Appling the Policy Capability Framework to improve future policy performance

WHAT THIS TOOL IS FOR

Do you want to know if your policy team or organisation is the best it could be – both now and for the future?

The Policy Capability Framework stimulates reflection and courageous conversations about current performance. These will help identify strategies and priorities to improve your policy performance in the future.

MAIN FEATURES OF THIS TOOL

The Policy Capability Framework encompasses the four main dimensions of capability that policy leaders have identified as critical in a high-performing policy shop. For each dimension, a high-level question starts the conversation about policy capability improvement.

![Policy Capability Framework diagram](image)

We have two tools available to help you apply the framework:

1. **The ‘deep-dive’ review tool** facilitates in-depth conversations. It provides lead questions for the different elements of all four policy capability dimensions. It includes lines of inquiry to help you answer the questions.

2. **The ‘deeper-dive’ review tool** adds a maturity ranking scale. For each element of the dimensions, you will ask:
   - Where are we now?
   - Where do we want to be, and by when?
   - What will we do to get there?
   The answers you reach will form the basis of an action plan to improve your policy capability.

Instructions on **HOW TO USE THIS TOOL** can be found overleaf.

REFERENCES
You can access the Policy Capability Framework deep-dive tools from the Policy Project’s page.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

1. Get a clear mandate from your leadership team for a policy capability review that evaluates current capability and sets a direction for improvement.

2. Decide whether to use self-review, partial external input, or an externally-led review process.

3. Ensure that policy staff feel involved in the review process (‘doing with’ rather than ‘doing to’) and that they have time allocated to participate in the diagnosis and design of improvement solutions.

4. Counsel the staff in your policy team about needing to have an open mind and being prepared to challenge themselves.

5. Apply the two deep-dive tools that underpin the Policy Capability Framework. This will produce an action plan.

6. Implement the action plan in a way that engages those who need to make changes to achieve better policy performance.

This example page from the Policy Capability Framework shows its components:

- elements
- lead questions
- lines of inquiry and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Lead question</th>
<th>Lines of inquiry / indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work allocation</td>
<td>How well does the distribution of work support staff development and resilience?</td>
<td>How well is work distributed amongst staff? Are there some staff that regularly have spare capacity or are regularly overloaded? Is there an overreliance on experienced ‘policy stars’ to keep the policy machine running (key person risk)? To what extent are core staff (versus contractors) doing the key work? How does the distribution of work (in the team, buying in expertise) support building in-house capability?</td>
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