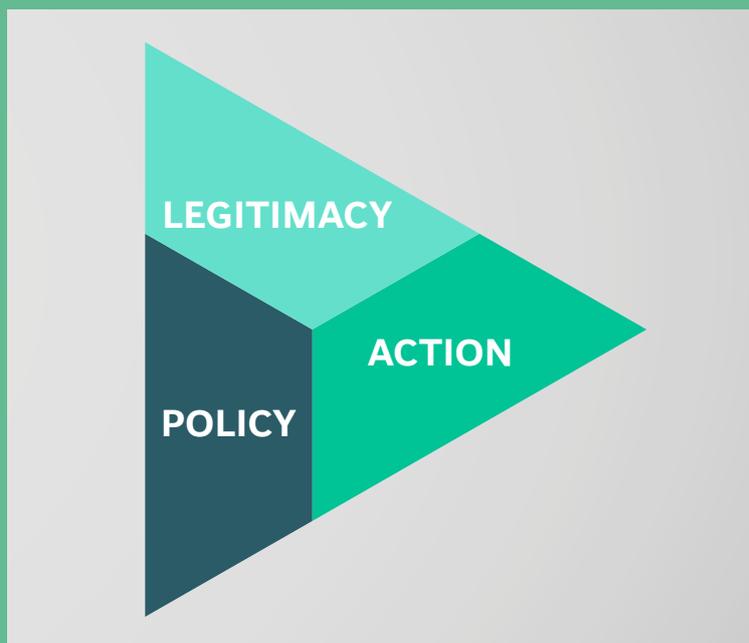


# The Public Impact Fundamentals

*Helping governments progress from  
idea to impact*

The Centre for Public Impact is a global not-for-profit foundation, funded by The Boston Consulting Group, dedicated to improving the positive impact of governments.

We bring together world leaders to learn, exchange ideas and inspire each other to strengthen the public impact of their organisations. Sharing insights from around the world, our global forums highlight what has worked and where challenges require new approaches.



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We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the team of scholars from the Hertie School of Governance who empirically tested the Public Impact Fundamentals against independent case studies. A special note of thanks to those who have supported us from the very start by being critical friends, as well as promoting our work, namely the Institute for Government, The World Bank, OECD and the UNDP.

Our final thanks go to members of the Centre for Public Impact team involved in this project: Joel Tito, Danny Buerkli, Nadine Smith, Matt Mercer, Amy Noonan and Harriet Loos.

# Forewords

## Adrian Brown

Impact – *public* impact – should be the lifeblood of any government. The hope and expectation of improved outcomes for citizens not only guides decisions at the ballot box but also helps power the machinery of public services day in, day out. So why is achieving it so difficult?

A glance at the news headlines can shed some light. In 2016 alone we've seen an international refugee crisis, geopolitical divisions, instability in the Middle East and beyond and economic challenges aplenty, all playing out across borders. Governments are also operating under a fierce media and regulatory spotlight, one that is buttressed by rising citizen expectations, budgetary pressures and megatrends – urban, demographic and digital – which are reshaping the world around us and rendering old practices obsolete.

But while so much is in flux, the need for results remains constant. That's why we at the Centre for Public Impact have worked with leading practitioners and academics from around the world to develop The Public Impact Fundamentals, a framework that sets out how governments can improve the results they achieve for citizens.

We have found that three things are fundamental to improved public impact: Legitimacy, Policy and Action. Legitimacy – the underlying support for a policy and the attempts to achieve it; Policy – the design quality of policies intended to achieve impact; and Action – translation of policies

into real-world effect. Mutually reinforcing, they collectively lead to improved public impact.

Governments need to be able to demonstrate their impact and how citizens benefit from it. While this is hardly a new ambition, it is increasingly a global imperative. Too often, government results have failed to achieve the right outcomes even when their policy idea was sound. This wastes time and money, and damages public trust in leaders and democracy. This is why improving public impact is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. We call on governments around the world to close their public impact gap.

There's no doubt that the transformations that surround us today will continue to proliferate. But while change continues anew, it is our hope that The Public Impact Fundamentals will act as a compass for public impact, helping governments – from country leaders to city mayors and local government – to improve the lives of citizens around the world both now and into the future.



**Adrian Brown**  
Executive Director  
Centre for Public Impact

## Mark Moore

Citizens of democratic societies have never have been entirely clear about who has the responsibility for improving the current and future performance of government.

Throughout our history, we have relied on the processes of representative government and democratic policymaking to define the ends and provide the means of government action. For the last century or so, we have also relied on a corps of professionals to provide expert guidance on the pursuit of agreed upon ends. And throughout, we have relied on the processes of democratic accountability – including the creation of audit capacities, different forms of citizen complaint mechanisms and the protection of an independent media – to produce information about past performance and create incentives for improved future performance.

Yet despite all of this apparatus, it is not clear that it has produced a government that is capable of achieving important goals, developing better means of achieving existing goals, or of changing goals in the face of new or emerging challenges.

I have spent my professional life developing concepts that can guide those with executive responsibility in government to perform better in that

role. “Better” not only in that government operations become fairer, more efficient and more effective but also in the sense that government becomes increasingly responsive to citizens. I can’t say that my effort has been entirely successful, but I’m still working on it.

What excites me about the ambition behind the CPI’s *Public Impact Fundamentals* is this: the continued desire to improve the practice of public management and to show citizens what effective public management looks like and requires of them in their varied roles as citizens, voters, taxpayers and clients.

A significant reason for my enthusiasm is that the *Public Impact Fundamentals* do, in fact, focus managerial attention on three key challenges: enhancing the democratic legitimacy of governmental activity; organising policymaking processes that can simultaneously build political legitimacy and make effective use of professional knowledge and evidence about performance; and deploying the varied tools of government to generate productive action across society to improve the quality of individual and collective life. (These basic ideas are closely aligned with the frameworks developed in my own work, and set out in *Creating Public Value and Recognizing Public Value*.)

Importantly, the *Public Impact Fundamentals* give due emphasis to building the legitimacy for government action among citizens, voters and taxpayers rather than among those who are better described as the clients and direct beneficiaries of government action. This differentiates them from many other frameworks developed in the private sector for application to the public sector.

This emphasis is justified practically in that government activities are financed by taxes raised and assigned through democratic processes. It is also justified philosophically – by the idea that any use of public authority or public money has to find favour with citizens, taxpayers and their elected representatives as well as satisfy the direct beneficiaries of government action.

Money, authority and moral authority are all used by government in advancing public purposes. That these three assets do not come from individual customers handing their money over the counter to producers is perhaps the main thing that distinguishes both government and non-profit management from commercial enterprises. In the world of government and the voluntary sector, it is the “third party payers” – not investors or customers – who sustain and judge the value of their activities.

