Presentation to
**the Finance and Public Administration Committee
of the Scottish Parliament**

Overview of the Policy Project

18 April 2023

About the Policy Project

Origins

Initiated in 2014 by senior public service leaders – keen to explore joint approaches to tackling shared issues like:

- an uneven quality of policy advice
- various work-force issues
- short-termism

Purpose

To help the Head of the Policy Profession build a high performing policy system:

- that supports and enables good decision-making (now and in the future)

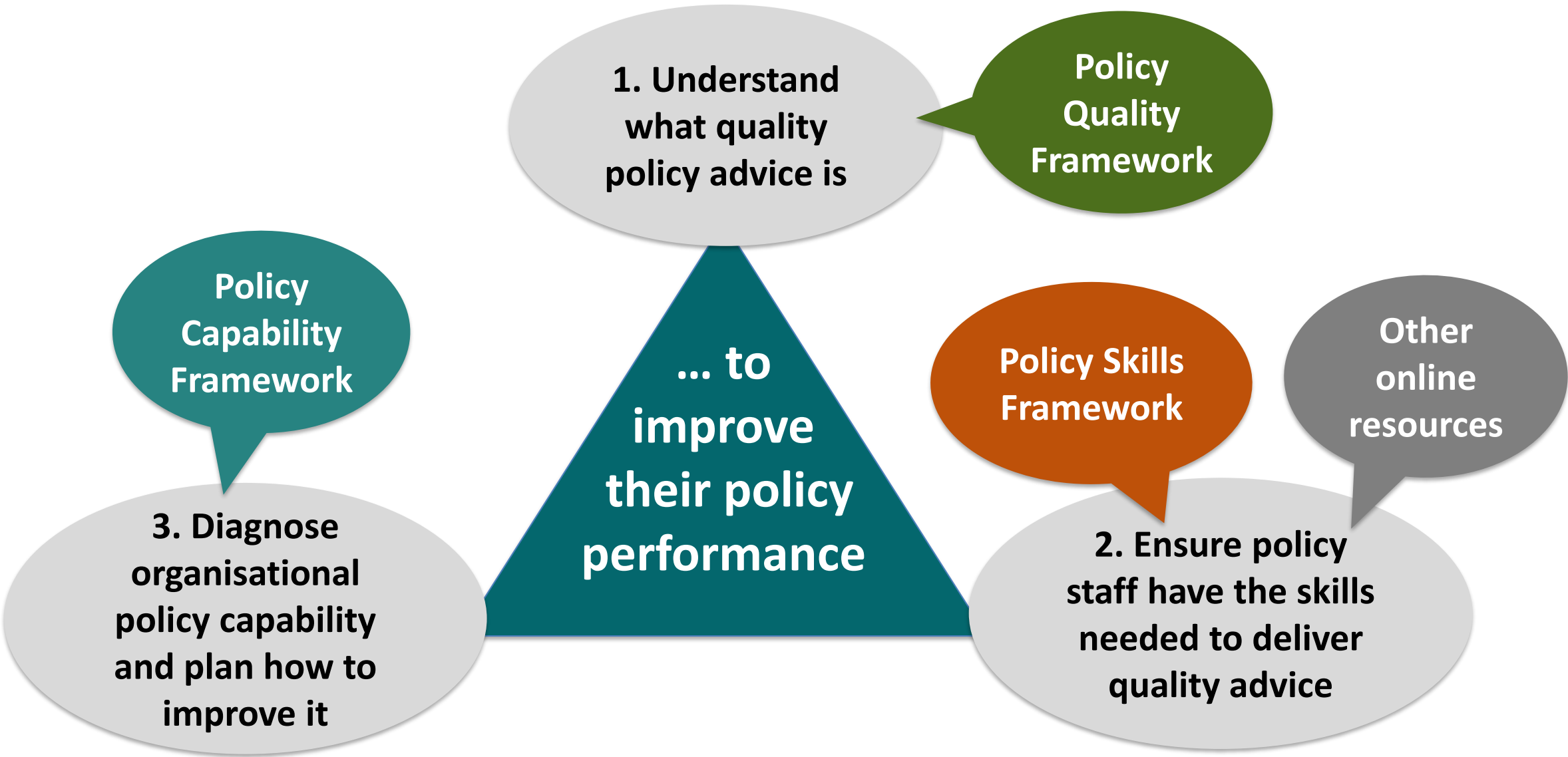- to improve the lives of people in New Zealand

