



Development of a Well-being Framework for Ireland

Stakeholder and Expert Group Minutes

2nd Meeting: Friday, 9th April 2021 @ 11am. Online via Zoom

Attendance: Seán Ó Conláin, Mike Hogan, Dessie Robinson, Philip Hamell, Sinead O’Flanagan, Paul Donnelly, Liam Delaney, Edgar Morgenroth, Colette Bennett, Clodagh Harris, Martin Quigley, Helen Johnston, Denis Duggan, John Sweeney, Emily Whelton, John Kinnane, Fiachra Kennedy, Ruadhan Branigan

Secretariat: Larry O’Connell and Niamh Garvey

1. Input from the Department of the Taoiseach on the direction and elements of the overarching framework

Emily Whelton presented the paper that was circulated to the group in advance.

Discussion and clarifications included:

- The relationship between public policy and wellbeing and the focus on agenda setting and priorities or policy evaluation. Clarified that Ireland’s approach to developing an overarching framework will focus more on the former (agenda setting and priorities) than the latter (detailed tools for policy evaluation).
- Reflecting on the policy wheel presented by the OECD and whether the framework will consider the infrastructure requirements from internal stakeholders. The Interdepartmental working group will add value in this area. The consultation may identify if there any institutional challenges.
- National and local level connections – and the level of ambition for the ability to drill down to the local / regional level. The intention is for both top-down and bottom-up approach to meet over time, but a lot will depend on what data is available at regional level.
- The importance of articulating the ultimate objective of the well-being framework.
- Reflecting on the dimensions and the proposed prioritisation of dimensions or indicators and the importance of ensuring that every department sees itself across the dimensions. The need to ensure the cross dimensional and integrated nature of wellbeing, which could be lost if you prioritise some at the expense of others – potentially consider more holistic dimensions with more focused indicators.

2. **Input from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on wellbeing and budgeting**

John Kinnane and Fiachra Kennedy presented the slides that were circulated to the group in advance of the meeting.

Rich discussion included:

- Welcoming seeing the detailed work already happening on policy redesign.
- A feature of some well-being approaches is bringing in external perspectives – to what degree might bringing external perspectives feature in the process the Department are developing?



- On policy evaluation: some areas, particularly quantitative areas are easier to evaluate, which generates more evidence and data. The importance of ensuring that some dimensions (that are more difficult to evaluate) are not ignored as it will create evidence gaps in some areas.
- The framework offers a good opportunity to drive policy – often objectives are too narrow or not well specified and the framework is an opportunity to address this.
- The importance of ensuring the framework is transformative not just incremental changes. A vision and clear objectives are really important – and the importance of consultation shaping those.
- On the integrated nature of well-being: the importance of going beyond individual Departmental programmes, for example on children's wellbeing should look also to Housing, Health and Education. The framework should help us to move beyond confining understanding of WB to the sectoral programmes, but enable us to look across policies and programmes spanning different departments.

Stakeholder and Expert group members invited to send in any further comments bilaterally after the meeting.

3. Overview and discussion of the S&E group findings from the Survey:

The findings of the pilot survey were presented to the group based on slides shared with the group ahead of the meeting.

Discussion focused in particular on the use of the survey with a wider set of stakeholders, including:

- The importance of taking a differentiated approach to different stakeholder groups, with 'front end' stakeholders engaging more on values and impacts while 'back end' stakeholders could focus more on the infrastructure requirements. Recommendation to do stakeholder mapping.
- Some of the questions were not straightforward and were difficult to answer. It needs to be simpler.
- It could have more benefit as an initial initiative with a focus at a higher level – vision and 'what are the ingredients of a good life' or draw on the Welsh approach 'What kind of Wales do we want' – a more open approach to questions than the tight framing on the OECD.

4. Next Meeting Dates Reminder

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