The processes of building legitimacy through consultation and policymaking – and of using the mandates that emerge from these processes as a framework of accountability that can define, animate and guide the creation of public value – are as important a managerial task as using administrative tools to control the deployment of the assets in achieving the desired results.

Keeping pace with the times is one of government’s most important functions. And no doubt the *Public Impact Fundamentals* themselves will go through changes and iterations as practitioners and policymakers offer feedback and review. But while public administration will always be in a certain state of flux, the conversations around improving government performance will continue. So, too, will the drive for impact and better results.

As citizens, we shouldn’t want or expect it to be any other way.



Mark Moore is the Hauser Professor of Nonprofit Organizations, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, at The Harvard Kennedy School

## Sir Michael Barber

In my experiences in the UK, and subsequently helping administrations around the world improve their performance, I have always been struck by the sheer importance of good government. Their success – or otherwise – is fundamental to the prosperity and wellbeing of all of us, wherever we live.

Interacting with policymakers from Canada to Kurdistan, South Africa to Australia, has also left me with the firm conviction that the allure of public service still holds strong. The best and the brightest continue to flock to governments far and wide. Theirs is a shared ethos which overpowers the higher salaries or fast pace that might be on offer in the private sector.

And yet working in government remains one of the most challenging jobs that anyone can pursue. Challenges spring up on a daily – if not hourly – basis. Pressures abound. Systems can buckle all too easily. And it's all played out under a fierce 24/7 media spotlight.

That there is now frustration in many countries should come as little surprise. Frustration that public services aren't matching expectations. Frustration that taxpayers' money is being wasted. This frustration builds. It generates cynicism with the political process and democracy more generally – and this is very dangerous.

That's why *The Public Impact Fundamentals* are so crucial. A framework for helping governments achieve better results for citizens, the Fundamentals will be a powerful tool in the ongoing drive for better government performance worldwide. Few missions are as important.



Sir Michael Barber is Founder of Delivery Associates and co-Chairman of the Centre for Public Impact

# Executive Summary

## The context

Challenges are woven deeply through the complex tapestry that is modern policymaking. Governments are tasked with addressing difficulties ranging from geopolitical instability to fluctuating global growth, food security to climate change, all of which are easy to list but far more difficult to solve. At the same time, our world is undergoing rapid transformation. Nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and gene sequencing are just some of the many technologies helping make the impossible possible. Today, disruption is no longer a concept but a reality.

Governments are striving in many areas to keep up. We see examples of policymakers deploying new techniques such as behavioural insights and “Labs” – bespoke teams dedicated to creating new and better solutions – are becoming increasingly prevalent. Governments’ use of digital technology is also on the up – the days of having to stand in line to renew your passport or driving licence are now long gone in many countries.

And yet the OECD’s finding that trust in national governments across its countries was just 41.8% in 2014 compared with 45.2% in 2007 tells a story of hopes unfulfilled and expectations dashed. It also gives rise to fears that populations will become unwilling to support public institutions through taxation or to participate in the democratic process. Clearly, governments need to do much more to demonstrate their impact and how citizens benefit.

To help governments navigate their way from idea to impact, the Centre for Public Impact (CPI) has developed a framework for thinking about the elements that influence the success of government initiatives. The Public Impact Fundamentals will help governments improve their performance and achieve better results for citizens.

## The Public Impact Fundamentals

The Public Impact Fundamentals are a systematic attempt to understand what makes a successful policy outcome and describe what can be done to maximise the chances of achieving public impact. In developing them, we have worked closely

with the most senior academics from the world's leading public policy schools, as well as senior government officials from across the globe. We have sought to develop a framework underpinned by cutting-edge thinking from academia and tested by government officials so that it can be immediately usable.

We have found three components to be fundamental to public impact: Legitimacy, Policy and Action. Within each are three elements, which collectively contribute to performance on each Fundamental:



**LEGITIMACY**

**ACTION**

**POLICY**

# LEGITIMACY

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
POLITICAL COMMITMENT

# POLICY

CLEAR OBJECTIVES  
EVIDENCE  
FEASIBILITY

# ACTION

MANAGEMENT  
MEASUREMENT  
ALIGNMENT

## LEGITIMACY

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Legitimacy refers to the underlying support for a government or public body. Governments and bodies that are legitimate tend to be more successful in achieving impact. When it is absent, politicians are unable to draw on their mandate to push through initiatives. Legitimacy can also reduce the transaction costs of governing by reducing reliance on coercion and monitoring.

## POLICY

CLEAR OBJECTIVES  
EVIDENCE  
FEASIBILITY

The quality of the policy matters. Clear objectives, strong evidence and an understanding of what is feasible are crucial to good policy. Ideally, policymakers will accumulate information, assess alternative courses of action, and choose among them on the basis of their potential to achieve the decision-makers' goals.

## ACTION

MANAGEMENT  
MEASUREMENT  
ALIGNMENT

Action is the translation of policies into real-world effects. Despite its importance, it is often the most neglected of our Fundamentals. It is important to note that Action does not constitute impact. A policy may be implemented effectively but fail to have a substantial impact because it was ill-conceived or because of other circumstances. Hence, successful action may be a necessary – but not sufficient – condition for the attainment of public impact.

### 1. Public confidence

Public confidence refers to the extent to which the general public trusts institutions to act competently and in support of the wider public interest. Public confidence in one's government or its institutions may be the most consequential element of legitimacy, in the sense that if it is undermined then more cataclysmic or large-scale changes in a society are possible.

### 2. Stakeholder engagement

Engaging stakeholders in the debate on policy design, development and implementation is crucial to achieving good outcomes. Effective stakeholder engagement starts with a clear objective for consultation, followed by the identification of people and organisations with a specific interest in the initiative. This allows policymakers to understand stakeholders, their roles and divergent interests.

### 3. Political commitment

The willingness of political leaders to spend political capital in support of the policy objective directly influences legitimacy. When there is active political opposition to a policy it affects the perceived legitimacy of an initiative. This makes it harder to achieve impact.

### 1. Clear objectives

Setting clear objectives during the early stage of design is crucial to developing good policy. They are important in defining the borders of policy because they allow for specific problems to be selected and prioritised. The inclusion of targets or indicators is particularly beneficial when setting objectives because they increase the pressure on governments, bureaucracies and civil society and lead to a greater focus on continuous improvement.

### 2. Evidence

Identifying good evidence is crucial because it allows policymakers to assess the nature and extent of a problem and weigh up the particular features of the policy situation, such as demographic changes. They can then judge those policies that may have been effective in similar situations.