Funding

- **Initially annual co-funding** from 8 medium to large-sized depts
- **2019/20: moved to 3 year co-funding** by all Public Service departments – 4 tier contributions based on the size of policy workforce

Governance

The Head of the Policy Profession is advised by:

- a Policy Profession Board (8 members)

- the Tier 2 Policy Leaders' Network (from all 28 government departments)

Policy Quality Framework – high level version

Setting
the scene

Context
– explains why the
decision maker is
getting this and
where it fits

Quality
advice

Identifying the
right advice

Analysis
– is clear, logical
and informed
by evidence

Communicating
the right advice

Advice
– engages the
decision maker
and tells the full
story

Action
– identifies who
is doing what
next

Specifying
the next key
steps

The **high-level
version of the
Policy Quality
Framework** sets
out four standards
for quality policy
advice

Policy Quality Framework
– summary version

The four **Context, Analysis, Advice and Action** standards each have a number of supporting elements.

The **summary version** of the PQF collectively describes all of the 17 characteristics of quality policy advice – particularly written advice

The **full version of the PQF** provides further information about each of the 17 elements in the summary version.

dpmc.govt.nz/publications/full-policy-quality-framework

Context
– explains why the decision maker is getting this and where it fits

Purpose, context, priorities, and connections across government are clear

Outlines previous advice and history of the issue

Analysis
– is clear, logical and informed by evidence

Clearly defines the problem or opportunity, rationale for intervention, and policy objectives

Uses relevant analytical frameworks and methodologies

Incorporates Treaty and te ao Māori analysis

Is informed by relevant research and evidence

Advice
– engages the decision maker and tells the full story

Enables a clear and informed decision or next steps

Assesses options to make impacts clear and reveal workable solutions

Reveals diverse views, experiences and insights and engagement approaches

Is communicated in a clear, concise and compelling way

Is free and frank

Reflects diverse perspectives

Makes any limitations of the analysis and advice clear

Outlines risks and mitigations

Anticipates decision maker's needs, next steps and timing

Action
– identifies who is doing what next

Enables effective implementation

Explains how the solution will be monitored and evaluated

Developing papers with the Policy Quality Framework
Checklist for reviewing papers in development

The Policy Project

This checklist can be used when reviewing a paper that you (or someone else) are developing. The Policy Quality Framework sets out four standards of quality policy analysis and advice. Detailed characteristics sit under each of these standards. Depending on the paper, some of the standards may not apply. If some content isn't in the paper, it's worth asking whether or not the omission was deliberate.

Questions to ask	Things to do
What's the elevator pitch?	
○ Is the purpose of the paper clear? Can you explain the key points in three sentences?	• Imagine yourself briefing the decision maker in a meeting – what would you say?
Context – explains why the decision maker is getting this and where it fits	
○ Is the purpose of the paper clear? ○ Is it clear why the decision maker is getting this advice now? ○ How does it fit with the decision maker's priorities? ○ What previous advice has the decision maker had on this?	• Be clear about why the paper is being provided, and why now. • Outline how the issue relates to the decision maker's priorities. • Remind the decision maker what has already been agreed. • Refer to any previous briefings and advice.
Analysis – is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
○ Is the issue clearly defined? ○ Does the evidence support the analysis? ○ Is there a clear rationale for whether or not the government should intervene ? ○ Are the policy objectives clear? ○ Are the options credible? ○ What analytical frameworks and methodologies are used in the analysis? ○ Are Treaty and te ao Māori frameworks used in the analysis? ○ Does the analysis reveal diverse views, experiences and insights?	• Structure the paper so the argument flows logically. • Make the analysis proportionate to the scale and importance of the issue. • Distinguish between the root causes and the symptoms of problems. • Identify who has a stake in the issue, and why. • Document the engagement strategies used. • Identify how the problem or opportunity and policy options could affect Māori, uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles, and affect Māori Crown relationships. • Indicate if the evidence is inconclusive or the outcomes uncertain. • Assess the options according to clearly stated criteria. • Check that the options are workable, and test with end users if possible.
Advice – engages the decision maker and tells the full story	
○ Will the advice help the decision maker to act? ○ Is the paper easy to read and free of errors? ○ Is it in the best format? ○ Is it free and frank?	• Use narrative headings to storyline the paper and clarify key messages. • Consider using a key messages section rather than an executive summary. • Make clear, action-oriented recommendations that make sense even when separated from the paper. They should reflect the paper's content. • Alert the decision maker to the possible consequences of particular decisions (even if it challenges their

