STATE SERVICES COMMISSION
Te Komihana O Ngā Tari Kāwanatanga

Official Information Capability Development Toolkit

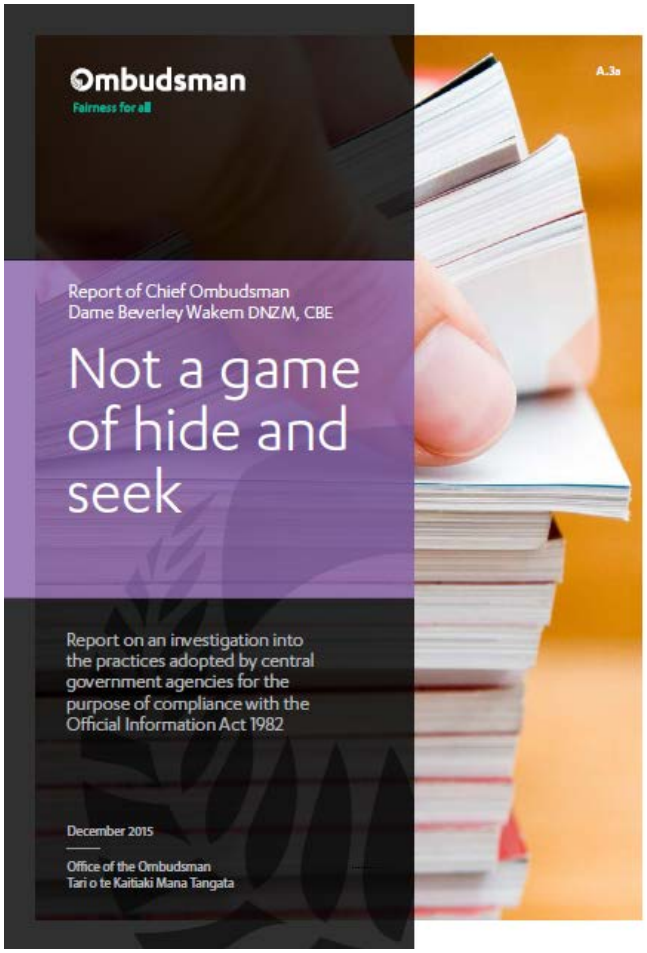
Workshop – December 2017

New Zealand Government

Workshop outline

- Brief overview of the toolkit
- How to use it
- Two pilot agency presentations on their experiences of using the toolkit
- Opportunity to ask questions
- Small group planning activity

Official Information



"Open government and freedom of information is a significant priority for me, and an important part of strengthening, protecting, and nurturing the constitutional principles that underpin the Public Service."

- Peter Hughes

Official Information Capability Development Toolkit

- Provides a structured framework for reviewing official information capability
- Helps agencies identify their strengths and weaknesses, improvement strategies, and priorities
- The approach taken means that the toolkit is not a compliance or benchmarking exercise.

Design principles

A tool to help agencies assess their official information practices in terms of their:

- Compliance with the *letter* of the Official Information Act, particularly in relation to OIA requests, and
- Compliance with the *spirit* of the Act, particularly in relation to the proactive release of information held by the agency.

Future focused
Encourage future focused discussion about agencies' official information capability.

Diagnostic
Identify and prioritise areas for improvement, as well as recognising what is being done well. Not a compliance or benchmarking exercise

Scalable
Different versions of the tool support different types of review to cater for differing agency contexts and needs.

Flexible
Different versions of the tool can be used individually or in combination.

Easy to use
It's easy to use and can be tailored for your agency's context and needs.