### 3. Feasibility

Feasibility refers to the absence of significant technical, legal or operational challenges to the policy. A policy initiative is more likely to achieve its intended outcomes when the question of *how* the policy is to be implemented has been an integral part of its design. Proper planning provides a map of how an initiative will be implemented, addressing matters such as timeframe, phases of implementation, responsibilities, resourcing and compliance.

### 1. Management

Management allows policymakers to assess whether the most appropriate systems are in place, the right people with relevant skill sets are matched to appropriate tasks, and interventions are structured in an effective manner. This process involves measurement, analysis, feedback, evaluation, calibration and adjustment. Successful implementation relies on the identification and management of risk, which promotes accurate, well-informed judgements.

### 2. Measurement

Measurement is the main tool of implementation. It can dramatically improve service quality in public agencies, and it allows for feedback loops that enable the timely adjustment of policy to facilitate successful implementation. Public managers and civil servants should begin by deciding on the managerial purposes to which performance measurement may contribute. Only then can they select a set of performance measures with the characteristics necessary to help them achieve these purposes.

### 3. Alignment

The actors required to make change happen need to share an alignment of interests in relation to the policy objective. To this end, coordination is fundamental to the development of a sense of shared mission. When actors cooperate effectively, when they are equipped to execute their part of the initiative and are highly motivated, implementation tends to be more successful. It is therefore clear that alignment is a significant contributing factor to successful action.

# The Public Impact Fundamentals

## A complex problem

“Government”. Few words resonate as strongly around the world. It is a constant presence, influencing and underpinning all walks of life and indispensable to solving many of society’s greatest problems. From the construction of a new well to the global eradication of polio, governments can have an enormous impact on the lives of citizens. However, it is clear that when it comes to outcomes that matter for citizens, governments can – and should – do better.

*“Too often, public policy is a process of simply lurching forward from crisis to crisis. I’m doing crisis management every day and it is very difficult to get up into a position where I can survey the entire battlefield, because I tend to be down in the trenches fighting. From a management perspective you have to be able to get above it and see the big picture.”*

Annise Parker  
Former three term Mayor of Houston, Texas

We believe that the touchstone for any government should be the results it achieves for its citizens: its public impact. In our work, we routinely see the effects of the gap between what governments achieve and what they could achieve. The consequences of this gap are significant – people’s livelihoods are jeopardised, services aren’t delivered and public funds are wasted. This leads to diminishing confidence in governments and an

increasing number of citizens who have lost faith in government’s ability to make a meaningful and positive difference to people’s lives. Against this backdrop, it is clear that governments need to improve their public impact.

Sounds great. So what’s stopping them?

## With no easy answer

Naturally, achieving public impact is complicated, and the reality of being involved in the delivery of frontline services is not capable of reduction to simple formula. The practitioners we talk to agree on one thing: there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Governments must adapt processes to different contexts, institutional backgrounds and cultures if they are to achieve targets and positive outcomes.

We believe that policymakers’ lives are made more difficult by a lack of agreement about precisely what influences the impact of government initiatives. A further complication is that it’s not

*“Policymaking is rarely a neat process and seldom systematic. It’s an environment that unfortunately leaves scant time for pausing to evaluate how well new initiatives are working or whether there might have been a better way to roll out a particular policy.”*

Former UK Cabinet Secretary  
Lord Gus O’Donnell

always clear what people mean by “public impact”. The term is broadly used when attempting to measure the achievements of government, but there is no consensus on what constitutes success.

## How we can help

We have sought to assist policymakers by developing the **Public Impact Fundamentals** (see figure 2), a systematic attempt to understand the elements of successful policies and describe what can be done to maximise the chances of achieving public impact. They are intended to provide a structured method for making targeted interventions and increasing the chances of success. In this way, they can be seen as a maximisation tool: increasing performance on any single element increases the chances of a positive outcome, even if all other elements are held constant. They can also be used as a differentiation tool, which allows policymakers to assess the likely performance of a number of alternative worlds and pick the initiative that stands the best chance of succeeding.

*Day to day in government, the ability to distinguish between a programme that is having a hugely positive impact and one that is having a moderate impact is difficult. The way governments are set up means we don't usually have the capacity to do this very well.*

Matthew Mendelsohn, Head of Canada's Results and Delivery Directorate

As with all work of this nature, the way in which the Public Impact Fundamentals will be used will be dependent on context. We did not develop the Fundamentals with the view to it being a universal and prescriptive list – instead we are interested to see whether they are consistent with the day-to-day activities of practitioners. We anticipate that once they are deployed in real world scenarios, new and interesting uses will develop. Practitioners might find the Public Impact Fundamentals useful for self-assessments, forward planning or progress tracking. We look forward to working with policymakers to refine the uses of the Public Impact Fundamentals.

## How did we develop the Public Impact Fundamentals?

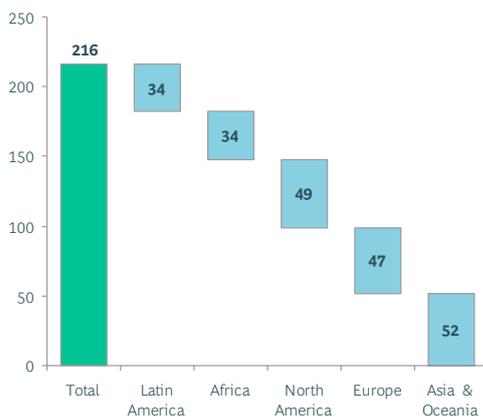
In developing our approach, we have worked with distinguished academics from the world's leading public policy schools as well as senior government officials from across the globe. We have also rigorously tested our work by collaborating with academics from the Hertie School of Governance. Our intention has been to develop a framework that not only represents the most cutting-edge academic work but is also immediately usable by government officials from central to local administrations as well as international organisations. In this way,

the Public Impact Fundamentals provide a bridge between the world's leading thinkers in this area and the frontline staff who are engaged in delivering government services day after day.

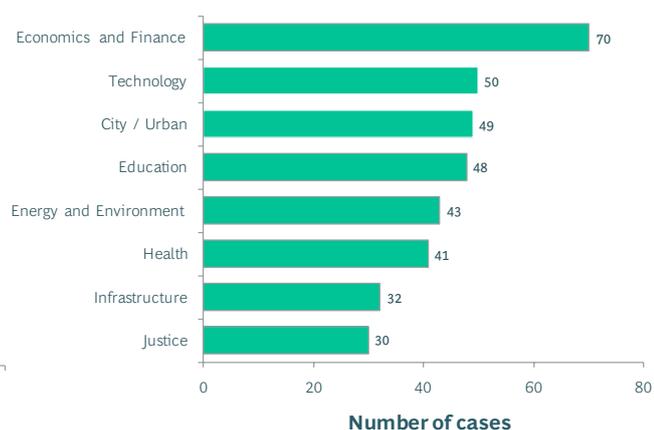
We developed this framework using two methods. The first involved an analysis of academic writing<sup>1</sup> and an identification of the common themes in the literature. The second method involved an analysis of over 200 cases of public policies (many of which are now online on the Public Impact Observatory) from across the world and in various policy areas in order to understand the elements that contributed to their success.