The Policy Skills Framework

- **Describes the capabilities policy practitioners require to be able to deliver quality policy advice:**
  - **Knowledge**
  - **Applied skills**
  - **Behaviours**

- **Provides – for all 15 PSF elements:**
  - **detailed descriptors** of what policy practitioners are expected to be able to do
  - **at three capability levels:**
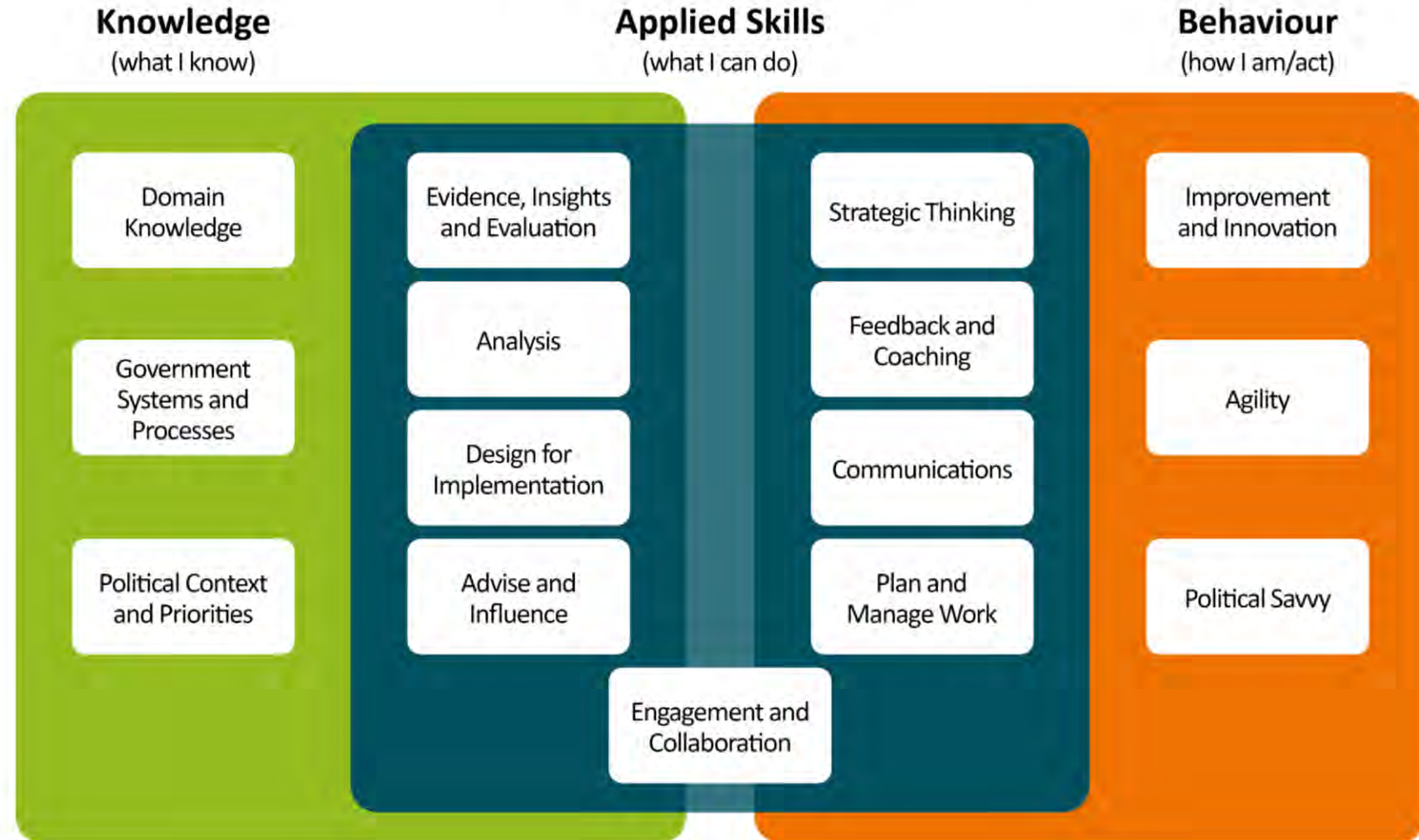
  Developing   Practicing   Expert/Leading

