ACESA Evolved Position

Based on Discussion & Inputs from Board & Membership Workshops, plus Subsequent Board Feedback

* * *

Contents

Vision Statement

Strategic Priorities

- Core Functions & Purpose
- Briefing Sessions
- Research Focus & Future Needs
- Projects, Reach, Communications & Future

Appendices

1. Evolved Position & Underlying Principles

- Core Functions & Purpose
- Briefing Sessions
- Research Focus & Future Needs
- Projects, Reach, Communications & Future

2. Rapporteurs' Summary Points Arising – 22.01.20

- Table 1 – Presented by Tomás Ó Ruairc
- Table 2 – Presented by Liz Pope
- Table 3 - Presented by Patricia Gilheaney
- Table 4 – Presented by Andy Kelly

CONFIDENTIAL

Vision Statement

To support members through knowledge sharing, reflective practice, collaboration and networking

Strategic Priorities

Core Functions & Purpose

- Promote, develop and optimise the value of the ACESA network to CEOs by enhancing our approach to knowledge sharing in the pursuit of best practice
- Identify matters of interest to members, providing a forum for joint exploration and shared learning
- Develop considered and evidenced based positions on matters of interest to members

Briefing Sessions

- Leverage the Network's collective knowledge and experience through mutual networking, information sharing and proactive updates
- Ensure accessibility of: (i) knowledge/information and (ii) membership events by enhancing delivery channels, knowledge repositories and opportunities for networking
- Survey membership to determine areas of particular (niche/specialist) subject matter interest and develop channels for learning/information sharing

Research Focus & Future Needs

- Develop and agree research agenda which reflects members' priorities, recognises value-for-money and supports CEOs
- Encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration by promoting awareness of ACESA research – both national and international – as well as relevant initiatives being undertaken by member organisations
- Develop: (i) knowledge base of membership queries and (ii) inventory of best practice/ lessons learned across comparable organisations – both Irish and overseas
- Explore interest in establishing peer support or mentoring type arrangements into the future

CONFIDENTIAL

Projects, Reach, Communications & Future

- Redesign membership survey to reflect ACESA's development while also providing an important channel for communication and feedback
- Prioritise internal communications (on matters of benefit/interest to members) while recognising the potential value associated with external messaging and profiling of ACESA
- Continue to develop ACESA as a support network and resource for CEOs – promoting same to existing as well as prospective members

CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix 1

Evolved Position & Underlying Principles

Note: Text in black represents the 'straw man' version developed on the basis of Board inputs. Blue text represents the additions as identified by members during the workshop of January 22nd last.

Core Role & Purpose

- A professional network, support and resource for State Agency CEOs® which is promoted further and optimised
- Dedicated to shared learning, insights from experience, knowledge exchange and the pursuit of best practice in areas of agreed and common interest
- Providing a forum for sharing knowledge on topics which otherwise could not be shared easily
- Committed to the delivery of excellence in public service by working jointly with the central government to actively influence and progress, both the Reform agenda and other relevant issues/priorities*
- Highlighting key issues affecting the performance and operation of Agencies
- Reserving the membership position° where consensus has not been explored/arrived at due to consultative timelines or the different operating circumstances of e.g. regulatory agencies, cultural institutions, etc.

® Network of CEOs, i.e. rather than a network of State Agencies/NCSSBs

* To include policy, legislation and practice but agreed that parameters for same should be clearly defined across agencies – i.e. assuming associated interest in working with ACESA on the part of central government

^ For example, on recruitment at point one of the relevant salary scales, secondment of civil servants, etc.

° During meetings with central government

CONFIDENTIAL

Briefing Sessions

- Engage, inform and update members on matters of particular relevance, interest and importance
- Leverage our knowledge and experiences to the mutual benefit of others across the network
- Explore scope and interest in 'micro-sessions' which would allow members to participate in smaller groups with a dedicated focus on particular issues and specialised areas/ topics
- Explore solutions and deploy technology to increase reach and accessibility of briefing sessions
- Leverage the ACESA website as a knowledge repository, information source and database for members – Note: Resource Considerations Arise
- Ensure that updates are provided in respect of issues affecting members and for those who are unable to attend meetings/briefings– Note: Resource Considerations Arise

* Inspiration, operation and other

Research Focus

- Agree research agenda and closely align research to reflect members' needs – consistent with broader public service priorities
- Promote cross-network awareness of members' research initiatives and plans to provide for information sharing, collaboration and/or synergies, as appropriate
- Ensure value for money and optimise return on research investment by compiling reviews and summaries of lessons learned
- Explore scope to leverage the 'ACESA brand' or NCSSB access as a means of undertaking more cost-effective research
- Identify research undertaken by, or relating to overseas agencies, and collate/share lessons which are relevant to ACESA members
- Explore interest in establishing peer support or mentoring type arrangements into the future
- Develop and define ACESA's approach to knowledge management* to include the review of historical queries, as well as the creation, sharing and update of information

