



Development of a Well-being Framework for Ireland

Stakeholder and Expert Group Minutes

1st Meeting: Wednesday 3rd March 2021 @ 11am. Online via Zoom

Attendance: Emma Kerins, Dessie Robinson, Seán Ó Conláin, Colette Bennett (alternate for Sean Healy), Sinead O’Flanagan, Philip Hamell, Paul Donnelly, Geraint Ellis, Micheal Hogan, Liam Delaney, Clodagh Harris, John Sweeney, Helen Johnston and Emily Whelton.

Secretariat: Larry O’Connell and Niamh Garvey

Apologies: Denis Duggan

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** were given by all in attendance.

2. **Terms of Reference & Work Programme:**

Members asked for clarity on how this group will fit with the Department of the Taoiseach (DOT) Working Group (WG), and on how it will be involved with consultation process.

It was clarified that the ‘Framework’ is being developed by the DoT WG, and that this sub-group (S&E group) has been brought together to gather expert ideas to inform and shape the WG.

It was noted that the purpose of the S&E group is to assist the Departmental WG. The S&E group will provide a sounding board for work emanating within the Working Group. It will also provide guidance to the WG based on the members experience in relation to Irish and international work at national, regional and local level and in specific sectors.

Its role will be both to shape and guide the initial phase on the development of a framework, immediate priorities or ‘key outcomes’ and how these can be reflected impactfully in policy. It will also make recommendations that would happen after the 6-month timeframe of both this and the WG deadline.

In the discussion on the terms of reference and work programme a recognition of the need for any framework be used to bring about transformative change and a new more holistic and cross-cutting approach to policy making was noted.



3. What are the key considerations in approaching this work?

There was a very fruitful discussion on the considerations which should shape this work. The issues raised included:

- the importance of a clear vision and mission for the work, the highest value that this work could achieve;
- the need to think about what success looks like, for example in NZ;
- the need to identify and understand the component parts of a well-being approach: framework, dashboard, indicators, prioritization, links to action and consultation, accompanying research, and what is involved in each part;
- that the process will be iterative and can take a long time, years in some cases like Canada;
- the need to make choices and to be selective about indicators but also the deeply connected nature of indicators;
- that tensions will emerge and there are competing views about how well-being will be enhanced;
- that monetary and fiscal implications are also important and that it would be important to continue to help break down barriers to the importance of wellbeing as a means of measuring and progress and means of guiding policy and budgetary decisions; and,
- that a mechanism to hold people to account in order to measure success and usefulness is important.

4. What are the elements required for an effective consultation?

There was a very useful discussion on consultation. The issues raised included:

- to generate ownership there is a need to think deeply about consultation and engagement—its needs to be about more than asking people to choose between domains or indicators;
- importance of a wider stakeholder map, including in areas like national experts, international experts, country experts (for example in NZ, Canada or Scotland);
- need to develop a set of questions for different stakeholders;
- value of engagement with PPNS—both their expectations of this national exercise and their experience in developing well-being statements and policies whilst using existing data and indicators, the public voice must be heard.



- the potential role that innovative online technologies could have in supporting some initial broadly-based engagement with citizens;
- the potential future role of citizens Assemblies and/or Citizen Juries; and
- the critical importance of early engagement, and pilots or projects that help to probe specific issues more deeply;

5. Next Steps

It was noted that the Secretariat will be to identify people with whom to engage, including bilaterally with some members of the S&E Group.

Members were asked to forward suggestions about people who the Secretariat might engage.

The Secretariat will prepare a note for consideration by NESC Council at its next meeting.

6. Dates for Next Meetings

Diary entries and zoom joining details would be sent to members for:

- April 9th @11am
- May 7th @ 11am
- June 4th @ 11am

7. A.O.B.