Policy Skills Framework

Knowledge
(what I know)

Applied Skills
(what I can do)

Behaviour
(how I am/act)

- Domain Knowledge
- Government Systems and Processes
- Political Context and Priorities

- Evidence, Insights and Evaluation
- Analysis
- Design for Implementation
- Advise and Influence

- Strategic Thinking
- Feedback and Coaching
- Communications
- Plan and Manage Work

- Engagement and Collaboration

- Improvement and Innovation
- Agility
- Political Savvy

Example from the Policy Skills Framework

Evidence, Insights and Evaluation
Gather and generate evidence to support analysis

Developing

- ☐ Becoming familiar with how to use evidence throughout the policy cycle.
- ☐ Growing an understanding of the different kinds of qualitative and quantitative evidence, evidence sources and evaluation types.
- ☐ Learning how to summarise and synthesise evidence to draw conclusions (e.g. on key issues, their magnitude, root causes and possible solutions).
- ☐ Learning how to incorporate end-user perspectives accurately and empathetically into analysis.

Practising

- ☐ Can synthesise diverse information and evidence, distil what is important, and use it to tell a coherent story.
- ☐ Can competently assess the quality and limitations of evidence, data and research. Understands empirical methodology, principles of data integrity, and the basics of statistical analysis.
- ☐ Understands methodologies for drawing insights from the 'citizen-as-customer' and the frontline, and how those insights can inform policy.
- ☐ Can identify measurable and meaningful indicators of effectiveness, plan (and possibly execute) fit-for-purpose evaluations, and extract lessons learnt to help build an ongoing evidence base.

Expert / Leading

- ☐ Applies expert knowledge to lead others in developing strong evidence-informed policy.
- ☐ Develops and guides others on the right lines of inquiry.
- ☐ Draws on the right capabilities to mine data and use 'big data' for insights that can enable better decisions and create value.
- ☐ Can commission and/or execute monitoring and evaluations, and build their findings into policy development, at early and subsequent stages in the policy cycle.

How Policy Managers can use the Policy Skills Framework

Diagnosing your team's strengths and gaps

	Knowledge				Applied skills									Behaviour				
Name	Domain Knowledge	Government Systems and Processes	Political Context and Priorities	Evidence, Insights and Evaluation	Analysis	Design for Implementation	Advise and Influence	Engagement and Collaboration	Strategic Thinking	Feedback and Coaching	Communication	Plan and Manage Work	Improvement and Innovation	Agility	Politically Savvy

The Policy Project

Development Pathways Tool: a companion to the PSF

From the Policy Skills Framework

- describes **'what'** to achieve

dpmc.govt.nz/ development- pathways-tool

Evidence, Insights and Evaluation

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- Understands methodologies for drawing insights from the 'citizen-as-customer' and the frontline, and how those insights can inform policy.
- Can identify measurable and meaningful indicators of effectiveness, plan (and possibly execute) fit-for-purpose evaluations, and extract lessons learnt to help build an ongoing evidence base.

PRACTISING

70% on-the-job learning

- ☐ Develop a strategic relationship with your agency's data team, so they are familiar with your requirements.
- ☐ Identify and communicate themes from data analysis results along with methodology strengths and limitations.
- ☐ Participate in policy projects that have a significant information and evidence base.
- ☐ Apply the design thinking, behavioural insights and futures thinking guidance in the Policy Project's Policy Methods Toolbox to one of your projects.
- ☐ Build into your projects opportunities to revisit policy assumptions based on the evidence base.
- ☐ Use a variety of methods to bring data and information to life for non-specialists.
- ☐ Commission complex data extraction and collection internally and externally.
- ☐ Ensure that policy projects allow sufficient time for data collection and analysis.
- ☐ Critically evaluate the accuracy, completeness, consistency, uniqueness and timeliness of data you use as evidence.
- ☐ Share and present your data analysis and evaluation findings from specific projects and discuss lessons learned.
- ☐ Mentor and coach others in developing strong evidence-informed policy.

