

## UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

**Nominee:** Legal Policy Division, Ministry of Law

**Nominator:** Public Service Division

**Category:** Improvement of the Quality of the Public Service Process

**Country:** Singapore

**Region:** Asia and the Pacific

**Summary:**

The legal Policy Division of the Ministry of Law successfully implemented the “Polygon of Good Laws” in assessing Bills forwarded by other Ministries. This inexpensive procedure has enabled officers to assess Bills based on a set of criteria mapped onto a Polygon. The shape of the Polygon would help to determine how good a proposed legislation is and the areas needed for fine-tuning.

The Polygon of Good Laws has promoted greater transparency and professionalism in the legislative decision-making process. The Division has come up with a method to scrutinize the law more consistently using international benchmarks. Their laws have become all the better for this and are more consistent with Singapore’s national interest. The Legal Policy Division’s role is to be the “gatekeeper” and to assist Ministries in shaping the eventual Bill to achieve their respective policy objectives in the best way possible.

In assessing legislative Bill, 6 factors are considered in turn. They are rule of law, fairness and reasonableness, certainty and clarity, access to justice, proportionality and consistency of approach. The results are then mapped into a polygon. It is a unique way of reviewing legislative proposals – it has led to identifying and encouraging the making of better laws. The solution is also practical because:

- a. officers now apply the good law criteria so that there could be better laws;
- b. the criteria are clear and easily understood;
- c. the criteria can be applied easily;
- d. it results in equal emphasis given to all criteria set out in the polygon;

The new system has also resulted in reduction in time taken to review bills, manpower savings and such intangible benefits, such as sound legal infrastructure which promotes economic and social development.