
Evidence-Based Public Policy Design and Implementation Training Course

8 – 12 March 2027
Cape town





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Ref: 121_14604 **Date:** 8 – 12 March 2027 **Location:** Cape town **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Evidence-based public policy design and implementation is a five-day training course for policy directors and senior officials at strategic level, culminating in a policy proposal and delivery plan for a live issue in their own institution. Proposals often reach decision-makers without a tested problem definition, costed options or a delivery and evaluation plan. The approach follows the policy cycle from agenda setting to evaluation, applying appraisal and impact assessment tools at each stage. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in evidence-based public policy.

The Business Case

Policies built on weak evidence are often reversed or abandoned, consuming budget and public trust. Institutions that define problems precisely, compare options including doing nothing, consult those affected and plan delivery before approval produce decisions that survive scrutiny and can be measured.

- Policy Approval Quality: Improves as submissions present evidence, costed options and risks in a consistent format.
- Implementation Slippage: Falls as delivery chains, milestones and owners are agreed before a policy is announced.
- Value for Public Money: Rises as cost-benefit analysis and evaluation show which interventions to scale, adjust or stop.

Principles and Evidence Base

- The Policy Cycle: Structures the programme from agenda setting and formulation through decision, implementation and evaluation, introduced in Session 1.
- OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Impact Assessment: Guide problem definition, option comparison and consultation for regulatory proposals in Session 3.
- Cost-Benefit Analysis: Provides the method for valuing and comparing policy options over time in Session 2.
- Theory of Change and Logic Models: Link inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes for delivery planning and evaluation design in Sessions 4 and 5.

Intended Participants

- Officials who lead policy units and decide which proposals go forward to ministers or boards.
- Advisers who draft policy briefs, cabinet submissions and regulatory proposals.
- Directors who translate approved policies into programmes, budgets and delivery plans.
- Leaders of strategy, planning and performance units who monitor and evaluate public programmes.



The programme serves ministries and central agencies, regulators, municipal and regional authorities, and public bodies in health, education, energy and economic development.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a problem definition and policy objective supported by data and stakeholder evidence.
2. Participants will be able to appraise policy options, including no action, using cost-benefit and multi-criteria analysis.
3. Participants will be able to apply regulatory impact assessment and structured consultation to a proposal.
4. Participants will be able to select a mix of policy instruments suited to the problem and the institutions involved.
5. Participants will be able to design an implementation plan with a delivery chain, milestones and risk controls.
6. Participants will be able to justify a monitoring and evaluation framework and present it in a policy submission.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Public Policy Cycle and Problem Definition

What problem is the policy meant to solve, and how strong is the evidence?

- Stages of the Policy Cycle and Decision Points
- Problem Trees and Root Cause Framing
- Policy Evidence Hierarchy and Data Sources
- Baseline Indicators and Target Setting
- Agenda Setting and Political Feasibility Mapping

Day 2: Options Appraisal and Cost-Benefit Analysis

Which option offers the greatest net benefit to society?

- Long List to Short List of Policy Options
- Cost-Benefit Analysis and Discounting
- Multi-Criteria Analysis for Non-Monetised Effects
- Distributional and Equity Effects
- Sensitivity and Scenario Testing of Options

Day 3: Regulatory Impact Assessment and Consultation

How are regulatory proposals tested with evidence and with those affected?



- Regulatory Impact Assessment Under OECD Best Practice Principles
- Compliance Cost and Administrative Burden Estimates
- Stakeholder Consultation Design and Analysis
- Policy Instrument Choice: Regulation, Spending, Information and Incentives
- Behavioural Insights in Instrument Design

Day 4: Implementation Planning and Policy Delivery

How does an approved policy become results on the ground?

- Theory of Change and Logic Model Construction
- Delivery Chain Mapping Across Institutions
- Implementation Milestones, Trajectories and Routines
- Delivery Risk Registers and Escalation
- Monitoring Indicators and Performance Dashboards

Day 5: Applying Evidence-Based Public Policy to a Live Issue

How are evidence, options, assessment and delivery combined into one submission?

- Problem Statement and Options Review for a Participant Issue
- Evaluation Plan: Process, Impact and Value for Money
- Policy Brief and Cabinet Submission Drafting
- Peer Challenge Panel on Draft Proposals
- Policy Proposal and Delivery Plan Presentation

Methodology

The programme relies on case analysis supported by structured exercises. Participants work through cases from health, transport, energy and economic regulation, building problem trees, appraisal tables and delivery chains, then defend choices before a mock decision panel.

- Suggested activity: Building a problem tree for a rising public service backlog.
- Suggested activity: Comparing three options for a subsidy reform using cost-benefit analysis.
- Suggested activity: Drafting a two-page brief for a minister with a decision deadline.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a policy proposal and delivery plan for an issue in their institution. It contains the problem definition, appraised options, an impact assessment summary, the chosen instruments, a delivery chain and an evaluation plan.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is evidence-based public policy training suitable for senior officials without an economics background?

Yes. It suits policy directors and advisers with government experience; appraisal methods are taught from first principles.

Which models underpin evidence-based public policy design in this programme?

It draws on the policy cycle, the OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Impact Assessment, cost-benefit analysis, and theory of change with logic models for delivery and evaluation.

How is the public policy proposal and delivery plan used at work?

You return with a draft submission your unit can refine and table, including appraised options, a delivery chain and an evaluation plan.

How does evidence-based public policy design differ from a public sector strategy programme?

It works at the level of individual policies, their evidence, options and delivery, rather than setting an institution's overall vision, reform agenda and strategic objectives.