20% learning from others (including colleagues)

- ☐ Join relevant communities of practice or networks (e.g. Government Economics Network).
- ☐ Consult and work with data specialists, survey design specialists, co-design and public participation experts, and evaluation experts to learn about and ensure the appropriateness of the:
  - – design and collection of data and research
  - – design and use of survey tools for collecting qualitative information (e.g. Survey Monkey)
  - – design of evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of current policy interventions or post policy implementation effectiveness.
- ☐ Develop relationships with Māori academics and others who have an interest in data in your subject area.
- ☐ Discuss with experienced colleagues how to balance apparently conflicting analytical approaches.

10% formal learning

- ☐ Consider more advanced courses on statistical analysis and methodologies for drawing insights from the 'citizen-as-customer'.
- ☐ Undertake a programme evaluation course (e.g. Programme Evaluation – Supporting Evidence-Informed Practice by University of Auckland).
- ☐ Attend conferences such as indigenous data summits (e.g. Ngā Pae o te Maramatanga).

Content in the body of each DPT page:

- describes **'how'** to achieve it
- identifies some practical actions policy advisors could take to build this aspect of their policy capability

Select the skill you wish to develop

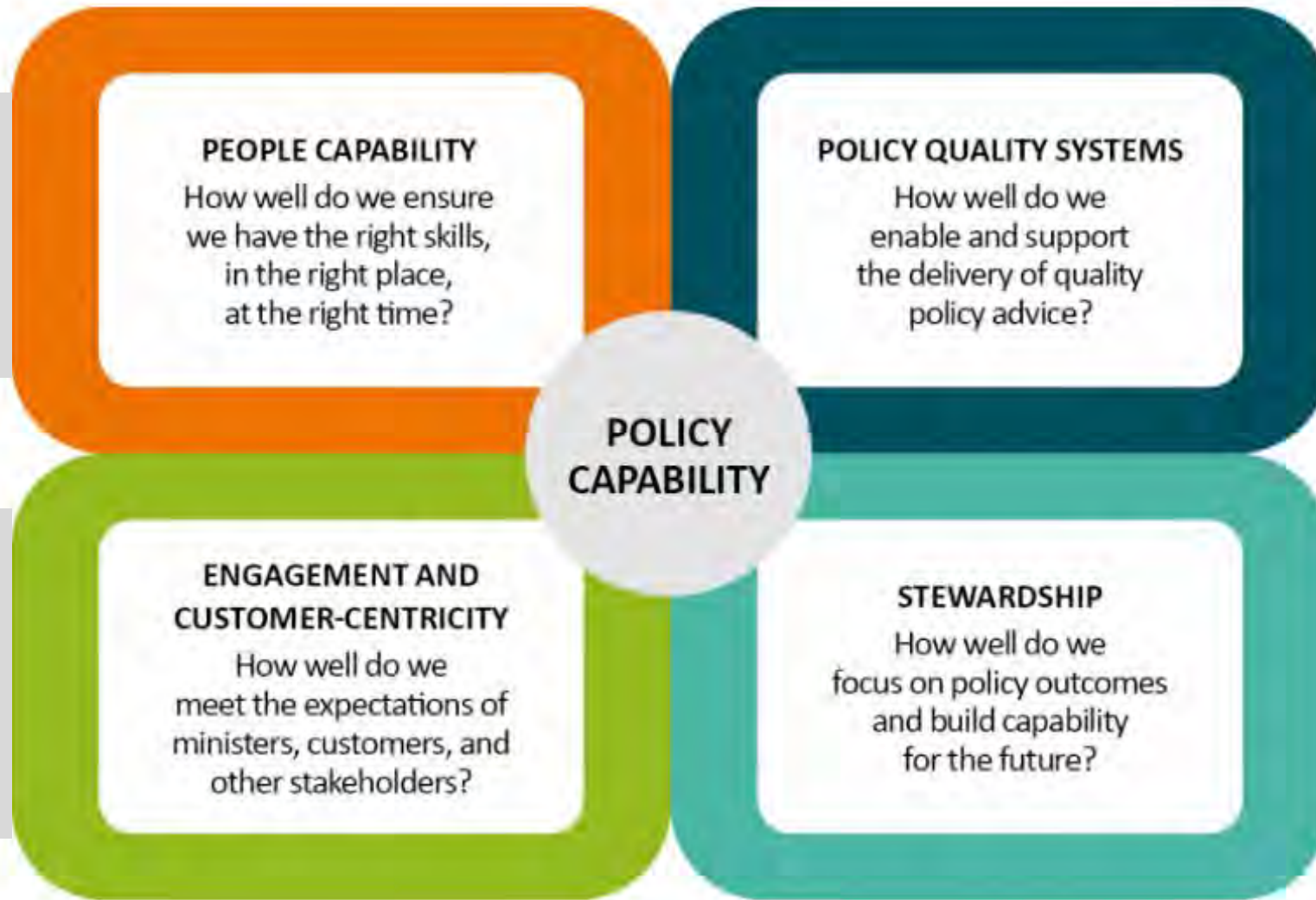Select the development level you want to achieve