Figure 1

### Cases from around the world...



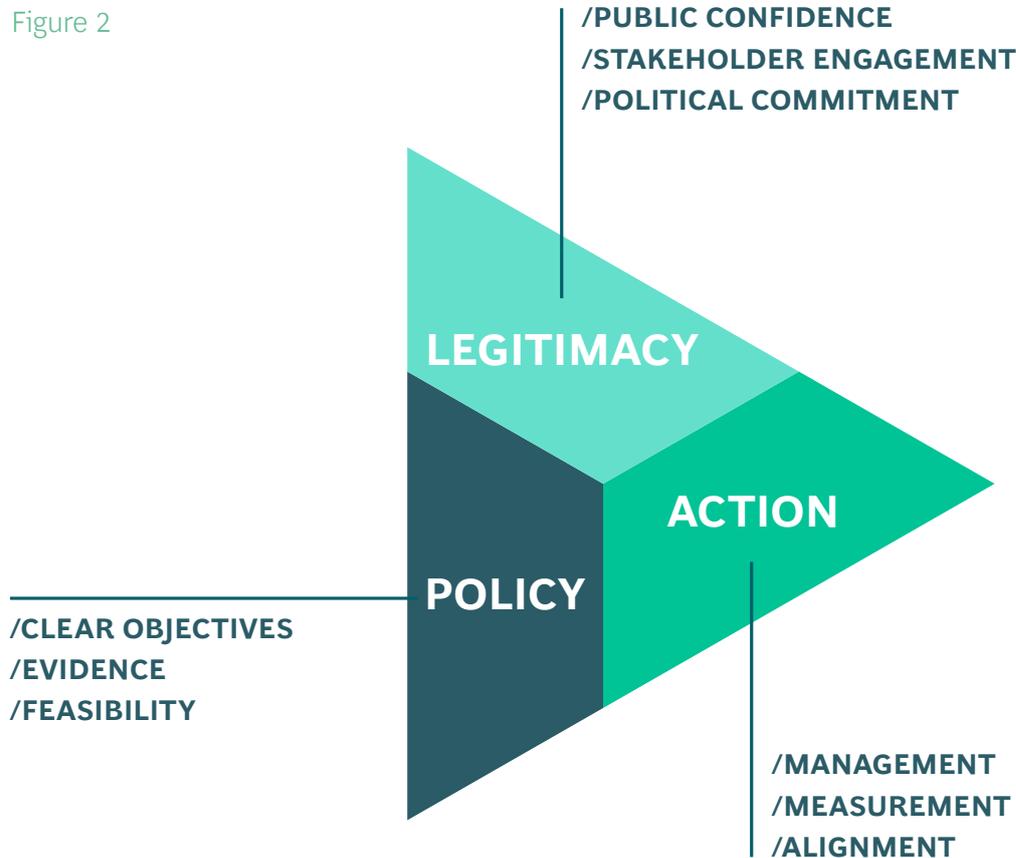
### ... relating to various policy areas



1 See, for example, Bardach, E. and Patashnik, E.M., *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (2012) CQ Press; Cairney, P., *How Can Policy Theory Have an Impact on Policy Making?* (2013) International Conference on Public Policy; Cochran, C.E., Mayer, L.C., Carr, T.R., Cayer, N.J., McKenzie, M. and Peck, L., *American Public Policy: An Introduction, 11th Edition* (2016) Cengage Learning; Dunn, W., *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction* (2011) Pearson; Hulme, D., Savoia, A. and Sen, J., *Governance as a global development goal? Setting, measuring and monitoring the Post-2015 Development Agenda* (2014) Effective States and Inclusive Development; Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A. and Zoido-Lobaton, P., *Governance matters* (1999) The World Bank; Theodoulou, S.Z. and Cahn, M.A., *Public Policy: The Essential Readings* (2013) Pearson; and Young, J., Shaxson, L., Jones, H., Hearn, S., Datta, A. and Cassidy, C., *A Guide to Policy Engagement and Influence* (2015) Overseas Development Institute.

## Public Impact

Figure 2



Our work has found that three things are fundamental to public impact: **Legitimacy, Policy and Action.** These Public Impact Fundamentals are each supported by three elements, which collectively contribute to performance on each Fundamental (see Figure 2).

We partnered with a team of scholars from the Hertie School of Governance to empirically test the Public Impact Fundamentals against independent

case studies. The test examined the relationship between good performance on each of the elements and the likelihood of public impact. The scholars developed a methodology that allowed them to code performance on each of the nine elements of the Public Impact Fundamentals and, separately, evaluate the public impact of each case. Their analysis identified positive correlations between better performance in the elements and increased public impact.

*Good policy – policy that achieves desired ends in cost effective ways – is rarely technically easy and can sometimes be politically challenging. If a policy is to be effective and seen to be so, thus garnering broad support, a case must be made that is both well founded and based on engagement with stakeholders. This is not rocket science, but it is often neglected. The three components that constitute the Public Impact Fundamentals, and their nine constituent elements in particular, provide a ready checklist of wide applicability for policymakers. Finding a way of institutionalising these, akin to Regulation Impact Assessment requirements, could prove a useful safeguard against poor policy decisions.*

Professor Gary Banks  
Chief Executive and Dean of Australia and New Zealand School of Government

The Public Impact Fundamentals are also intended to be used as a checklist for practitioners. Our work has shown that the better an initiative performs on each of the elements, the higher the chances of its successfully achieving public impact. In this way, the Public Impact Fundamentals are a “**maximisation framework**”: it allows one to focus on targeted interventions that can improve performance in any of the nine elements and thereby maximise the potential for an initiative to have a positive public impact.

The Public Impact Fundamentals are mutually reinforcing: better performance in one element creates the enabling environment for better performance in others. In this way, they provide a tangible method for working towards successful outcomes. Even if policymakers can only influence one element of the Fundamentals, the relationship between each element means that even working on this one element can increase the likelihood of success.

### Public Impact Observatory

Using the framework of the Public Impact Fundamentals, CPI developed the Public Impact Observatory, a comprehensive database of case studies of public sector initiatives. These case studies cover different regions of the world and eight key themes: city/urban, economic/finance, education, energy/environment, health, infrastructure, justice, and technology. Each study outlines the challenge that a public body sought to address, along with its objectives, methodology and impact, and evaluates the initiative using the nine elements of the Public Impact Fundamentals. Each element is given a rating on a four-point scale ranging from weak to strong.

