

Introduction

Many NZ agencies periodically assess the quality of advice provided to decision makers. Agencies with an appropriation for policy advice, assess and report on the quality of advice as part of Annual Reports¹. For some agencies, ex-post assessment is also part of a quality assurance or improvement programme, with scored assessments showing the direction of travel on the quality of advice overall, and areas for improvement.

Assessing papers Assessing papers as a measure of advice quality can provide rich feedback to authors and policy teams of what good policy advice papers look like.

Periodically diving deeper A recommendation from the Head of Policy Profession/Policy Project is that agencies assess papers, and also periodically dive deeper and assess the 'advice in sum' provided to a decision maker.

Looking at the quality of advice provided on a subject over a period of time, as well as the approach used can provide even greater insights into strengths and areas for improvement; assessors can be better informed about context as well as agency processes. Deep-dive assessments consider:

- the sum of advice provided of a particular issue/policy area,
- the approach used to develop advice and whether it was fit for purpose.

A recommendation is that agencies consider undertaking deep dive assessments on two policy issues per year (agencies with medium size and larger policy shops might consider doing more) and that the results are used to inform improvement activities to boost quality.

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¹ In 2012/13 Cabinet refined the definition of the 'Policy Advice Output', and asked Treasury to specifying performance metrics related to for a wide selection of agencies. This covers twelve agencies; a number of other agencies include metrics on policy quality in annual reporting.

Preparing for assessment

Who could do the assessing?	Ideally a panel of people should assess the papers. An ideal panel would include a selection of lead policy practitioners from within your Agency, as well as assessors who are independent of your agency (this could be an independent contractor or a policy leader from another agency, or both). This arrangement strikes a good balance between rigour, robustness and fresh perspective (provided by the independent assessors), and a broad understanding of context and the policy ecosystem for the agency (provided by the internal panel members). Using internal assessors is also more likely to internalise learnings. Inviting in assessors from other agencies spreads that learning.
Making a sample of papers available for assessment.	Assessment will be less rigorous if paper are hand-picked. A suggested way forward is that a random sample of papers is made available for assessment in the first instance (e.g. all papers from a specified time frame be made available for assessment e.g. all papers put forward in April-May; or the last three or four papers prepared by each policy team in a specified time period).
Information about context from the authors.	For each paper in the potential assessment pool the author should provide brief information about context (see Appendix 1) and attach that as a cover sheet to the paper.
Selecting papers to assess.	The assessment panels could then cull for papers that met the Treasury's Policy Advice output subject matter definition if necessary ² , and that cover a range of levels of complexity (half or more of the papers assessed should be reasonably complex). Agencies may also want to consider how much the papers that are

² Agencies that intend to use these assessments to report to Parliament on agency performance against the Policy Advice appropriation, will need to assess papers with **subject matter that meets** Treasury's definition of 'policy advice outputs' as (currently set out in the document [Reorganisation of Appropriations for Policy Advice: Guide for Departments; Annex 2: Common Definition of Policy Advice](#)). Specifically, the subject matter must relate to one of the following areas

- the development of high-level government outcomes,
- whether government intervention is necessary or desired to achieve those outcomes; if government intervention is required,
- the selection and design of government intervention directed at those outcomes, or
- how government interventions are to be implemented and funded.

assessed should align with the core business of the policy unit or the wider ministry.

Suggested process

Figure 1 (over) sets out options for managing the quality assessment process. It is worth noting that:

- the timing of the assessment exercise is also set by agencies – it does not have to be in April-June which can be busy time of year,
- agencies can also assess a small batch of papers at regular intervals throughout the year and sharing the strengths and areas for improvement, as an alternative to a single bulk assessment once a year.
- The Policy Project wasn't to support the policy community to leverage what is learnt from assessments into collective action and learning. Figure 1 has an option for leveraging the quality of policy assessment exercise.

Additional guidance

A brief guide for panel members and FAQs are available from the Policy Project website. If you have any other questions regarding ex-post assessment, please contact the Policy Project.