– All –

– All –

Find your pathway   Start again

Policy Capability Framework: focuses on organisational capability

- Team makeup & diversity
- Career paths/progression
- Development and training
- Decision rights and enablers
- Work allocation

PEOPLE CAPABILITY
How well do we ensure we have the right skills, in the right place, at the right time?

POLICY QUALITY SYSTEMS
How well do we enable and support the delivery of quality policy advice?

- Commissioning
- Planning and project management
- Research, analysis and knowledge
- Quality assurance
- Evaluation and learning

POLICY CAPABILITY

- Ministers and Cabinet
- Customers and other end users
- Other agencies
- Stakeholders
- Frontline staff/delivery units

ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY
How well do we meet the expectations of ministers, customers, and other stakeholders?

STEWARDSHIP
How well do we focus on policy outcomes and build capability for the future?

- Leadership and direction
- Strategy and priorities
- Culture
- Investment in future capability

Policy Capability Framework – review tool

Policy quality systems – build the systems and processes that support the delivery of quality policy advice

Element	Lead question	Lines of inquiry / Indicators	Where are we now?	Where do we want to be? By when?	What will we do to get there?
Commissioning	How well does the team use appropriate systems and processes to ensure that the supply of policy advice meets demand and has impact?	Is the policy intent/commissioned product clear from inception? Is there 'free and frank' challenge where necessary (where an alternative approach/process might have more chance of delivering policy intent)? Are appropriate commissioning tools, templates and guidance made available and consistently used by policy staff? To what extent are policy staff able to be present at meetings with senior officials/Ministers when work is commissioned? What strategies are in place to avoid policy intent being 'lost in translation' (including through relationships with ministerial office staff)? How is proactive, unsolicited, policy advice offered and received (e.g. proposing changes to policy settings or transformative policy shifts)?			
Planning and project management	How well does the team ensure that the right policy outputs are delivered, on time, using the most efficient mix of resources?	How are resources prioritised to the highest value work, and low value work deprioritised/stopped? How are policy outputs costed, and how is this information used for planning, prioritisation and resource allocation? Are outputs typically delivered on time and within budget? Are 'fit for purpose' project management methods and tools effectively employed by policy staff? What templates and guidance are available to support the choice of method? Are project management skills present in the policy team?			
Research, analysis and knowledge	How well is the policy team actively investing in building its knowledge base over time?	How well does the policy team understand, keep up to date with and contribute to the body of knowledge in its field, including relevant literature, and evidence? Are key information gaps identified and is there a plan in place to address them? What systems are in place for recording and accessing relevant previous approaches to policy issues, current evidence (local and international) and anticipating future trends? Are policy staff clear about the set of analytical tools they are required to have proficiency in? Is there good data architecture? Is knowledge (not just data) being generated?			

Maturity levels

Informal Ad hoc practices that are specific to the person, team and/or situation specific.

Enabled Policy processes, capability and support systems in place.

Practiced Formal systems and practices enacted, generally effective but requires concerted effort to embed.

Embedded Systems and practices part of culture, used consistently and confidently, with success. Regular review drives continuous improvement.

Policy Project's work programme – six main elements

1 Support agencies to build policy capability and improve quality of advice

2 Build and maintain an active policy community

3 Operate at the policy system level

4 Improve and extend Policy Project frameworks, tools and guidance

5 Promote awareness and use of Policy Project frameworks, tools and guidance

6 Monitor and evaluate Policy Project performance and respond to findings

The Policy Project

Start Right

Start Right is also known as policy commissioning, policy initiation and project management for policy development.

Design thinking

Design thinking is also known as human-centred design, co-design and participatory design.

Futures thinking

Futures thinking is also known as foresight, strategic foresight and futures studies.

