

Scenario 9: Consultation on proposed government policy that is politically controversial

An agency is ready to undertake consultation on a proposed government policy by publishing a consultation document on their website. It is in the middle of a pre-election period and the topic is an election issue with strong and divergent views across political parties.

Practical guidance

- In general, consulting on a proposed government policy may be appropriate to go ahead close to an election where there is good reason to do so.
- If proceeding, the agency and staff need to carefully work through how they will meet their political neutrality obligations to mitigate the perception that funds are being used to finance publicity for party political purposes.
- However, if there is no reason to go ahead at this time an agency may consider talking to the Minister about a possible delay in the public consultation.