What the tool looks like

- Modelled on SSC's Performance Improvement Framework
- Identifies five domains of capability – each with a lead question
- Each domain is divided into a number of key elements
- Each element has a key question and additional lines of enquiry

Components at a glance

Lead question

Domain

Element

Element's key question

Additional lines of enquiry

Maturity rating

OFFICIAL INFORMATION CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT - IN-DEPTH WORKSHEET

Customer focus – *How well do we understand the information needs of New Zealanders and provide accessible and responsive services?*

Element	Key question	Questions to consider in your review	What are we doing well?	What can we improve?	Maturity Rating	When do we need to act?
Understanding customer needs	**How well does the agency understand its customers and their information needs?**	How well does the agency understand who its customers are and their short and longer term information needs? To what extent is the agency website regularly monitored to assess what information is being sought/accessed? To what extent does the agency proactively release ... public is looking for on ... ...mers' ... in which ... policies,				
Engaging with customers	**How well does the agency engage with customers to meet their information needs?**	... making a ...y's website, user ... To what extent does the agency publish information to help requesters make an effective request? How well does the agency engage with requesters to better understand their information needs? How well does the agency explore ways to deliver value to customers in terms of meeting their information needs? How well does the agency continuously work to understand customers' satisfaction and take action accordingly?				
Proactive release	**How well does the agency proactively release information?**	How well do leaders work with their teams to visibly deliver consistent and positive messages on the agency's commitment to openness and transparency about its work? To what degree are there clear and consistent internal policies and procedures for proactive release of information, including publication of OIA responses? To what extent do leaders demonstrate a commitment to openness about their team's work through the proactive release of information (consistent with the agency's internal policy)?				

Review tools

OFFICIAL INFORMATION CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT – INTERMEDIATE LEVEL REVIEW

Intermediate level review

	Lead question	Element	Key question	What good looks like
Customer focus	*How well do we understand the information needs of New Zealanders and provide accessible and responsive services?*	Understanding customer needs	How well does the agency understand its customers and their information needs?	*Official information is provided to the public and stakeholder groups based on understanding of their information needs.*
		Engaging with customers	How well does the agency engage with customers to meet their information needs?	*The agency has procedures in place for contacting requesters and these are reflected in practice.*
		Proactive release	How well does the agency proactively release information?	*An active programme of proactive release of official information is in place, including publication of OIA responses.*
Leadership and direction	*How well do we respond to and advance government's commitment to the principles of openness and transparency?*	Senior leadership commitment	How well does the senior team demonstrate its commitment to openness and meeting official information obligations?	*The senior leadership team provides a clear statement of expectations regarding the agency's commitment to openness and meeting official information obligations.*
		Senior leadership oversight	How well does the senior team provide collective leadership and direction to ensure official information performance?	*Demand and performance information is actively used to inform planning, resourcing and capability building decisions.*
		Working with Ministers	How well does the agency engage with Ministers in relation to OIA requests, responses and information releases?	*There is clear understanding about respective roles and decision making responsibilities under the OIA, and how the 'no surprises' approach will be managed.*
People and development	*How well do we ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time?*	Investing in capability	How well do leaders build official information capability within the agency and across the system?	*There is investment in people to build knowledge and skills, and minimise key person risk.*
		Culture	How well does the agency develop and sustain a culture that embodies openness and transparency?	*All levels of staff and management act consistently with the letter and spirit of the OIA.*
		Training and development	How well does the workforce understand the OIA and their role in the agency's approach to official information?	*OIA training and professional development is planned, organised and undertaken on a regular basis.*
Structure, policies and systems	*How well do our structure, policies and systems support effective and consistent official information practices?*	Organisation design	How well does the agency's organisational structure support official information performance?	*Formal structure exists with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and the delegations for making decisions on OIA requests sit at an appropriate level.*
		Policies, processes and practices	How well do the OIA and information management policies, processes and practices promote efficient, effective and consistent practice?	*Effective OIA and IM policies, procedures and systems are in place, are well understood and are reflected in current practice.*
		Tools	How well does the agency deploy systems and tools to support its official information practices?	*Appropriate tools and technologies are in place to effectively process and track OIA requests.*
Performance	*How well do we monitor and continually improve our official information performance?*	Monitoring and reporting	How well does the agency monitor and evaluate its OIA performance?	*Performance standards are in place and are regularly reported on and reviewed by the senior team.*
		Continuous improvement	How well does the agency encourage and demonstrate continuous improvement of its official information practices and performance?	*Performance information, including complaints data, is used to continually improve OIA policies and procedures.*