Behavioural insights

Behavioural insights involves the study of human behaviour, often drawing on empirical research in fields including economics, psychology and sociology.

Policy Methods Toolbox

Community engagement

Engaging individuals and groups from the community to participate in policy design and development through:

Treaty of Waitangi analysis

Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi analysis applies the terms and concepts in the texts of the Treaty to policy development and implementation.

Policy Advice Themes

- Commissioning a policy project
- Communicating policy advice
- Evidence and evaluation
- 'Free and frank' advice
- Innovation
- Policy and Law
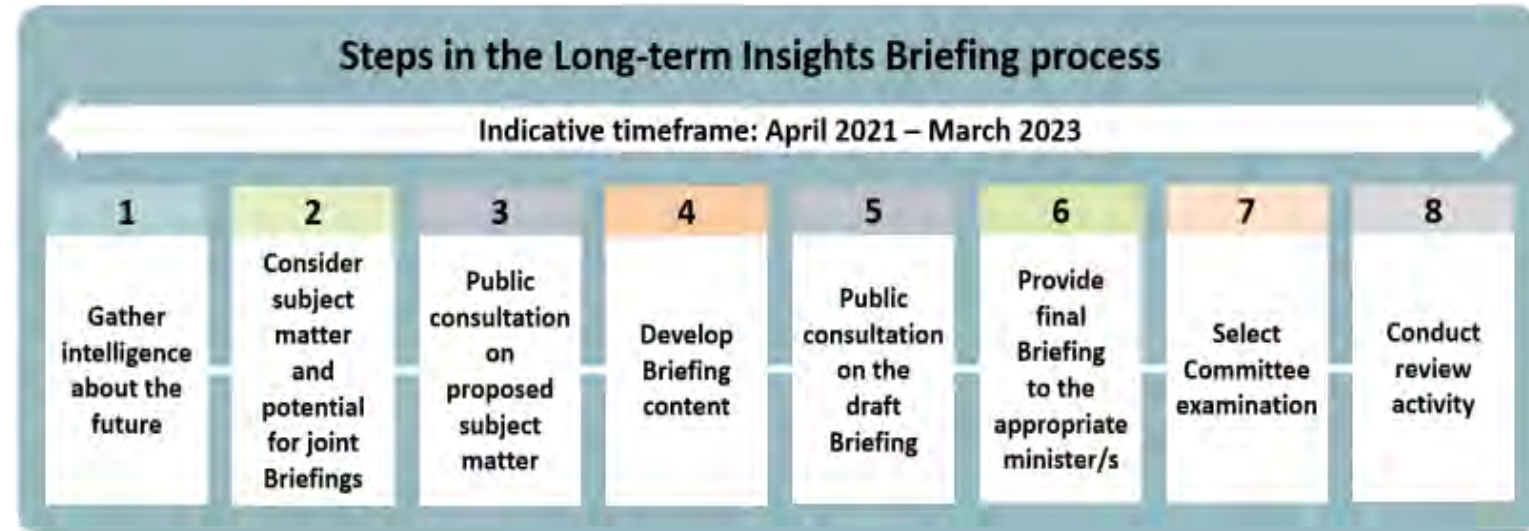- Stewardship

Long-term Insights Briefings

The *Public Service Act 2020* introduced **a new statutory duty on New Zealand government department Chief Executives** – to regularly consider the long term

They must **publish a Long-term Insights Briefing** – singly or jointly
- at least <u>once every three years</u>
- <u>independently of Ministers</u>

The purpose of these public service 'think pieces on the future' is to make available in the public domain "information:
- about medium and long-term trends, risks and opportunities that affect or may affect NZ and NZ society
- impartial analysis, including policy options for responding to these matters".

Steps in the Long-term Insights Briefing process

Indicative timeframe: April 2021 – March 2023

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gather intelligence about the future	Consider subject matter and potential for joint Briefings	Public consultation on proposed subject matter	Develop Briefing content	Public consultation on the draft Briefing	Provide final Briefing to the appropriate minister/s	Select Committee examination	Conduct review activity

First round of Briefings: 2021–2023

- 28 government departments produced Briefings on 19 topics
- Varying approaches adopted to futures thinking and engaging with citizens
- 7 LTIBs are yet to be tabled in Parliament
- The Policy Project will lead a review of the first round, then update LTIB guidance

The Policy Project