# LEGITIMACY

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
POLITICAL COMMITMENT

## Legitimacy

Legitimacy refers to the underlying support for a government or public body

*Unlike many other frameworks developed in the private sector for application to the public sector, the Public Impact Fundamentals rightly give proper emphasis to building legitimacy among citizens and elected representatives. This emphasis is justified practically by the fact government activities are financed through taxes raised and assigned through democratic processes, and philosophically by the idea that any use of public authority or public dollars has to find favour with citizens, taxpayers, and their elected representatives as well as satisfy direct beneficiaries of government action. The processes of building legitimacy through consultation and policymaking, and of using the mandates that emerge from these processes as a framework of accountability that can define, animate, and guide the creation of public value is as important a managerial task as using administrative tools to control the deployment of the assets in achieving desired results.*

Mark Moore

Hauser Professor of Nonprofit Organizations,  
Ash Center for Democratic Governance and  
Innovation, Harvard Kennedy School

Legitimacy ordinarily involves popular approval of a government and its governors or, at least, an acceptance of their right to rule.<sup>2</sup> People confer legitimacy on institutions not simply because of an adherence to standards of good behaviour but because they regard the institutions as representing particular

normative and ethical frameworks.<sup>3</sup> Conferring legitimacy on an institution is therefore an act based on the expression of shared values, or of “moral alignment”. Institutional legitimacy flows not simply from factors such as procedural fairness but is also based in public perceptions that authorities share broadly similar moral positions.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of legitimacy to public impact is therefore clear – when it is absent, it can lead to tension between members of both dominant and nondominant groups and lead to intergroup conflict. When combined with instability, a lack of legitimacy becomes a powerful incitement for attempts to change the status quo.<sup>5</sup> The widespread existence of legitimating beliefs can also reduce the transaction costs of governing by reducing reliance on coercion and monitoring. This leads to an increased likelihood of compliance with governmental rules and regulations. Accordingly, governments and bodies that are legitimate tend to be more successful in achieving impact.

Our research demonstrates that legitimacy is influenced by three elements:

1. **Public confidence**
2. **Stakeholder engagement**
3. **Political commitment**

2 Levi, M. and Sacks, A., Legitimizing beliefs: Sources and indicators, (2009) Regulation & Governance Journal.

3 Beetham, D., The Legitimation of Power (1991) Palgrave

4 Hough, M., Jackson, J., Bradford, B., Myhill, A. and Quinton, P., Procedural Justice, Trust and Institutional Legitimacy (2010) Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, 4/3: 203—210

5 Tajfel, H., Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, p. 52(1982) Annual Review of Psychology, Vol. 33: 1-39

## Public confidence

Public confidence refers to the extent to which the general public trusts the institutions involved in policymaking to act competently and in support of the wider public interest. Trustworthy government helps promote social trust and the cooperative behaviours that support democracy. Public confidence in one's government or its institutions may be the most consequential element of legitimacy, in the sense that if it is undermined then more cataclysmic or large-scale changes in a society are possible.<sup>6</sup>

An example of the importance of public confidence is shown in a case study of New Zealand's meningococcal B immunisation programme. In the 1990s, New Zealand suffered a major epidemic of meningococcal disease. It resulted in nearly 250 deaths and left many of the

survivors with serious disabilities. In 2004, the country's Ministry of Health began an immunisation programme using a specially developed vaccine, and by 2007 the epidemic had been halted and the number of cases significantly reduced.

Public confidence in the immunisation programme was crucial to its success. There was a high level of public acceptance of the need for the intervention and there was no widespread public concern regarding the safety of the vaccine. The vaccination campaign was rolled out in phases, with the highest-risk areas offered immunisation first and, once the vaccine was shown to be safe and effective in these areas, lower risk areas were vaccinated. This was done alongside a public information campaign. The public acceptance of the programme ensured a speedy and successful resolution of the epidemic.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Levi, M. and Stoker, L., Political trust and trustworthiness (2000) Annual Review of Political Science 3: 475–507

7 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

## Stakeholder engagement

The procedural steps taken by authoritative decision-makers during the policy cycle can affect both stakeholders' and the public's perception of a policy's legitimacy.<sup>11</sup> Factors such as the emotive appeals made to gain support for an initiative and the processes of stakeholder involvement shape the legitimacy of public policies and the governments that promote them.<sup>12</sup> Fostering a relationship between policymakers and stakeholders can also improve the fit between an original policy and the delivery of public services.<sup>13</sup>

Engaging stakeholders in the debate on policy design, development and implementation is therefore crucial to achieving good outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Effective stakeholder engagement starts with a clear objective for consultation, followed by the identification of people and organisations with a clear interest in the initiative. This allows policymakers to understand stakeholders, their roles and divergent interests. Seeking cooperation between these interests avoids problems of coordination and organisation in pursuing policy objectives.<sup>15</sup> To this end, it may be necessary to draw on people with

*In many citizens' minds, government has faded away from their day-to-day lives. It's no longer seen as relevant. This means people no longer see evidence of government as a force for something immediately positive. They don't see it; they don't feel its relevance; and therefore government loses some of its legitimacy.*

*It is therefore, fundamentally important for governments to re-connect with citizens in order to regain social license by affirming and directly linking relevance, impact and legitimacy – which is where stakeholder engagement comes in. Government needs to use engagement with stakeholder groups to communicate and reiterate its positive role in creating a strong society and economy. A stronger relationship between government and citizens will then follow.*

Maryantonett Flumian, President of the Institute on Governance, Canada

a wide range of competencies throughout the engagement process, such as skilled political enablers, storytellers, networkers and engineers.<sup>16</sup>

In Ghana, for example, stakeholder engagement ensured an orderly presidential election in 2008. The Ghanaian Electoral Commission

8 Klitgaard, R. and Light, P.C., High Performance Government: Structure, Leadership, Incentives (2005) RAND

9 Mintzberg, H., Power In and Around Organizations (1983) Prentice-Hall

10 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

11 Howlett, M., From the 'old' to the 'new' policy design: design thinking beyond markets and collaborative governance (2014) Policy Science

12 Wallner, J., Legitimacy and Public Policy: Seeing Beyond Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Performance (2008)

13 Mintrom, M. and Luetjens, J. Creating Public Value: Tightening Connections between Policy Design and Public Management (2015) Policy Studies Journal.

engaged national and international NGOs to monitor voting, set up a task force to ensure safety and security at polling stations, investigated electoral registrations and initiated public awareness campaigns. The outcome was a transparent, peaceful election whose result was not contested.<sup>17</sup>

### Political commitment

Reforms require both political will and analytical acumen.<sup>8</sup> The willingness of political leaders to spend political capital in support of the policy objective directly influences legitimacy.<sup>9</sup> Political leaders may leverage their influence to build consensus in favour of a policy objective and through their decision to be affiliated with a policy have an impact on the likelihood of its success. When there is active political opposition to a policy it affects the perceived legitimacy of an initiative. What follows is decreased trust in the need for the policy or a lack of legitimacy for the organisations charged with delivering it. This makes it harder to achieve impact.