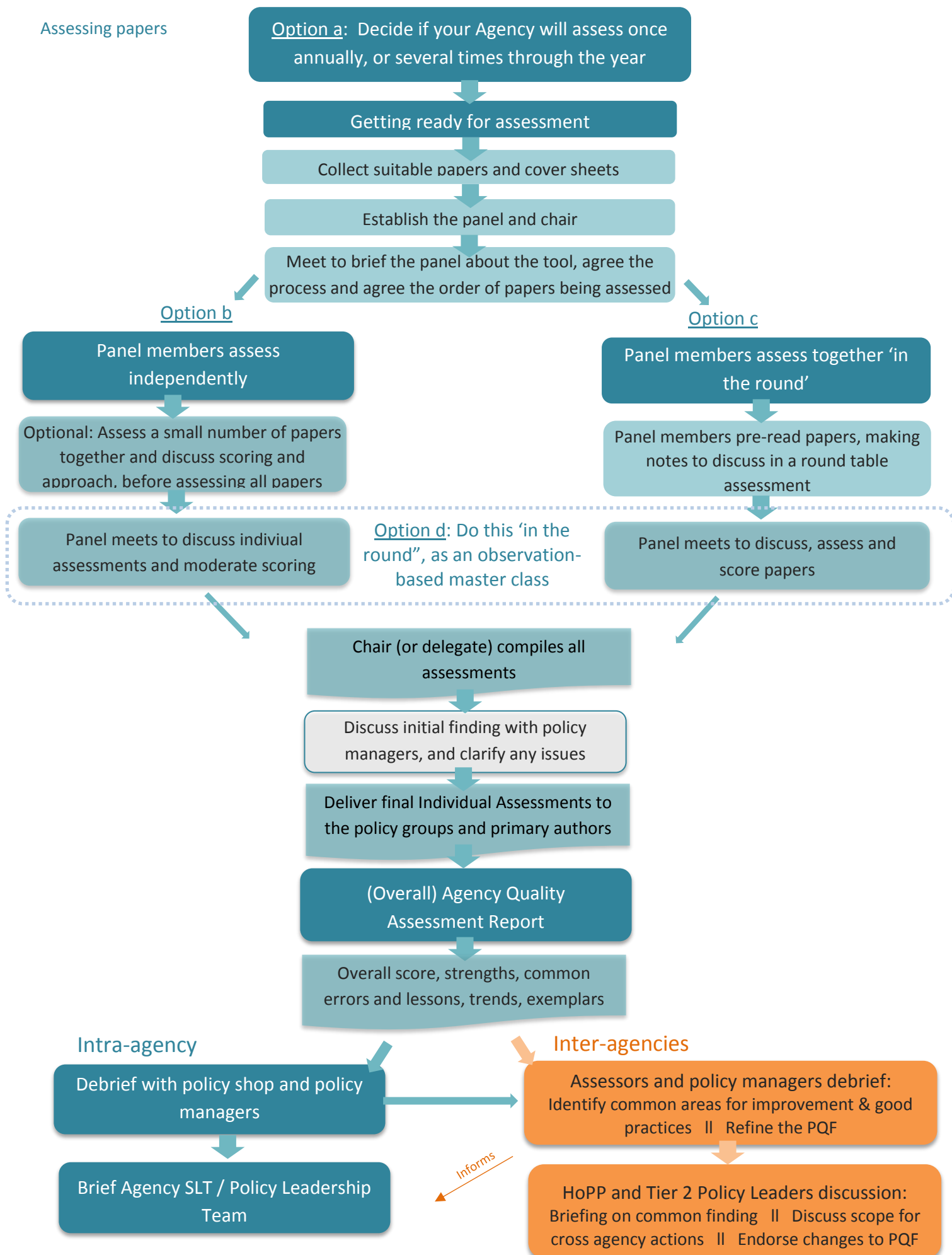


Figure 1: Options for assessing papers.

Undertaking assessment – what assessors should do

**Step 1:
Consider the
context** Context frames what constitutes quality advice. Understanding the context means that the assessor can make an assessment of quality that is more grounded in reality. The assessor/s can consider that context when assessing the extent to which quality characteristics are applicable and not applicable.

**Step 2
Assess** In the template section headed '*Assessment of the quality of advice in detail*' the assessor / assessing panel should assess the advice provided against the four characteristics set out in the [Policy Quality Framework³](#).

- Start by considering the strengths and weakness of the paper against each of the four quality characteristics at a high level.
- Run through each of the detailed criteria for each characteristic to finesse the commentary. Not all aspects will be relevant in all cases. Use 'NA' to mark aspects that are not at all applicable (or not particularly so), given the purpose of the paper. Give a star rating against each criteria that is applicable.

**Step 3
Summarise and
score** Summarise findings on the first page of the template. To score:

- First, give a score for each of the four characteristic, using the table 'What the scores mean' as a guide. The score should resonate with the star ratings given in the detailed assessment, but doesn't have to be derived directly from the star rating.
- Then, consider if any of the scores for each of the four quality characteristic should be weighted to emphasise those that are particularly relevant to the purpose of the briefing. Note that:
 - only whole numbers can be used for weightings
 - characteristics that are not applicable can be weighted as zero
- Finally, calculate the total score. The template has some limited in built functionality that can assist with this.
- The template has two 'workings columns'; one for noting the weighting applied to the score, another for calculating an adjusted score (the

³ The Policy Quality Framework (PQF) describes the key characteristics of good quality policy advice. It also describes the processes and practices, or ways of working, likely to enable the production of good policy advice.

original score for the characteristic, multiplied by the weighting). Note the instructions on the template for calculating scores.