Intermediate level review

- Includes suggestions for 'what good looks like'
- Use to start a conversation about capability
- Review tool for low to medium volumes and complexity of OIA requests

In-depth review

- Provides comprehensive evaluation of capability
- Use worksheet to record your detailed findings and prioritise areas for improvement

OFFICIAL INFORMATION CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT - IN-DEPTH WORKSHEET

Customer focus – *How well do we understand the information needs of New Zealanders and provide accessible and responsive services?*

Element	Key question	Questions to consider in your review	What are we doing well?	What can we improve?	Maturity Rating	When do we need to act?
Understanding customer needs	How well does the agency understand its customers and their information needs?	How well does the agency understand its customers and their short and longer term information needs? To what extent is the agency website regularly monitored to assess what information is being sought/accessed? To what extent does the agency proactively release non-sensitive information the public is looking for on its website? To what extent do insights about customers' information needs, including the format in which information is requested (effective agency policies, systems and practices)?				
Engaging with customers	How well does the agency engage with customers to meet their information needs?	To what degree is information about making a request easy to find on the agency's website, user friendly and up to date? To what extent does the agency publish information to help requesters make an effective request? How well does the agency engage with requesters to better understand their information needs? How well does the agency explore ways to deliver value to customers in terms of meeting their information needs? How well does the agency continuously work to understand customers' satisfaction and take action accordingly?				
Proactive release	How well does the agency proactively release information?	How well do leaders work with their teams to visibly deliver consistent and positive messages on the agency's commitment to openness and transparency about its work? To what degree are there clear and consistent internal policies and procedures for proactive release of information, including publication of OIA responses? To what extent do leaders demonstrate a commitment to openness about their team's work through the proactive release of information consistent with the agency's internal policies?				