A good case study example is the successful anti-corruption initiative in the police force of Bihar, India. Nitish Kumar was elected as chief minister of Bihar, India's poorest state, in 2005

with a mandate to reform the police and address the high levels of crime and unrest. He restructured the force and recruited an able group of army veterans, senior law enforcers and administrators to revitalise the state government and strengthen crime prevention. The initiatives were strongly backed by Kumar himself and he was directly involved in attracting experienced administrators and police to Bihar. Kumar also took pains to insulate the police from political interference. Buoyed by the chief minister's support, the police force became an effective law enforcement agency with the equipment, resources and autonomy required to carry out its duties. The result was a significant decrease in violent crimes such as homicide (36%), banditry (53%) and kidnapping (77%).<sup>10</sup>

14 Riege, A., Knowledge management in the public sector: stakeholder partnerships in the public policy development (2006) *Journal of Knowledge Management*

15 Jacobs, A., and Matthews, J.S., Why Do Citizens Discount the Future? Public Opinion and the Timing of Policy Consequences (2012) *British Journal of Political Science* 42-4: 903-935

16 Young, J. et al. (2015)

17 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

# POLICY

CLEAR OBJECTIVES

EVIDENCE

FEASIBILITY

## Policy

Clear objectives, strong evidence and an understanding of what is feasible are crucial to good policy

The quality of the policy matters. Clear objectives, strong evidence and an understanding of what is feasible are crucial to good policy. Any reform, will almost certainly upset the equilibrium of the existing policy mix and will, depending on its characteristics, set in motion a number of different responses. Some will occur in the public arena, others will be largely played out in a bureaucratic context. Some responses will have only a minor impact on effective implementation, while others will bring the pursuit of the new policy into question or may even threaten the government's very existence.

The extent to which the costs and benefits of a reform are dispersed or concentrated, its technical and administrative content, and the length of time taken for its results to become apparent – these are significant characteristics of policy and organisational reform that determine the nature of the conflicts that will emerge during implementation.

They also signal the kind of resources needed by reform advocates to sustain the policy or organisational initiative.<sup>18</sup>

There are various models that offer theories about the impact of policy on the change process. The political sciences literature has focused on analysing decision-making within the organisational context of the

state. As such, it takes as a principal unit of analysis the individual or organisation responsible for making decisions.<sup>19</sup> Much of the discussion of policy has thus revolved around the following question: to what extent can policymakers be considered rational actors who accumulate information, assess alternative courses of action and choose among them on the basis of their potential to achieve the decision-makers' preferences?<sup>20</sup>

Picking the policy that will have the greatest impact is undoubtedly a complex problem. In our work, we found that there were three elements that increased the likelihood of designing a policy that had the greatest chance of success:

1. Clear objectives
2. Evidence
2. Feasibility

*Government is always going to be underfunded and there are always going to be distractions or emergencies. But by having the appropriate vision around your initiatives you can keep focused even as you have to deal with different things. You have to deal with them well, but you also have to keep everyone focused on the longer-term goals that you're trying to achieve.*

John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado

18 Grindle, M.S. and Thomas, J.W., Policy makers, policy choices, and policy outcomes: The political economy of reform in developing countries (1989), Policy Science 22: 213

19 Grindle and Thomas (1989)

20 See Allison, G.T., Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (1971), Frohock, F.M., Public policy: scope and logic (1979); Killick, T., The possibilities of development planning (1976), Oxford Economic Papers, 28(2); March, J.G. Bounded Rationality, Ambiguity, and the Engineering of Choice (1978) Bell Journal of Economics, 9: 587–608; and Robinson, J.A. and Majak, R.R., The Theory of Decision-Making in Charlesworth, J.C. (ed.), Contemporary Political Analysis (1967)

## Clear objectives

Setting clear objectives in the early stage of design is crucial to developing good policy. They are important in defining the borders of policy because they allow for specific problems to be selected and prioritised by local actors.<sup>21</sup> To this end, the objectives of a policy should reveal why the change is being proposed, who it will affect, what needs to be done about it, and where one actor stands in relation to others who are also trying to bring about change.<sup>22</sup>

The inclusion of targets or indicators is particularly important when setting objectives. Targets increase the pressure on governments, bureaucracies and civil society<sup>23</sup> and lead to a greater focus on continuous improvement.<sup>24</sup>

One example of the importance of clear objectives can be seen in the case of Mexico City's ProAire programme. Of the 20 megacities whose air quality was measured by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN in 1992, Mexico City had the highest levels of pollution. The city administration and the

*When it comes to shaping sustainable solutions, some of that relates to finances but there's more to the story. If you don't have clear targets, or a sense for 'better' you might lose track of your goals. And it really is true that if you can't measure something, you will struggle to manage it.*

Melanie Walker, Director of the President's Delivery Unit and Senior Advisor to President Jim Yong Kim at the World Bank Group

Mexican government responded to these levels by initiating ProAire, a programme to address pollution on several fronts, including reducing industrial and automobile emissions, raising public awareness, and promoting cleantech and green methods of transport.

The objectives of ProAire were clear and measurable and were maintained throughout its implementation. Within four years Mexico City had surpassed its carbon emissions target reduction of 7 million tonnes, and in 2013 it won the Siemens Climate Leadership Award for Air Quality.<sup>25</sup>

21 Andrews, M., Pritchett, L. and Woolcock, M., The Challenge of Building (Real) State Capability (2015) Center for International Development at Harvard University

22 Young et al. (2015)

23 Foresti, M., Wild, L., Takeuchi, L.R. and Norton, A., Governance targets and indicators for post 2015 (2014)

24 Hulme et al. (2014)

25 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

*Political leaders struggling to deliver on their promises is nothing new – a look through the history books showcases stories of kings and emperors, presidents and prime ministers, seeking to improve the lives of their citizens and very often coming up short. Although huge government departments should – in theory at least – enable these leaders to deliver positive outcomes for citizens, they frequently become barriers to implementation.*

*Overcoming these hurdles requires not only the setting of priorities and ambition – both key ingredients for transformation – but also defining what outcome is actually intended. Although the setting of targets can leave one open to charges of “control freakery” or “top-down command and control”, if the definition of success is not clear then the direction of travel will likely veer off course.*

Sir Michael Barber, former Head of the UK Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit

