

# ICPS newsletter

## State secretaries should organise policy process

*The success of social transformation depends on the quality of reforms within the government, which should be focused on creating effective systems for managing change. Establishing the position of "state secretary" is an important step towards modernising and raising the level of skills in the Ukrainian government. Paul Brown and Antonio Bar Cendon, experts at ICPS "Creation of Policy Analysis Groups and an Information Resource Centre in the Government of Ukraine" and "Institutional Support for Verkhovna Rada Deputies and Staff Study Visits" projects, gave a presentation on international experience in setting up work of state secretaries*

### State secretary role is administrative support for policymaking

Above all, the government is responsible for determining strategic courses. When developing public policy, the government converts its vision of the future into programs and measures by means of which desired results should be reached. The Presidential Decree No. 345/2001 "On the next measures for further implementation of administrative reform in Ukraine" dated 29 May 2001 clearly determines the responsibilities of the state secretary, including ensuring that a principal function of the government is policy development.

Worldwide best practice in terms of this senior policy role suggest three core areas of accountability:

- developing strategies and ensuring policy coherence;
- building and sustaining policy capacity;
- providing a framework for achieving quality government decisions.

In these areas, the state secretary fulfils the following functions:

#### 1. Developing strategy and ensuring consistency of policy implementation

- Anticipates emerging issues within the ministry, the government as a whole, and the external environment that may affect the ministry's work and government-wide policy and priorities, and ensures that the minister is aware of these issues and considers them in setting priorities and strategies.
- Develops and recommends an annual ministry policy agenda, plans, and priorities on policy development for consideration by the minister and for priority setting by the government.
- Represents the ministry in government-wide consultations for the development of government priorities and strategic plans.
- Provides direction for policy initiatives, and ensures that they reflect and demonstrate coherence with the government's priorities.
- Establishes a strong working relationship with the secretaries of other ministries working on common issues, to ensure collaboration, integration, and policy coherence across the government.
- Manages the effective and efficient use of policy resources in the ministry, allocates resources, and coordinates the efforts of policy staff to deliver policy commitments and enhance the quality of research and analysis. Ensures that policy proposals going to its adhere to Cabinet guidelines and reflect best professional practices in terms of analytical methods (problem identification, development and analysis of options, recommendations, communications strategy, and implementation implications).

### Comparative analysis of operational principles of ministry secretaries in Ukraine and Great Britain

Ukraine	Great Britain
1. Ministry secretaries are senior officials in the ministries.	1. Permanent Ministry Secretaries are senior officials in the ministries.
2. Ministry secretaries appoint and dismiss officials of the ministry central apparatus, as well as the heads of its territorial departments.	2. All public officials working in the ministry are subordinated to the Permanent Ministry Secretary.
3. Ministry secretaries are in office for the presidential term. Cabinet resignation or changes in its staff could not be a reason for dismissing the State Secretary of the Cabinet, ministry secretaries, or their first deputies and deputies.	3. The Permanent Ministry Secretary manages the work of his/her ministry on a constant basis, regardless of any changes in the Cabinet staff.
4. Ministry secretaries and their first deputies and deputies are nominated by the Prime Minister and dismissed by the President.	4. The Permanent Ministry Secretaries and their deputies and assistants are appointed and dismissed by the Department of State Service, subject to approval of the Prime Minister.

### Comparative analysis of operational principles of ministry secretaries in Ukraine and Lithuania

Ukraine	Lithuania
1. Ministry secretaries manage the ministry apparatus, organise support for the minister's activities and day-to-day operations directed at implementing objectives delegated to the ministry, submit recommendations regarding allocating budget funds to the minister.	1. Ministry secretaries are responsible for coordinating ministry operations and organising the process of drafting normative acts within the ministry, including responsibility for their quality.
2. Subject to approval of the Ministry of Finance, ministry secretaries determine the expenditures of the ministry.	2. Ministry secretaries are responsible for the financial and economic operations of the ministry.
3. Ministry secretaries coordinate the operations of territorial agencies of the relevant ministry, as well as the activities of enterprises and organisations which are related to the sphere of ministry management.	3. Ministry secretaries organise and carry out supervision of all structural departments and agencies subordinated to the ministry.
4. Subject to approval of the minister, ministry secretaries set the ministry organisational structure; and subject to approval of the Ministry of Finance they set the staff list.	4. Ministry secretaries submit proposals regarding staff lists of the ministry to the ministers.

- Ensures a strong link between policy, communication and operations staff to ensure joint consideration and participation in the development of key messages, public policy positioning, background materials on policy proposals, and targeting of audiences for policy messages.