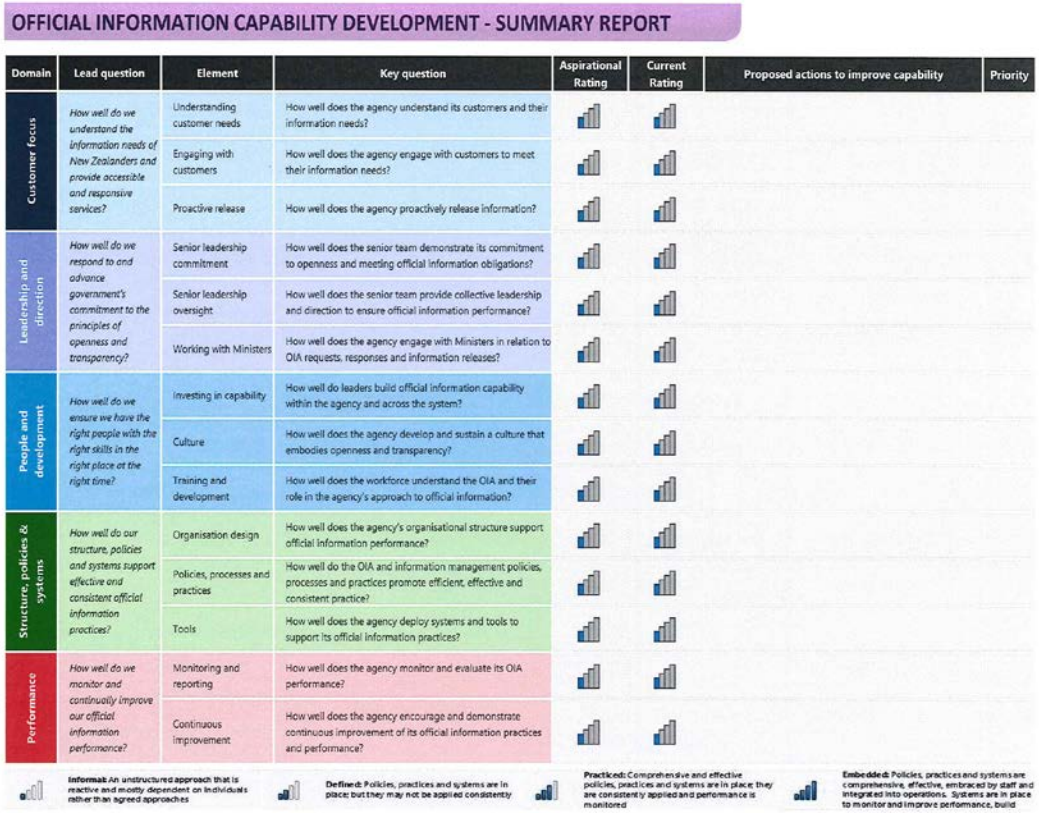
In-depth review

Maturity scale

	Informal: An unstructured approach that is reactive and mostly dependent on individuals rather than agreed approaches
	Defined: Policies, practices and systems are in place; but they may not be applied consistently
	Practiced: Comprehensive and effective policies, practices and systems are in place; they are consistently applied and performance is monitored
	Embedded: Policies, practices and systems are comprehensive, effective, embraced by staff and integrated into operations. Systems are in place to monitor and improve performance, build capability, and anticipate future demands

- Maturity scale is for internal use and is optional
- Use the scale to:
  - Identify an aspirational level for each domain and/or element (optional)
  - Assess where the agency currently sits on the maturity continuum for each.
- Avoid temptation to aspire to the ‘top’ rating when this may not be appropriate for the agency

Summary report template



OFFICIAL INFORMATION CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT - SUMMARY REPORT

Domain	Lead question	Element	Key question	Aspirational Rating	Current Rating	Proposed actions to improve capability	Priority
Customer focus	*How well do we understand the information needs of New Zealanders and provide accessible and responsive services?*	Understanding customer needs	How well does the agency understand its customers and their information needs?				
		Engaging with customers	How well does the agency engage with customers to meet their information needs?				
		Proactive release	How well does the agency proactively release information?				
Leadership and direction	*How well do we respond to and advance government's commitment to the principles of openness and transparency?*	Senior leadership commitment	How well does the senior team demonstrate its commitment to openness and meeting official information obligations?				
		Senior leadership oversight	How well does the senior team provide collective leadership and direction to ensure official information performance?				
		Working with Ministers	How well does the agency engage with Ministers in relation to OIA requests, responses and information releases?				
People and development	*How well do we ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time?*	Investing in capability	How well do leaders build official information capability within the agency and across the system?				
		Culture	How well does the agency develop and sustain a culture that embodies openness and transparency?				
		Training and development	How well does the workforce understand the OIA and their role in the agency's approach to official information?				
Structure, policies & systems	*How well do our structure, policies and systems support effective and consistent official information practices?*	Organisation design	How well does the agency's organisational structure support official information performance?				
		Policies, processes and practices	How well do the OIA and information management policies, processes and practices promote efficient, effective and consistent practice?				
		Tools	How well does the agency deploy systems and tools to support its official information practices?				
Performance	*How well do we monitor and continually improve our official information performance?*	Monitoring and reporting	How well does the agency monitor and evaluate its OIA performance?				
		Continuous improvement	How well does the agency encourage and demonstrate continuous improvement of its official information practices and performance?				

Informal: An unstructured approach that is reactive and mostly dependent on individuals rather than agreed approaches

Defined: Policies, practices and systems are in place but they may not be applied consistently

Practiced: Comprehensive and effective policies, practices and systems are in place; they are consistently applied and performance is monitored

Embedded: Policies, practices and systems are comprehensive, effective, embraced by staff and integrated into operations. Systems are in place to monitor and improve performance, build

The report summarises:

- Key components of the capability development tool
- Aspirational and current maturity ratings
- Proposed actions
- Priority order for implementation

When to use the toolkit

- As part of a capability building exercise
- To test the consistency of practices across business units when the OIA function is decentralised
- As input to the agency's planning and improvement cycles
- As input to a PIF self-review
- To prepare for an OIA own-motion investigation by the Office of the Ombudsmen.