CONFIDENTIAL

- Establish links with third-level institutions for the purpose of undertaking cost effective research and/or developing intern arrangements

Note: Resource Considerations Relating to Research & Knowledge Development

* Including research amongst members rather than (only) commissioned research

Projects, Reach, Communications & Future

- Select projects to reflect areas of particular need and interest to members
- Target communications to focus internally, with provision for selective, judicious and occasional external messages where relevant or of benefit to ACESA
- Consider development of a moderate public profile* to promote awareness of ACESA, NCSSB contributions and value to the citizen – while also dispelling certain myths
- Complete review and re-design/update the membership survey to increase associated value and benefit
- Develop the members' area of the ACESA website as an effective channel of communication and engagement
- Actively promote ACESA and membership benefits to non-members
- Identify how, as a resource, we can be of greater assistance to each other
- Explore perceived value of CEO guide, scope for enhancement and return-on-investment associated with updating

* Succinct information regarding 'who we are' and 'what we do'

CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix 2

Rapporteurs' Summary Points

Table 1 - Presented by Tomás Ó Ruairc

Core Function and Purpose

1. Group felt that a distinctionC should be drawn between agency (our agency as people) and Agency (corporate / organisation).
    a. Are we clear about our network as one of CEO's, not agencies?
    b. Strong support for the view that ACESA is representative of, not for.
    c. The opportunity for networking and for personal follow-up is the greatest strength of ACESA.
    d. Are we leveraging our collective talent and expertise most effectively in the briefing sessions?

2. Agency (with a capital A!)
    a. Round-robin emails are very helpful.
    b. With a caveat of discretion, could a table of queries raised be compiled to gather and save collective memory?
    c. Question raised about working "with" the centre.
        i. Are "they" actually interested in this? Will it happen?
        ii. Can ACESA work with the centre or is this more a matter for each agency and Department?
        iii. What do DPER do with ACESA input?
        iv. Could we think in terms of ACESA engaging with the centre, rather than working with them?
    d. Who is here (at breakfast sessions) and who is not? Why? Do they all have a voice? Do some have a connection that they are happy with I.e. they don't need ACESA!

Value, relevance and logistics

Comments here come under the theme of personal, professional and the space between.

1. Engagement between CEO's – most valuable aspect of ACESA.
    a. Diplomatic impact of the humble coffee bean.
    b. We need to tap into our internal resources a bit more.
    c. Share experience e.g. PMDS, both from the point of view of ourselves as CEO's (performance reviews) as well the reviews we conduct of colleagues.
    d. We need to map ourselves better – perhaps establish sub-groups along various themes.
2. Agency (capital A!)
    a. Opportunities for complimentary work around the agency governance work which IPA does.
3. Space and time
    a. Ultimately ACESA offers space and time to foster relationships which will facilitate effective and helpful conversations.
    b. This is so important because the half-life of a CEO tends to be short!

CONFIDENTIAL

c. We need to share our learning more – we don't know an awful lot about ourselves as people and as professionals.

Research and future needs

The underpinning theme for our comments here was process and product.

1. We need to define what we mean by research – not narrowly prescribe, but nonetheless be clear as to what is included.
2. Some practical suggestions:
    a. Tracking and review of historical queries – what themes are bubbling up?
    b. Look at international comparators e.g. European examples, which may well be quite different.
    c. Horizon scanning – to support thought leadership; identify common issues for potential collaboration – always remembering that we are a network of CEO's.
    d. The Innovation Report was a good example of point c above. This echoes back to earlier points about the importance of mapping ourselves.
    e. Are we getting the best from mentoring? What is the best structure / approach?

Projects, research and communications

1. External messaging
    a. Stick to the facts e.g. 40% of members are female. Lack of any enthusiasm for adopting positions as a collective.
2. Preference expressed for projects of internal interest.
3. On a spectrum from internal to external, strong preference for spiral learning between us as people at the internal end of the spectrum.
4. Agreement that we should not be in the social media space.
5. Are we making the best use of the tools that we have? E.g. website – importance of using technology to augment human relationships to foster better conversations….