## 2. Building and sustaining policy capacity

- Encourages a learning environment and the sharing of communications and information needed for sustained excellence in policy development within and across ministries and with all sectors of the research community, e.g., information and data exchange, stakeholder consultation to build consensus.

- Leads the development of a human resource development strategy to ensure policy capacity within the ministries, by identifying:

- competencies for policy analysis and research;

- training and development requirements;

- accountability frameworks to ensure quality policy advice and program delivery.

- Ensures that plans are developed and mechanisms established to identify, acquire, and manage information and information technology needed for analysis of strategic and cross-government policy issues.

- Ensures that technology supports and processes are in place to enable access to ministry research and analysis by other ministries, other jurisdictions, and external stakeholders.

- Ensures effective communication and working relationships at all levels of the ministry's policy function, with the external research community, other jurisdictions, etc.

- Ensures that standardised approaches, tools, and templates are developed and applied to support strong policy management.

- Shows leadership in initiatives to build and sustain government policy capacity.

## 3. Providing a framework for achieving quality

- Establishes and ensures implementation of a sound ministry policy framework within the context of government-wide frameworks.

- Ensures that the ministry policy staff has a clear vision and definition of the elements of a good, quality public policy product.

- Ensures that policy outcomes are clearly articulated, that criteria for measurement of outcomes are established, and that capabilities for evaluation have been put into place for all policy initiatives.

- Ensures that policy options that are developed are reasonable, affordable, and provide an effective balance between cost effectiveness, administrative feasibility, and accountability requirements.

- Promotes cross-ministry approaches and participates in the development of government-wide policy initiatives that support the government's medium- and longer-term agenda and priorities, and continuous improvement in government-wide standards, processes, and policy capacity.

## Risk of politicisation of state secretary position can be reduced

In many parliamentary and semi-parliamentary (semi-presidential) systems, the government tends to be a complex structure consisting of:

- prime minister;

- ministers;

- secretaries of state (deputy ministers, ministers of state, parliamentary secretaries).

Responsibility for the nomination of persons who are going to hold the office of state secretaries should always lie with the minister in charge of the ministry within which the "deputy minister" is going to perform this role, to the government as a whole, or the department of state service. The formal appointment—decree of appointment—may be signed by the head of the state or the prime minister and normally it is countersigned by the relevant minister. The way in which this formal appointment is conducted depends on the different constitutional arrangements of each country. Nevertheless, this does not mean that any relationship of dependence is established by this means between the head of the state and the "deputy minister". The latter should be always and only dependent on the relevant minister or the government as a whole.

The politicisation of state secretaries carries the risk of making the position dysfunctional. To ensure the effective operation of this office, at the very least the following aspects should be considered and formally established by means of law or regulation:

- roles and functions of the state secretary;

- attachment to other departments or members of the government;

- relationship with these other departments or members of the government, i.e., hierarchy, responsibility/accountability, coordination;

- relationship with the subordinate or executive areas of public administration, i.e., policy formulation, coordination, control, overseeing;

- guidelines for nomination, appointment, and dismissal;

- personal status as a member of the government, i.e., rights and duties, participation—if any—in Cabinet meetings. ■

# Distance learning should be an integral part of the state educational policy

The Distance Learning Department of the Institute of Correspondence and Distance Learning at the National Aviation University of Ukraine organised a roundtable on "Problems of Introducing Distance Learning into the Aerospace Sector" that took place in the framework of the International Conference AVIA-2001. The event gathered representatives from the most important organisations working on the development of distance learning in Ukraine, including the National Aviation University, National Shevchenko University, National Technical University, Academy of Public Administration, University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", Ukrtelekom, UNDP, ICPS, etc. The roundtable was conducted under the patronage of Mr. Ihor Voronov, director of the institute, and organised under the direction of Ms. Lesia Dovha, head of the Distance Learning Department.

The main objectives of the roundtable were:

- involving a wider number of people and organisations in the problem discussion to find effective solutions;

- determine the tasks needed to be solved immediately, both on the methodological and organisational or legal level;

- finding ways of possible collaboration between interested groups on introducing distance learning in Ukraine.

Participants discussed the development of new education methods and techniques based on modern informational technology. As result of the discussion, participants made the following decisions:

- create a Ukrainian Association of Open Education that will include not only educational organisations but also other interested entities;

- organise a regular roundtable on "Problems of Introducing of Distance Learning" at the Institute of Correspondence and Distance Learning of the National Aviation University;

- initiate the creation of a relevant normative and legislative base for the development of distance learning;

- develop standardised requirements for the preparation of electronic courses (on the basis of TRAINAIR methodology), along with a selection of computer software for their development;

- create a new informational-analytical periodical titled *Distance Education in Ukraine*. ■