## Evidence

By gathering evidence on what works, governments can design policies that best fit the circumstances in which they are to be implemented.<sup>26</sup> This requires the collection of information, data, examples and frameworks that allow policymakers to tackle a problem on the basis of the best evidence and to devise optimal solutions.<sup>27</sup>

Naturally, the policy process is not that simple: studies of the use of evidence in policymaking show that context is a central factor in determining appropriateness.<sup>28</sup> “Evidence” is unlikely to be neutral and unproblematic: its definition is part of the policy process and depends heavily on context. What is clear, however, is that identifying good evidence is crucial to good policy because it allows policymakers to: (1) assess the nature and extent of a problem; (2) assess the particular features of the policy situation, for example, demographic changes; and (3) assess policies that may have proved effective in similar situations.<sup>29</sup>

In New Zealand, for example, the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), or cot death, was higher in the 1980s than in any other developed country. A case-control study was conducted from 1987 to 1990 which demonstrated that there were three main risk factors for SIDS: the sleeping position of the infant, maternal smoking, and a lack of breastfeeding. In 1991, the Department of Health initiated a prevention programme which focused on these three areas and had an almost immediate impact, with a halving of the SIDS mortality rate within two years.<sup>30</sup>

26 Wesselink, A., Colebatch, H. and Pearce, W., Evidence and policy: discourses, meanings and practices (2014) Policy Sciences

27 Klitgaard, R., Policy Analysis and Evaluation (2013); Deeming, C., Trials and Tribulations: The ‘Use’ (and ‘Misuse’) of Evidence in Public Policy (2013) Social Policy and Administration

28 Wesselink et al. (2014)

29 Bardach and Patashnik (2012)

30 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

## Feasibility

Feasibility refers to absence of significant technical, legal or operational challenges to the policy. A policy initiative is more likely to achieve its intended outcomes when the question of how the policy is to be implemented has been an integral part of its design.<sup>31</sup> To ensure the feasibility of a proposed policy, broad sets of actors should be engaged to ensure that the policy is viable and implementable.<sup>32</sup> Proper planning provides a map of how an initiative will be implemented, addressing matters such as timeframe, phases of implementation, responsibilities, resourcing and compliance.<sup>33</sup>

The WHO's response to the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa demonstrates the importance of feasibility studies. The WHO, with 11 West African nations, developed an Outbreak Response Plan to control the transmission and spread of Ebola.

The financial feasibility of the proposals, as well as the economic recovery plans for the three countries most affected, were addressed by the relevant NGOs. The plan also identified a precise amount of finance required, and the World Bank mobilised funding from the International Development Alliance and the International Finance Corporation. The health-based response was based on previous initiatives and the knowledge and experience of the national ministries of health and the health NGOs. In January 2016, the WHO was able to declare the end of the outbreak.

*One of the biggest legacies of the introduction of behavioural sciences into government is that it has made credible the experimental approach. To incorporate experimental methods deeply into policymaking is a fundamental game-changer. We're kind of in the dark ages on most policy and professional practices, and apart from a tiny percentage we don't really know if things are truly effective, and we certainly don't know if a small variation would make things more effective.*

David Halpern, Chief Executive of the UK's Behavioural Sciences Team

31 Australian National Audit Office, Successful Implementation of Policy Initiatives: Best Practice Guide (2014)

32 Andrews et al. (2015)

33 Australian National Audit Office (2014)

# ACTION

MANAGEMENT  
MEASUREMENT  
ALIGNMENT

## Action

Action is the translation of policies into  
real-world effect

Despite its importance, action is often the most neglected of our Fundamentals. This neglect is due in part to the assumption that “once a policy has been ‘made’ by a government, the policy will be implemented and the desired results of the policy will be near those expected by the policymakers”.<sup>34</sup> The implementation process is assumed to be a series of mundane decisions and interactions unworthy of the attention of those seeking the heady stuff of politics. Most of the crucial policy issues are often seen to have been resolved in the prior decisions of executives, legislators, and judges.<sup>35</sup>

This leads to different definitions of the concept. Some see it as the actions of public and private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set out in previous policy decisions.<sup>36</sup> Others focus on whether an organisation can bring together people and material in a cohesive unit and motivate them to carry out stated objectives.<sup>37</sup>

Although action is fundamental to public impact, it is important to draw a clear distinction between the two. **Action does not constitute impact.** The study of impact searches for the consequences

of a policy decision.<sup>38</sup> For example, do disadvantaged children improve their reading or maths skills as a consequence of an innovative education programme? In this way, those investigating impact typically ask: “what happened?”

By contrast, those studying action will focus on activities that affect the rendering of public services,<sup>39</sup> and they will be asking: “why did it happen this way?”<sup>40</sup> A policy may be implemented effectively but fail to have a substantial impact because it was ill-conceived – or because of other circumstances. Hence, successful action may be a necessary – but not sufficient – condition for the attainment of public impact.

We have found that three elements tend to contribute to good action:

1. Management
2. Measurement
3. Alignment

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34 Smith, T., *The Policy Implementation Process*, (1973) *Policy Sciences* 4.2, pp. 197-8

35 Van Meter, D.S. and Van Horn, C.E., *The Policy Implementation Process* (1975)

36 Van Meter and Van Horn (1975)

37 Williams, W., *Social Policy Research and Analysis*, (1971), Elsevier Publishers p. 144

38 Dolbeare K.M. and Hammond P.E., *The School Prayer Decisions: From Court Policy to Local Practice* (1971) University of Chicago Press

## Management

Management refers to the extent to which mechanisms are implemented to ensure that progress is made. It allows policymakers to assess whether the most appropriate systems are in place, the right people with relevant skill sets matched to appropriate tasks, and the interventions structured in an effective manner.<sup>41</sup> This process involves measurement, analysis, feedback, evaluation, calibration and adjustment.<sup>42</sup> Successful implementation relies on the identification and management of risk, which promotes accurate, well-informed judgements.<sup>43</sup>

Active leadership is essential to good management,<sup>44</sup> and a leadership team's initial objective is to develop an appropriate performance strategy. This will involve employees, collaborators and citizens in achieving a specific public purpose or, alternatively, in eliminating or mitigating an important performance deficit that is preventing them from achieving their purpose.<sup>45</sup>

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39 Van Meter and Van Horn (1975)

40 Van Meter and Van Horn (1975)

41 Young et al. (2015)

42 Australian National Audit Office (2014)

43 Australian National Audit Office (2014)

44 Metzenbaum, S., Performance Management: The Real Research Challenge (2013) Public Administration Review; Bouckaert, G. et al., The Coordination of Public Sector Organizations: Shifting Patterns of Public Management (2010) Palgrave Macmillan

45 Behn, R.D., On Why All Public Officials Need to Follow the Basic Rule: Always Start with Purpose (2013) Harvard University, Performance Leadership Report

Madagascar's 2005 primary education programme demonstrates the importance of management. Primary school education in Madagascar had been plagued by underachievement and low levels of literacy and numeracy. To address the problem, in 2005 the Madagascar Ministry of Education partnered with J-PAL, an anti-poverty NGO, in a new programme, Improving Education Management in Madagascar (AGEMAD).

