**Policy paper**



**Title of the paper**

Universite Laval

**Author A**

**Author B**

**Author C**

Month Year   
(of publication)





**Template and instructions updated in July 2021**

**Title of the paper**

This paper was developed as part of PEP-supported research project CODE (e.g. MPIA-22333), entitled “*title of the research paper*”. The objective of this companion piece is to position the project’s research work and findings within the broader policy context (including the policy strategies and decision processes) that they shall serve to inform.

**Authors**

|  |  |  |
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This project was carried out with financial and technical support from the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) ([www.pep-net.org](http://www.pep-net.org)), with funding from the Government of Canada through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). **This first section is mandatory, and must be copied as is.**

The authors are also grateful to Person X and Person Y for support and guidance, as well as to Person Z for valuable comments and suggestions. **This section can be customized and may include other contributors, but we encourage you to start by acknowledging your PEP mentors (especially, in this case, your assigned PEP policy outreach mentor).**

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**IMPORTANT NOTE**

A PEP project’s policy paper should **NOT EXCEED 10 PAGES** for the core document (excluding references), with a maximum of 3 additional pages of supporting annexes/appendices, if required.

For further/more detailed guidance in preparing public policy papers (beyond what is recommended and explained in the template below), you may refer to:

* YOUNG, E. and L. QUINN (2002). “*Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide for Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe”*, Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute Budapest – [find it online](mailto:http://www.icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/icpa/files/downloads/writing_effective_public_policy_papers_young_quinn.pdf)

Please note that **PEP’s requirements do not extend beyond what is explicitly described in the template below**. Therefore, not all instructions in the Young and Quinn (2002) reference are relevant or applicable in this paper.

**We strongly encourage you to review the presentation of the** [**PEP workshop on Best Practices for Policy Engagement**](https://www.pep-net.org/sites/pep-net.org/files/typo3doc/pdf/Training_Material/PEP-PE_Course_2021_Fullpresentation.pdf) (especially session 2 – May 19, 2021) to inform the development of your policy paper.

Writing strategy

PART 1 – to submit at interim stage:

* Shall contain Section 2 (Problem description) and Section 3.1. (Outline of policy alternatives).

PART 2 – to submit at final report stage:

* First draft: shall contain revised/updated versions of Sections 2 and 3.1, and draft Sections 3.2 (Evaluation of policy options) and Section 4 (Conclusion and recommendation).
* Resubmission: shall contain all revised contents and Section 1 (Introduction) – i.e. FULL PAPER

# - Introduction *(max 1.5 page)*

The introduction to a policy paper establishes and defines the main content that will follow in the body of the paper. It is crucial to convince your reader to share your viewpoint that an urgent problem exists and that your paper is worth reading because it will offer possible solutions to the problem. It is also important that it clearly communicates your position on the problem, so that the reader can understand the policy alternatives and recommendations you will propose later in the paper.

Towards effectively achieving these purposes, a number of structural features are contained in the introduction:

* Context and definition of the policy problem
  + Briefly, as this will be further elaborated in section 2 below
* Statement of intent
* Brief description of the PEP-supported research project and its contribution to achieve the intent stated above.
  + This may include brief description of the project’s methodology and limitations
* Road map of the paper
  + Providing an overview of how the paper is organized.

This section should be completed last – once all other sections are finalized.

# Problem description *(max 2 pages)*

The objective of this section is to “define the problem that your research seeks to address/inform, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE POLICYMAKER. The following four points provide an overview of what this section of your paper shall aim to achieve:

* Identify and define the nature of the problem that policymakers are facing in relation to the topic of your study.
* Convince the reader that the issue in focus requires government action – i.e. risk (including political risks?) of not acting now.
* Outline the problem within its SPECIFIC POLICY environment (not the general environment) – e.g. ongoing policy debates, formulation or decision processes; existing policy frameworks and/or commitments, strategic event in political calendar, etc.
* Highlight the key features, or dimensions, of the problem that an effective policy intervention shall tackle.
* Clarify the “policy objective/needs” that your research aims to help achieve or address

The problem description includes two main structural features:

* **The definition and background/history of the problem**:
  + Causes and effects, population affected
  + Policies that have been implemented in the past to address the problem and their outcomes.
* **Problem within its current policy environment:** 
  + Current knowledge about the status/extent of the problem
  + What does the problem mean for social, legal, economic, and/or political contexts
  + The current policy being implemented to address the problem
  + The successes and failures of this current approach:
    - What do we know, or need to know?
    - What does the government need to do now, in relation to this problem?

**Nota bene**

To convince the reader that your argument is credible, it is necessary to present evidence from many authoritative primary and secondary sources. As public policy involves stakeholders at all levels of the community, it is not unusual that the types of sources included in a policy paper are very varied, e.g. government legislation and policy statements, government reports, NGO or IGO reports, other policy studies, academic journals, conference papers and newspapers.

