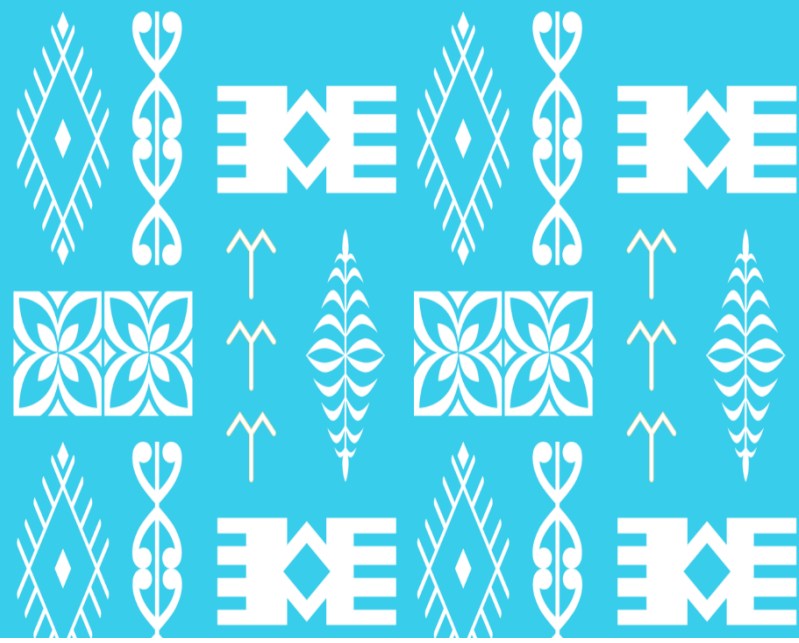




Pacific Public Service Workforce Planning Guideline



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In November 2023, Pacific Public Service Commissions developed and endorsed workforce planning principles at the Public Service Commissioners Fono meeting held in Wellington, New Zealand. Pacific Island Public Services later considered the development of a Pacific Public Service Workforce Planning Guideline, to provide direction on workforce planning processes and practices in the region. Supported by the governments of Australia and New Zealand, this work builds on previous undertakings to reinforce and strengthen workforce management and development in the Pacific.

1.2 Purpose

The Pacific Public Service Workforce Planning Guideline aims to strengthen workforce planning capability in the Pacific. It aims to inform and empower Pacific Public Services when undertaking workforce planning activities. It is intended to be a living document, and may change depending on workforce planning practices, as well as the needs of your government and country.

1.3 Objectives of the Guideline

The objectives of this Guideline are to:

- support Pacific Island countries in building workforce planning capability in the Public Service;
- provide clear step-by-step guidance and methodologies on how to develop your Workforce Plan;
- provide best practice guidance, information, insights, recommendations and frameworks to help develop your Workforce Plan;

2. What is Workforce Planning?

2.1 Defining Workforce Planning

Workforce Planning is a process for organisations to determine their workforces to deliver on their strategic development priorities.

Workforce planning supports organisations to plan for short-to-long term workforce needs, including strategies on how identified gaps will be met. These can include recruiting, development, promotion, mobilisation, succession planning, re-skilling or re-training, and others. Workforce planning supports business continuity by having the right capabilities as and when required.

2.2 Why is Workforce Planning important?



Public Services in the Pacific consistently acknowledge workforce pressures affect the delivery of services to their citizens. Workforce pressures also impact workforce sustainability and public sector capability.

These challenges include, but are not limited to high attrition rates, skills shortages, low or no capacity to deliver on priorities, minimal resourcing for training or retraining, and employee wellbeing (both physical and emotional). These workforce challenges are coupled with evolving demands and expectations from citizens.

Developing a workforce plan for your Public Service helps address these issues, as well as proactively planning for future needs and workforce changes.

Workforce planning is typically permitted through a legal or policy framework. As a result, creating a Workforce Plan is often a required task and will include details about the necessary legal obligations.

Besides legal obligations, an assessment of the workforce will also:

- strengthen your Public Service's capability to deliver on your strategic goals & targets;
- create and promote an understanding of your workforce profile;
- ensure alignment of HR policies to pivot current capacity and shape future workforce profiles;
- clearly identify specialised and technical roles critical to business continuity in your Public Service, and manage them accordingly;
- inform resourcing and expenditure for workforce management and development.