The function of AGEMAD was to trial interventions at different levels of educational management, from district administration to individual primary schools. The programme's objectives were to improve the educational performance of primary school pupils, increase school attendance, reduce the number of pupils who repeated school years, and raise pupil test scores.

There was a well-defined, hierarchical management structure. Each district administrator managed an average of 14 sub-district administrators, and each sub-district administrator was responsible for about 10 school directors who managed three teachers and 177 students on average. A separate team was hired and

trained to implement the AGEMAD interventions in order to adhere to the strict requirements for implementation and data collection. As a result of AGEMAD, school attendance increased by 87%, the number of pupils repeating school years was reduced and their test scores were significantly higher.<sup>46</sup>

## Measurement

Measurement is the main tool of implementation.<sup>47</sup> It can dramatically improve service quality in public agencies<sup>48</sup> and allows for feedback loops that enable the timely adjustment of policy to facilitate successful implementation.<sup>49</sup> It is accordingly fundamental to ensuring successful action.

Public managers and civil servants should not go looking for their one magic performance measure. Instead, they should begin by deciding on the managerial purposes to which performance measurement may contribute. Only then can they select a set of performance measures with the characteristics necessary to help them achieve these purposes.<sup>50</sup>

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46 More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

47 Newcomer, K., Forging a Strategic and Comprehensive Approach to Evaluation Within Public and Nonprofit Organizations – Integrating Measurement and Analytics Within Evaluation (2015) American Journal of Evaluation

48 Bardach and Patachnik (2012)

49 Australian National Audit Office (2014)

50 Behn, R.D., Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures (2003); Yang, K., Managerial Effectiveness of Government Performance Measurement: Testing a Middle-Range Model (2007) Public Administration Review

*Government is now in the deliverology business. How long is the waiting time at a hospital? How long before emergency services show up at someone's house or at a fire? All these things are quantifiable and you manage against them. Unfortunately most people in government grew up thinking they should manage against politics, and not against performance.*

Joel Klein, former Commissioner of Schools, New York City

Brazil's Programa Bolsa Família (PBF) is a government programme that was introduced in 2003 by President Lula and serves to demonstrate the importance of measurement. The PBF makes cash transfers to low-income families on condition, for example, that they send their children to school and ensure that they are properly vaccinated. Several indicators were used to measure the impact of the PBF, such as: the types of beneficiary; the levels of family and individual income; school enrolments and children's educational achievements; and health indicators such as vaccine rates and height/weight relative to age. Effective monitoring tools and agencies were also dedicated to improving the PBF's performance.

It is estimated that "the level of extreme poverty would be between 33% and 50% higher without the PBF. The programme has also contributed to reducing income inequality, accounting for 12%-21% of the

recent sharp decline." As a result of its success in Brazil, this form of "investment in human capital" has since been adopted by administrations from New York City to the Philippines.<sup>51</sup>

## Alignment

The actors required to make change happen need to share an alignment of interests in relation to the policy objective. To this end, coordination is fundamental to the development of a sense of shared mission.<sup>52</sup> When actors cooperate effectively, when they are equipped to execute their part of the initiative and are highly motivated, implementation tends to be more successful.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore clear that alignment is a significant contributing factor to successful action.

The municipal turnaround in Cape Town underlines why alignment is so important. Cape Town's renaissance from 2007 onwards has taken it from being a city with a crumbling infrastructure and severe levels of poverty, unemployment and crime to a well-run, solvent and stable municipality, with growing racial and gender equality. At the heart of this revival was its five-year development plan, a blueprint for socioeconomic reform, which was executed in a gradual and pragmatic fashion.

<sup>51</sup> More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

<sup>52</sup> Besley, T. and Ghatak, M., Incentives, choice and accountability in the provision of public services (2003) IFS Working Papers W03/08, Institute for Fiscal Studies

<sup>53</sup> Young et al. (2015)

*It is far simpler to coordinate policies in the abstract than actually implement them in our territories – they are all different. This means we have to really focus on our alignment.*

Paula Acosta, Director of Strategic Delivery for President Santos of Colombia

The gradual process of political integration merged the 35 municipalities that made up the greater Cape Town area into 7 local authorities, which became in 2010 a single local authority with a population of almost 3.5 million residents. This meant that the different areas of the wider city cooperated more efficiently with each other.

By March 2009, Cape Town had stabilised the bureaucracy in the city and increased the number of employers from 19,000

to 23,000. Data showed a steep increase in staff morale. The city also increased annual spending on new capital infrastructure projects from US\$161 million to US\$806 million and doubled its annual expenditure on maintenance and repairs. Additionally, the city's budget was well monitored and managed and provided stability to the city's strategic planning and operations. This new management meant that money could be invested in critical areas to help improve the quality of life of citizens.

All this resulted in Cape Town being rated in 2010 as having the best local government in South Africa. Furthermore, in the same year it successfully co-hosted the World Cup, while 100% of houses had access to basic sanitation and 92% had access to electricity.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> More information can be found in the full version of this case study, which can be accessed in our Public Impact Observatory.

## Conclusion

We believe that the Public Impact Fundamentals offer a new and compelling set of insights into how governments can systematically improve outcomes. It is our hope that policymakers, and those who seek to influence them, will be able to start using the Public Impact Fundamentals as a practical tool to test and improve policy as it is conceived, developed and implemented. For example, existing policies and initiatives can be tested against the Fundamentals to identify strengths and weaknesses and as new objectives emerge, the Fundamentals can help to ensure impact is embedded into the thinking from the outset.

To help apply the Fundamentals, we will be making a series of supporting tools available. For example, the Public Impact

Observatory available via the Centre for Public Impact website, maps hundreds of impact case studies around the world against the Fundamentals. This should help to stimulate new ideas by highlighting examples with different strengths and weaknesses. We will also be developing tools that groups can use to help apply the Fundamentals to specific policy problems.

We welcome feedback and reactions to the Fundamentals and will seek to improve and refine them over time. Our ultimate aim is to initiate a conversation about how public impact can be improved and to support those who wish to take the next step to doing so.

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## LEGITIMACY

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT  
POLITICAL COMMITMENT

## POLICY

CLEAR OBJECTIVES  
EVIDENCE  
FEASIBILITY

## ACTION

MANAGEMENT  
MEASUREMENT  
ALIGNMENT

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