POLICY MEMO GUIDELINES

The Policy Memo requirements:

1. **Executive Summary** (300 words)

2. **The Policy Memo** (1400 words)
   a. Background and research question
   b. Methodology/ Data
   c. Key findings
   d. Recommendations

3. **Key References/**

A Policy Memo should be addressed to a person, department or entity that potentially can have a real impact on the policy issue that is addressed or could benefit from the recommendations. The "CC" involves another key person who may be not directly affiliated but may still benefit from the policy memo.

These guidelines are based on upon and in memory of Dr. Crister S. Garrett († 2019) and his Policy Memo Assignment and Dr. Oliver Schmidtke's recommendations.

Considerations

Complexity and Clarity

In any international policy area in which you are working, colleagues will most likely be very well informed. They do not need you to simplify issues, but to explain complex issues so that they are simple to understand. A good guideline for such writing can be found in any article published by The Economist (not promoting their conclusions, just the writing). This newspaper enjoys rightfully an unparalleled reputation for explaining complex issues in clear and accessible language. One story might involve a wide variety of variables, including economics, sociology, geography, politics, history, and culture. But it does so in a cohesive and integrated presentation. This is exactly what decision-makers dealing with daily stress need, and expect. They are not looking for just the sociology of an issue, or its history, but an integrated and cohesive presentation of the policy challenge that allows the decisionmaker to understand it fully.

Costs

Every decision -- every decision -- involves possible benefits and anticipated costs. Decision-makers want to know both so they can make as fully-informed a decision as possible (The reality is that often decision-makers are under enormous pressure to make a certain type of decision, and thus want to know less about possible costs associated with that decision. But we are going to assume for this exercise that the recipient of your memo is an 'enlightened' decision-maker trying to maximize public benefit). Costs can come in many forms: lost votes, financial, reputation, popularity, influence, power, possible worsening of the problem being addressed, unanticipated consequences. Costs can be very hard to anticipate, but as an analyst, you are being paid to do just this, anticipate possible costs. In this part of the PM exercise, be creative, be realistic.

1. Executive Summary (ES)

Length: Circa 300 Words (12 point, normal margins).

Written when the policy memo is completed.

Summary: Circa 100 words: This is the "so-what" element. Here the reader learns why your memo deals with a high priority policy issue.

Discussion: Circa 100 words: Elaborate the issue and why it is important.

Recommendation: Circa 100 words: Based on what kind of empirical evidence/ research design have you arrived at your conclusions.

2. The Policy Memo

Length: Circa 1,400 words (12 point, normal margins).

a. Background and research question /Policy Issue

b. Methodology/ Data (if applicable)

c. Key findings and Policy Options

d. Policy Recommendations

a. **Background / Research Question / Policy Issue**

Circa 500 words

Provide a clear definition and description of what the policy issue is.

Clarify why the issue is pressing and needs addressing now. This includes outlining what can happen if the issue is not addressed.

Outline the complexity of the issue. What are the various moving parts, i.e., who is an important partner/voice in your issue, what is the sociology of your issue, the economics, the politics -- whose interests are impacted? The challenge is to capture the complexity of your issue, and to present this in a clear and coherent way.

b. **Methodology / Data (if applicable)**

Circa 200 words

Based on what kind of empirical evidence/ research design have you arrived at your conclusions.

c. **Key Findings / Policy Options (PO)**

Circa 400 words

- What are the key findings regarding alternative policy options.
- What are the costs/ opportunities onvolved in the respected policy options

d. **Recommendation**

Circa 300 Words

- Why are the costs of your recommendation less than other options

- And in that vein, why the benefits are the most optimal.

- Conclude the section with an overall analysis of why your chosen PO will alleviate the Policy Issue/Challenge that you have isolated.

- Brand Your Theory – provide a title for the theoretical model that you constructed for yourself.

3. Key references (*Maximum five*)