3. Pacific Public Service Workforce Planning Principles

The following are basic principles for developing Workforce Plans in the Pacific:

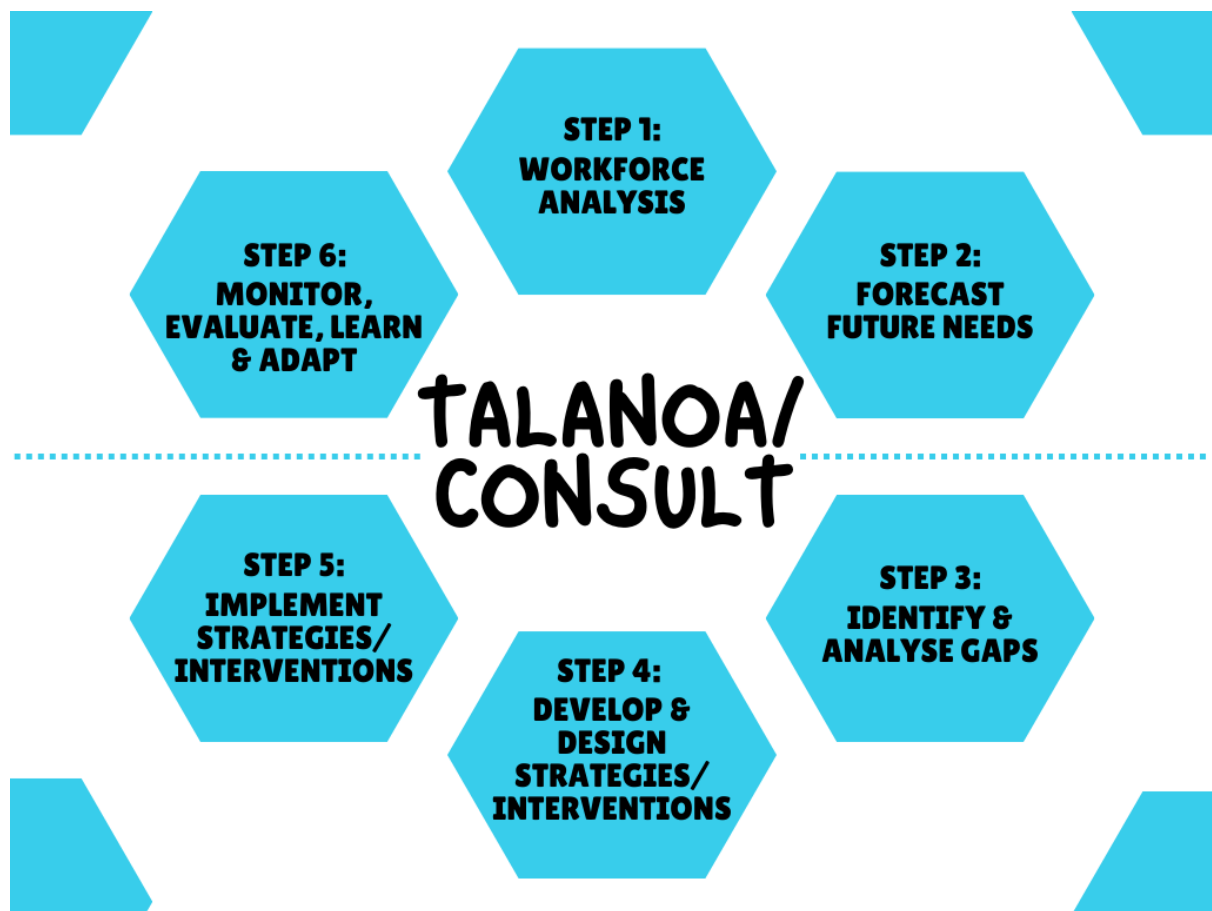
High Level Principle	Description
Pacific-led/owned/driven	Empowering Pacific countries to lead, own, and drive implementation & contextualization of the Strategy to reflect their unique values and priorities.
Culturally-sensitive/appropriate	Ensuring strategies respect and integrate Pacific cultures, languages, and traditions.
Value added	Creating tangible benefits for Pacific peoples, economies, and societies through workforce development.
Politically neutral	Maintaining impartiality to foster trust and inclusivity across diverse political contexts in the Pacific.
Collaboration	Encouraging cooperation and networking among Pacific governments, communities, and sectors to achieve shared workforce goals as outlined in the Strategy.
Partnerships	Building strong, equitable relationships with stakeholders to support sustainable workforce outcomes.
Foresight	Anticipating future trends and challenges to proactively shape workforce strategies.
Evidence-based & Data driven	Using reliable data to inform decisions, track progress, and improve outcomes. Grounding workforce strategies in research and proven/best practices to ensure effectiveness and impact
Flexible & adaptable	Adapting to changing circumstances and needs within Pacific communities and labor markets.
Resilient	Strengthening the Pacific workforce's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions.
Traditional knowledge	Valuing and incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into workforce planning and development.
Agile	Responding quickly and effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges in Pacific workforces