Getting started

Which tool?

Which review tool best suits your agency's context and needs, and how you will use it?

Reviewers?

Who will be involved in conducting the review?

Evidence?

What information does your agency already have to support the review process?

Consultation?

Who will you gather additional information from to test your judgements? How will you do it?

Priority?

How will you prioritise improvement opportunities and build them into your agency's improvement plans?

7 steps to using the toolkit

Orient		Familiarise	The review team with the guide and tools; discuss how you will use the tools, the desired outcome and process.
Interpret		Reflect	On what each domain/element means and what good would look like in your agency's context.
Aspire		Decide	The maturity level you would like to be at in two years' time for each domain and/or element.
Evaluate		Evaluate	Gather information and evaluate each domain/element. Record your findings and assign a maturity rating (optional).
		Prioritise	The 3-4 key things your agency needs to improve to lift official information capability.
Report		Report	Use the Summary Report template to record the outcome and discuss with your senior leadership team.
Act		Do	Put in place an action plan to progress agreed priority areas.

The DPMC experience

Version:

- DPMC chose the “in-depth” version of the tool. We based this decision on the complexity and volume of OIAs that DPMC receives.

Overview:

- We involved:
  - Senior Ministerial Advisors
  - Manager, Ministerial Services
  - Legal Advisors
  - Members of ELT and;
  - Senior reps from business groups that we support
- What we did:
  - Discussed / workshopped our initial thinking within the Ministerial Services Team
  - Identified areas for a “deeper dive.”
  - Conducted focus group with ELT members. Opportunity to highlight “pinch points.”
  - Approx 10 hours of planning and assessment, plus 1 hour for Focus Group

Benefits / Learnings

- Tool helped to organise your thinking
- Split by “domain.” Different members of the team could examine different domains
- Helped to prioritise actions
- Look to reword some of the questions when working with senior leaders – don’t want to infer poor performance
- Able to modify some of the lines of enquiry to better suit our model of working

The Maritime NZ experience

Version:

- Using the in-depth version and the summary report.
- Adapted both slightly to fit our needs.

Overview:

- The project is ongoing – not yet completed
- Steps included:
  - Interviews with staff
  - Reviewing key documentation
- Anticipate developing a work programme to lift maturity and capability.

Benefits / Learnings

- Identify and document areas where we have good systems and processes, as well as areas where this could be improved
- Confirmed what we already knew and provided support for progressing our work programme
- Helpful for prompting discussion and raising awareness
- Toolkit is flexible
- Takes time and commitment
- Valuable and challenging – a work in progress

The DIA experience

Version:

- We trialled all three levels.
- We found the in-depth tool best suited to start working with, with the other two levels then being used as a status overview and presentation aid.

Overview:

- We completed the assessment within a central team currently carrying out a capability uplift programme, as much of the information was already held at that point through previous collation and work with business units.
- What we did:
  - Discussed / workshopped our initial thinking within the Governance, Risk and Assurance OIA Team.
  - Worked through all areas of all forms systematically based on existing information held.
  - Considered how this assessment could be further developed or applied, and how it may fit into our existing reporting structure.

Benefits / Learnings

- Tool is helpful for identifying opportunities for development, irrespective whether it is completed as part of a formal process or informally within a team.
- We found that a lot of the improvement initiatives we identified in the tool found their way into our actual work-stream within the next quarter.
- Starting at different levels of the tool can result in different information being produced/different targets for improvement resulting.
- You get out of it what you put into it – be aspirational in your thinking about what could be done and begin it during a quiet phase.
- Tool would be good to use as a springboard for workshops with ELT or OIA staff.

Questions?