* IMPORTANT: These sources are NOT THE SAME AS YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT’S LITERATURE REVIEW. The research you shall conduct to understand the problem from a policy perspective (including to identify the different policy options faced by the decision-makers – see below) is very different from the review of scientific literature which has led to identifying the “research gaps” described in your project’s research proposal/paper.

# Evaluation of policy options *(max 4.5 pages)*

Having detailed the background and current policy environment of the problem, the policy options element entails discussing the POSSIBLE WAYS IN WHICH THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED. The purpose of this part is to present an argument for the preferred policy solution/orientation, based on the evaluation of the possible alternatives.

Here again, it is important to identify all your sources and references. ALL CLAIMS MUST BE SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE – either from your own research work or other (valid/rigorous) sources.

In fact, this section should emphasize the CRITICAL GAPS IN TERMS OF EVIDENCE BASE needed to inform/support decision-making in this specific context, and the importance of procuring/using source of reliable evidence as part of the policymaking process. The authors shall also be honest regarding uncertainties and/or missing evidence to complete the evaluation.

This section shall be divided in two parts:

## Outline of the possible policy alternatives, and related framework of analysis

This first part shall stem from the description of the “policy problem” developed in section 2. Indeed, a “policy problem” usually requires the decision-makers to identify the best possible scenario, or action path, to address the issue.

The objective here is thus to present a clear, but succinct, **list and description of the best-known options that can/should be considered by decision-makers, to tackle the problem.** This can also mean introducing reforms or new measures as part of existing policy interventions and strategies.

These options should be identified in consultation with target users/stakeholders, to:

* find out about options currently being considered by the government, and/or
* discuss potential alternatives, based on other countries’ responses or promoted in relevant literature, and that could apply in the context of your country.

This section should also **identify the key criteria that should be used to evaluate/compare these options** (e.g. effectiveness, equity/inclusiveness, cost and efficiency, feasibility, etc.) – in other words, your “framework of analysis”.

IMPORTANT:

* This section (and framework of analysis) **should only refer to policy options and criteria that you can realistically assess** – either via your PEP research findings, or using existing data or literature from external (valid) sources.
* Cost is a critical aspect of policy decisions – you should refer to the relevant government institutions for information on cost and monetary implications of development issues and related policy interventions.
* The

## Evaluation of the policy alternatives

In this important section, the authors must present a **comparison of the policy options, and using the criteria, identified** in 3.1 above. This comparative evaluation shall be based on the evidence produced through your PEP research, or gathered from relevant/valid sources. The aim is to build an objective argument that will support decision-making by highlighting the pros and cons of the different options for policy action.

Remember that:

* Cost implications represent a critical factor for decision-making
* All claims should be supported by evidence (and related sources/references indicated)
* You should be honest about uncertainties and/or missing evidence to complete the evaluation

Finally, we strongly recommend to conclude with an illustration of your entire argument in the form of a “table”, in which you can summarize the pros and cons of each option (presented side-by-side), and for each criterion (see session 2 presentation of [PEP workshop on Best Practices for Policy Engagement](https://www.pep-net.org/sites/pep-net.org/files/typo3doc/pdf/Training_Material/PEP-PE_Course_2021_Fullpresentation.pdf))

# Conclusions and policy recommendations *(max 2 pages)*

This final element brings the policy paper to an end by synthesizing the key findings of the research and outlining the author’s suggested course of action towards solving the policy problem analyzed throughout the paper. The purpose of the policy paper as a decision-making tool and call to action is ultimately fulfilled in this section.

It is crucial that the conclusions and/or recommendations are clear, practical, logical and comprehensive.

This final section of the document should comprise two or three main structural features:

* ***Synthesis of major findings and highlights from the evaluation of policy options***
* ***Set of policy recommendations***
  + *If possible, the authors should* outline the practical steps that need to be taken to implement the chosen policy option, showing that the proposed measures provide a practical solution to the policy problem identified.

# Bibliography

*Example:*

ALKIRE, S. and J. FOSTER (2007): “Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measurement,” OPHI Working Paper Series No. 07, OPHI.

RAVALLION, M. and S. CHEN (2003): “Measuring Pro-poor Growth,” *Economics Letters*, 78, 93–99.

YOUNG, E. and L. QUINN (2002), “Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide for Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe”, Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute Budapest. Retrieved August 28, 2019, from: <https://www.icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/icpa/files/downloads/writing_effective_public_policy_papers_young_quinn.pdf>

# Annex *(max 3 pages)*

This section should report additional tables and figures that are not included in the main text, if needed.