4. The Workforce Planning Model

The Pacific Public Service Workforce Planning model reflects the common stages of workforce planning processes practiced in the region as well as other jurisdictions. It has also been informed by the Australian Public Service Academy's Workforce Planning model. This means it is important for each Pacific Public Service to identify how these elements need to be contextualised to meet their unique workforce needs, in line with the Pacific Workforce Planning Principles.

There are 6 steps to the Pacific Public Service Planning model, outlined in detail below.

PACIFIC PUBLIC SERVICE WORKFORCE PLANNING MODEL



STEP 1: WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Workforce analysis requires an assessment and understanding of the organisational strategic direction, strengths and weaknesses, current workforce profile, external labour market and other environmental factors.

The analysis is informed by your **strategic documents** which may include your National Development Plans, Sector Plans, Corporate Plans, as well as the legislative and policy frameworks outlining your functions and mandates.

The analysis is underpinned by consultations and Talanoa sessions with key stakeholders to ensure relevant information is included., Stakeholder mapping is critical; these will be stakeholders who can support the process by providing data and information, direction, and constructive insights on workforce trends.

In addition to the strategic assessment, workforce analysis must be supported by understanding the external factors impacting your workforce. Tools like the PESTEL and

SWOT Analysis (found in Annex 1 and 2) provide the basis for understanding the external environment and other factors.

The following questions will help guide the review of your Public Service or organisation direction and external environment. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions – Strategic Direction & Workforce Profile

1. Where is the organisation heading in the next 3-5 years?
2. What roles, positions and skills are required to deliver on the strategic priorities?
3. Are core functions clear & currently well resourced?
4. Are there any anticipated changes (functional, structural, operational, etc) in the next 3-5 years?
5. What is the current composition of the workforce (skills, age, gender, etc)?
6. What roles may be required beyond 5 years?
7. Are staff satisfied with their salary packages and entitlements?

Guiding Questions – External & Internal factors

1. What are the internal and external factors influencing your organisation?
2. What are current and projected retirements, turnover, secondments, etc?
3. Are there skill shortages or surpluses in key job roles?
4. How has digital transformation impacted skills requirements?
5. Does the organisation currently rely on contracts or temporary employment to cover key skills gaps?

In the Pacific Islands where workforces are often small, multi-skilled, and tied to cultural values, effective forecasting is essential.

Forecasting involves the following:

- analysing the current workforce capacity using quantitative and qualitative data to understand and anticipate future skills needs and competencies;
- Developing forecasting models; and
- Developing future scenarios using foresight

Understanding what is needed for the future requires an assessment of factors such as demographic shifts, skills availability, and trends in the education and training systems. It also requires consideration of key external influences such as Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), climate change, tourism, labour mobility, digital transformation, and government policy.

While there are different methods to help you forecast future needs, the following options may be considered:

- Foresight
- Scenario planning

The following table provides guidance in developing foresight enabling effective decision making.