Table 2 – Presented by Liz Pope

1. **Core Functions and Purpose**

- Committed to the delivery of excellence in public service by working jointly with central Government
- Influencing central Government by identifying 3 common critical issues across agencies (we need a mechanism to capture and align the views of members on this)
- A professional network, support and resource for state agency CEOs
- Mechanism for retaining, sharing knowledge topics that can't be shared easily

2. **Briefing Sessions**

- DPER, Lucy Fallon-Byrne – continue these to keep track of emerging reform plans and progress
- Expenditure briefings from DEPR (from the Vote side)

CONFIDENTIAL

- Shared experience workshops on HR/Workforce Planning/Organisational Management topics (e.g. succession planning, mobility, performance management)
- Evening session - at least 1 (more) per year
- Consider ½ day or full-day session once/year

3. **Research Focus and Future Needs**

- Process for identifying priorities and selecting research needs (use survey or supplemental??) – must be of common interest across agencies
- Peer support (not mentoring) – create mechanism for this

4. **Projects, Research and Communications**

- Creating awareness of agency issues to Secretaries General network and CSMB
- ACESA should not be a public-facing body
- Main audience for external communications and influencing is senior Government (e.g. Martin Fraser as main conduit)
- Mechanism for capturing membership outside attendees (why are we losing/not engaging them?)

Table 3 – Presented by Patricia Gilheaney

Core Function and Purpose

- Sharing Information
  - Trust / Non-Judgemental
  - Discussion of issues in a confidential forum
  - "short cuts" to getting things done
  - Opportunities

- Knowledge Management
  - Verbal / written
  - Enhance utilisation of the Members Portal
    - Create an inventory of the issues raised by members and the relevant organisation. Other members will then be in a position to make direct contact.

- Influencing
  - Seek clear government policy on state agencies
    - Why/when/how are state agencies established?
    - "Agency Independence" vis-a-vie excellence in public service.

- Anticipation of members needs
  - Informing members which will involve resource costs) in addition to responding to the network.

CONFIDENTIAL

Briefing Sessions

- Time /day of week probably optimal but would need to consult the network to validate that position.
- Look at maximising the use of technology to maximise access and facilitate participation of members outside of Dublin.
- In September seek views from the network regarding speakers for the following 12 months
    - Mix 'internal' and 'external' speakers
    - 'Planned' and 'Themed' in addition to being responsive to current issues
    - Use the portal to access views regarding speakers and topics
- 1st session of the year could perhaps be devoted to each agency sharing 2-3 priorities for them in developing their organisations during the year. This may identify a number of agencies addressing similar issues and a support network to share / discuss progress and issues.

Research Focus and Themes

- Commission Research within confined parameters (CP)
- Establish link with 3rd level institutions – source interns
- Explore maximising use of technology for networking – combination of 'face to face' and technology. Enhanced use of technology would assist in the 'Future Proofing' for the next generation of CEO's.

Projects/Reach/Communications and Future

- Influencing Role?- Yes
    - General Public – succinct information regarding' who we are' and 'what we do'
    - Centre (DPER)
        - Role clarity – what is and more importantly what is not the role of a CEO
        - No such thing as a generic CEO as it is more nuanced than that.
        - Accountability – alignment of role and responsibilities.

Table 4 - Presented by Andy Kelly

1. Core Function and Purpose

- **Representation**
  Clarify of / for – what is the distinction – two issues were mentioned; CEO guidelines and the different approach to existing public servants who have a permanent post in the same organisation and a civil servant who gets seconded with their permanent position protected and the second one was starting new staff on the first point of the scale – question was if ACESA does not raise these issues with D/PER who does when individual departments say it is D/PER not them who are making the rules?

CONFIDENTIAL

- Explore further – recognising that ACESA is not a representative body and should not be.
- Public Services Management Board – a brief on who sits on it, what is its purpose and how can members know more about it?

Proactive championing of Public Service Reforms achieved by Agencies – celebrate success and share the learning with other members.

2. Briefing Sessions – Value, Relevance & Delivery/Logistics

Briefing Sessions

~ Day + Time + Venue – maximise attendance

~ Mix of speakers / Themes

- Inspirational
- Operational

~ Internal panel on current "hot" topics / change initiatives -3/4 topics of 10 minutes followed by Q&A.

~ Mentoring / Buddy System

~ Specific topics – Smaller group to discuss / those interested in the topic – output could be shared with the wider membership

3. Research Focus & Future Needs

~ Research amongst members rather than commissioned research,

Repository of output from queries / research / questions – on website

~ Research being carried out by individual Agencies – not known and could be of value to other Agencies,

~ Share the output

~ Tapping into similar International Organisations – if there is an ACESA type organisation in other countries it could be useful to have a link.

4. Projects, Reach, Communication & Future

Engineer the networking more – when we meet for the breakfast sessions we tend to sit with people we know – perhaps there could be more benefit derived by having arranged seating or as one said, speed change of seating,

Economies of scale – are we missing a trick in terms of joint procurement?

~ Sharing tender documents

CONFIDENTIAL