	STEP	PURPOSE	KEY ACTIVITIES	QUESTIONS TO ASK
	HORIZON SCANNING	Identify early signals and trends	- Scan global, regional and local developments. - Track policy shifts, tech advancements, climate issues.	What trends could affect public service delivery in 5 – 10 years?
	DRIVERS AND DISRUPTORS ANALYSIS	Understand forces shaping the future	- Identify political, economic, social, technological, environmental; legal (PESTEL) factors. - Evaluate likely vs. high – impact disruptors.	Which forces will most significantly impact our workforce?
	SCENARIO PLANNING	Explore possible futures	- Develop 3-4 scenarios (e.g., status quo, transformation, crisis) - Consider uncertainty and volatility	What would workforce needs look like under each scenario?
	STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS	Translate foresight into workforce insights	- Map required skills, roles, capacities. - Identify capability gaps	What competencies will be needed? Are we growing or shrinking?
	DECISION MAKING AND ACTION PLANNING	Align foresight with workforce strategy	- Prioritise workforce investments. - Build flexible, adaptive plans	What decisions must be made now to prepare for the future?
	CONTINUOUS MONITORING AND LEARNING	Keep foresight relevant and dynamic	Set up KPIs and feedback loops – reassess annually or as condition change	What's working, what's not? What needs adjusting?

Included in these steps, scenario planning is a technique to account for future uncertainties, including natural disasters, economic fluctuations and regional development initiatives. It is based on assumptions made about how the Public Service or your organisation could evolve, or what risks it might face. The detailed steps in scenario planning are found in Annex 3.

The following questions will help guide your forecasting discussions with your stakeholders. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions

1. What would be a culturally appropriate tool to forecast your needs?
2. What would the workforce look like in 5-10 years' time to meet critical skills needs compared with now?
3. What will the organisation's priorities be in the future?
4. How do you plan to deliver these priorities? What skills will you need?
5. If you have the required skills, how will you ensure these skills are retained and nurtured?
6. What technological changes do you foresee may impact your operations and staffing needs?
7. What needs to change now with your workforce to prepare your organisation for the future?

What new knowledge or skills will you need to start thinking about for your organisation? How will you secure these?

STEP 3: IDENTIFY & ANALYSE GAPS

This step includes an analysis of your workforce gaps- the difference between what you have available (supply) and what you need (demand). Once you've identified your gaps, you will need to prioritize areas for action, based on available resourcing and risk associated with the gap if not addressed. The steps outlined in Annex 4 will assist you in identifying and analyzing gaps in your organization.

The following questions will help guide your forecasting discussions with your stakeholders. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions

1. Where do you currently have skills gaps and/or surpluses?
2. What pull factors (both local and regional) are affecting your workforce?
3. What would happen to your organisation if skills gaps are not addressed?
4. What is the attrition rate in your organisation?

STEP 4: DEVELOP STRATEGIES & INTERVENTIONS

This step includes forming solutions, activities and strategies, to address the workforce gaps identified in previous step.

When you reach this step, it is important to consider what success looks like in the future once you've addressed the gap. What do you need to achieve that success? Pacific Public Services should be mindful of the agreed Principles when developing strategies and interventions.

Your strategies may include changes to your recruitment & selection process, improving what you have to offer to attract talent, improving labor supply, organizational culture, how to better retain talent, governance, and capability, etc. A sample of the Workforce Development Strategies Action Plan can be found in Annex 5.

The following questions will help guide this process. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions

1. What cultural considerations will you need to consider in your strategy design?
2. How can you address the gaps we've identified?

3. Will you need to change any policies, processes, frameworks or laws to address these gaps?
4. How will you prioritise the required actions to meet resourcing and need?
5. What best practices can you learn from other Pacific Islands?
What were lessons learned?
6. What are some interventions currently being done that are working well which we can replicate elsewhere in the Workforce?
7. How will we fund these strategies? What can we do if there is no resourcing?

STEP 5: IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES & INTERVENTIONS

This step includes the execution of your solutions, strategies, and interventions.

Some important considerations include change management processes if there are medium-large scale adjustments that need to be implemented. This also includes organisational values and culture that need to be influenced to support implementation.

The following questions will help guide this process. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions

1. How can your strategies become part of business as usual in your organisation?
2. How will you secure stakeholder buy-in? Who will need to endorse the plan?
3. Does the organizational culture support the initiatives? Who will champion your planning process internally?
4. What indicators will you develop and monitor to measure the success and effectiveness of your strategies?
5. How will you secure political support for your strategies?
6. Do you have change management expertise and processes developed for the changes you need to make?
7. Are the existing and proposed policies inclusive? (GEDSI)
8. Do you have a plan to reflect the impact of climate change and other unexpected events like disasters or pandemics?

STEP 6: MONITOR, EVALUATE, LEARN & ADAPT

The last step of this process is an opportunity to review your strategies and interventions against your set indicators. It will help you:

- review performance;
- assessing and determining which strategies are working and not;
- adjusting your workforce strategies as necessary; and
- deciding whether there are strategies need to be dropped, added or adjusted.

Similar with the first step, this should be underpinned by consultations and Talanoa sessions with key stakeholders to ensure all relevant information is included as part of the assessment.

While the focus will be on your strategies, this will also be an opportunity to reconsider your workforce profile on whether there's been any changes. If there has been, you will need to readjust your strategies accordingly.

You will need to decide on how often you should monitor, what sort of metrics you should use to monitor, what impacts (both medium-long term) are you looking for, can the changes be sustained, can new practices be duplicated to change the norm, and other considerations.

The following questions will help guide the implementation of this process. Pacific Public Services are encouraged to select what is relevant to their context and workplan:

Guiding Questions

1. What did success look like from the beginning? Did you achieve it?
2. With the strategies, what worked well? What didn't work well and could be improved?
3. What systems and processes and data will you use to monitor and evaluate success?
4. Has anything in the organization changed to support changes to the strategies and interventions?
5. Do we have the required workforce now to deliver on priorities?
6. How is the organisation's overall performance now?
7. Are there new critical skills identified throughout the process?
8. Does the organisation have a culture that supports adaptation?

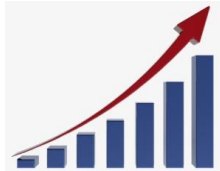
Annex 1: PESTEL Tool



Political

Government direction
Future service demand
Taxation
New Legislation
Policy Impacts

P



Economic

Financial environment
(regional and global)
Interest rates
Unemployment
Exports and Imports
Industry demand for products and services

E



Social

Nature of work
Change in attitude
Ageing population
Geographic population shift
Attitudes to work income distributions

S



Technological

Electronic service delivery
Service access
Communication channels
Innovation
Robotics
Artificial Intelligence

T



Environmental

Turning activities 'green'
Global Warming
Environmental disasters

E

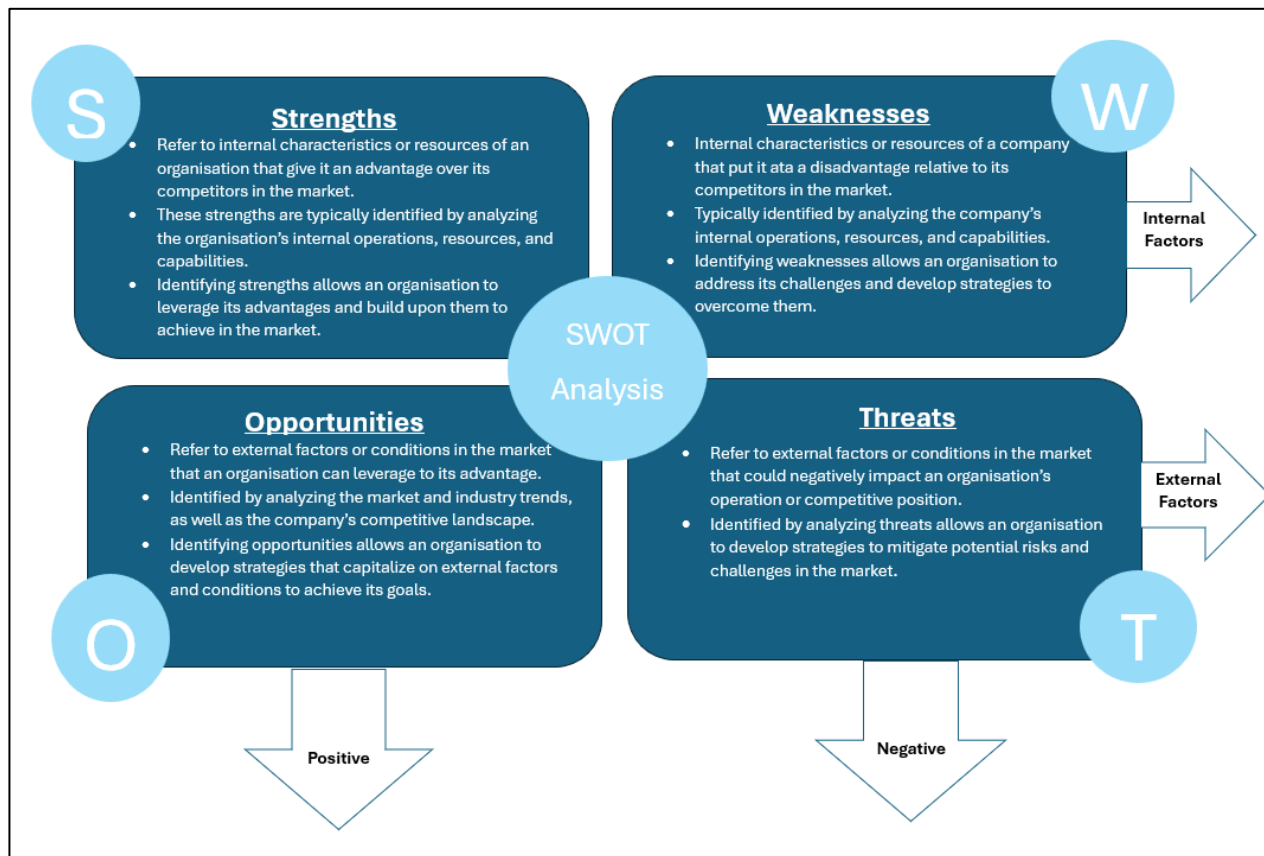


Legal

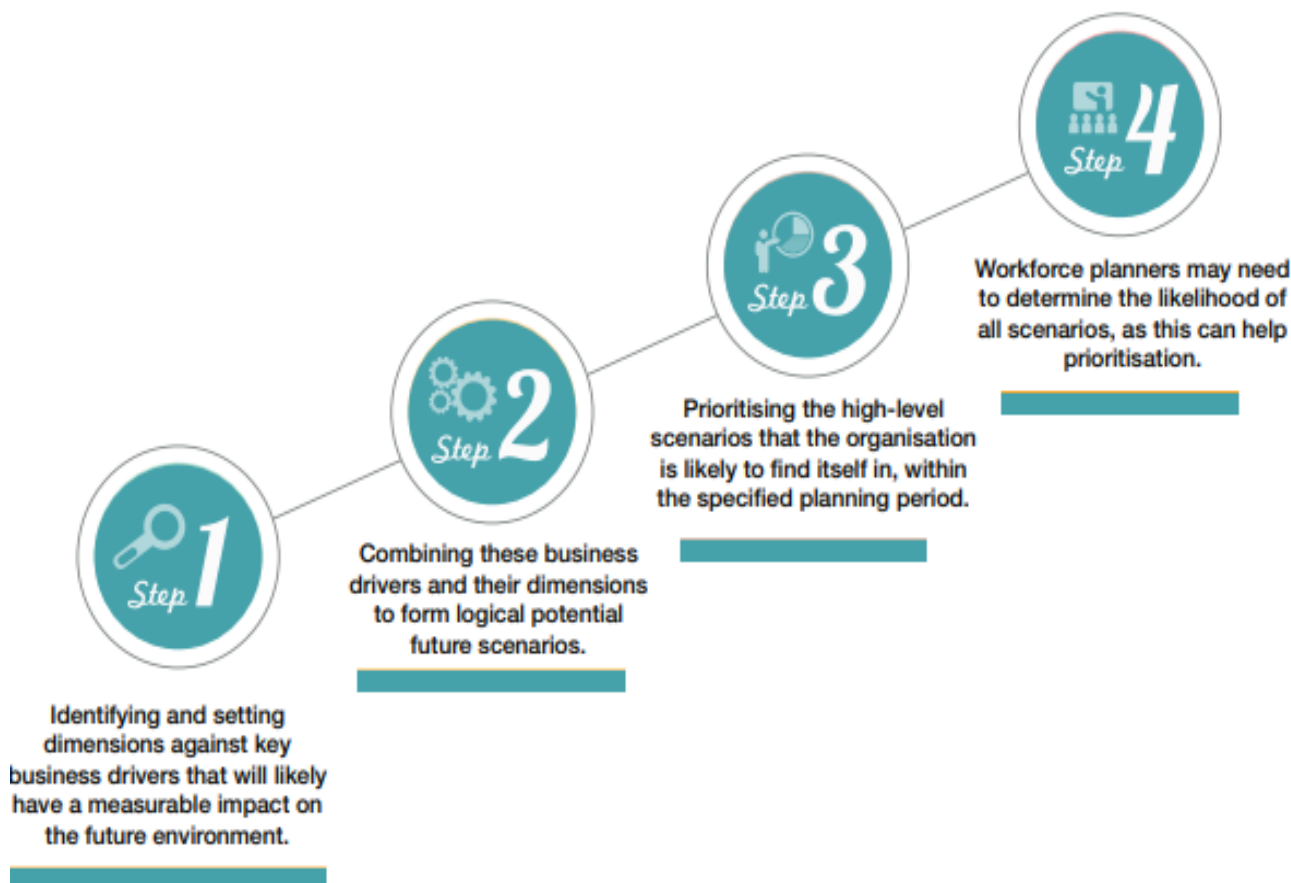
Emerging cases
Legislation and regulation
Health and Safety
Employment law

L

Annex 2: SWOT Analysis Tool



Annex 3: Scenario Planning Tool



Questions to consider as part of scenario planning include:

- What could happen?
- What might happen?
- What is likely to happen?
- What the organisation would like to happen?

Annex 4: Steps to assess Skills Gaps in the Organisation

STEP 1: Identify a particular group of people.

- Within your organisation, this could be a division, department, or a specific level of employment. For example, a division could be IT Division and officers for level of employment.
- Categorise the workforce group by employment level or by job title. The same should be done for other divisions or levels of employment.



STEP 2: Identify Skills Required

- Analyse the identified group of people job descriptions by listing down the skills and competencies required to perform their roles and responsibilities.
- Use the information gathered to develop a list of skills and competencies required noting the level of skills needed to perform their job.



STEP 3: Identify Current Skills.

- Develop a list of skills this specific group have. You will evaluate if this specific group are well equipped to do their jobs.
- Identify training received, performance reviews and other relevant documentation with credible data pertaining to the specific group of people selected.
- Assess the type of skills-flow within the ministry (for example, recent recruits within the last 2 financial years – did they have the relevant qualification and skills to fill the positions? Or were they recruited out of the need to fill the vacancy and with the hope that they will be trained on the job so they will become more suitable? Or were they hired on an ad-hoc basis/ for a defined period (project based)?)
- Group discussions or face to face interviews can also be conducted to help get a better idea of what skills your workforce currently has.



STEP 4: Analyse and Compare Data Collected

- Compile data collected from Step 2 & 3 to compare and analyse.
- Identify the skills gaps by assessing the differences between the two lists.

Skills Required – Current Skills = **SKILLS GAP**

- Sort by Skills Type (soft/hard) and whether it's a critical skill needed.

Example:

<i>Operational</i>	<i>Transformational</i>	<i>Technical</i>
Business/data analytics, time management, planning, business modelling, customer service	Leadership, Innovation, resistance management, Communication (negotiation, networking), Adaptability	Quantity surveying skills (numeracy), patient care, health, and safety



STEP 5: Closing the Gaps

- There are several approaches used to fill in the skills gap, either by training or hiring. It is entirely up to your organisation to decide which approach works best for each skill gap.
 - Proposed approaches to use to close the gaps.
 - Develop an Action Plan.

Annex 5: Sample of Workforce Development Strategies Action Plan Tool

Skills Gap/Workforce Issues	Gap or Workforce Issue Type	Priority Number*	Workforce Development Strategy	Strategy Type**	Measure	Timeline	Responsibility	Completion Date

*Priority Number – 1 (most important), 2 (moderately important) & 3 (least important)

** Strategy Type: Attraction, Recruitment, Retention, Organisational Practices, Flexible Work Arrangements & Training