Should scoring be adjusted to take account of constraints?

No, it is important that papers are assessed on quality only. There is no doubt though that constraints of time, resourcing and so on can impact on the quality of the advice provided, and assessors may wish to comment on constraints. Cross referencing scores and constraints can give valuable insights to your agency's senior leaders into how often quality is being compromised and establish the case for action. (For example, a common finding that time is compromising the quality of advice may prompt thinking about a need to rationalise priorities and refine the overall work programme).

Assess the ‘sum of advice’ and the approach to developing advice

Advice often spans a series of policy papers delivered over period of time. A Deep Dive Assessment considers the advice-in-sum provided on a policy issue over a given period as well as the approach used to develop advice. (Where advice on an issue has a very long history, the best approach may be to assess the sum of advice within a specific time frame.)

Aim for subject matter that is core to agency, and that relates to one of the following areas⁴:

- the development of high-level government outcomes,
- whether government intervention is necessary or desired to achieve those outcomes; if government intervention is required,
- the selection and design of government intervention directed at those outcomes, or
- how government interventions are to be implemented and funded.

Preparing for assessment

Tasks for authors, the policy team and the manager

1. For each paper going forward in the package for assessment authors should provide some brief information about context (see **Appendix 1**), and attach that as a cover sheet to the paper. This should take ten minutes per paper.
2. The policy team should map all papers against a timeline. **Appendix 3** provides a template. During interviews (see *Interviews with Key Staff* below) this timeline may be supplemented with key events or discussions with the decision maker.
3. The manager should complete *Advice Context spread sheet* (see **Appendix 4**). This should take 30-60 minutes.

Assessors interview key staff

The assessor/s should interview key staff including (but not limited to):

1. the primary authors,
2. the senior responsible person if possible, and
3. the person/s who was liaising with the decision maker (and/or their office or advisors).

⁴ This is per Treasury’s definition of ‘policy advice outputs’ as (currently set out in the document [Reorganisation of Appropriations for Policy Advice: Guide for Departments; Annex 2: Common Definition of Policy Advice](#)).

The purpose of interviewing key staff is to better understand context and approach. A starter list of questions for interviews is provided in **Appendix 5**. Assessors do not need to ‘stick to the script’; not all questions will be relevant in all circumstances.

Documenting the findings – tasks for assessors

Step 1:
Consider the context and approach

Based on the *Advice in context spreadsheet (Appendix 4)* completed by managers, assessors can produce a radar chart showing what was important in terms of approach given the context.

After interviewing key staff, assessors should revisit that radar chart, mapping what was actually done versus what was important. The radar chart showing this comparison forms part of the assessment report (under *Findings on the approach to developing advice*).

The assessment template then requires assessors to comment on the particular strengths and weaknesses in approach and to provide insights on what could improve quality.

Step 2:
Comment on the quality of advice

In the section headed *Assessed Quality*, the assessor / assessing panel should assess the advice provided against the four characteristics set out the [Policy Quality Framework](#), as well a fifth theme on advice maturation⁵.

- Start by considering the overall impression of strengths and weakness of the advice against each of the four quality characteristics.
- Use the star rating to zero in on particular aspects of each characteristic, and to finesse the assessment commentary.

Step 3:
Summarise and score

Summarise findings on first page of the template

- First, give a score for each characteristic, using the table ‘What the scores mean’ as a guide. The score should resonate with the star ratings given in the detailed assessment, but doesn’t have to be derived directly from these. Then, calculate the total score.
- Give a summary of strengths and weakness overall. Describe any key insights/lessons for improving quality.

⁵ As well as describing the key characteristics of good quality policy advice, the PQF also describes the processes and practices, or ways of working, likely to enable good advice. Some agencies may have additional or more refined quality characteristics that they value and wish to retain.

Appendix

	For assessing papers	For deep dive assessment
Appendix 1: Contextual information about papers being assessed	✓	
Appendix 2: Assessment template	✓	
Appendix 3: Time line of advice		✓
Appendix 4: Advice context spreadsheet		✓
Appendix 5: Suggested questions for interviews		✓
Appendix 6: Assessment template		✓

Appendix 1: Context for papers

Information about context for all papers: authors to complete.

Complete these four questions on the context in which the paper being assessed was provided, and attach it as a cover sheet to the paper being assessed.

Title of advice:

Name and role of the person completing this cover sheet:

1. What was the primary purpose of the advice?
2. Was this (underline one):
 - Preliminary advice
 - Mid-stream advice
 - Final advice
3. Was the advice (underline one):
 - Requested by the Minister
 - Pre-emptively provided by the department
4. Was the advice:
 - Part of the planned work programme
 - Ad hoc
 - Other (briefly describe)
5. Advice relates to (underline any that apply)
 - Agency core business
 - A significant agency priority
 - Secondary or supplementary advice to another agencies core business
6. Were there any constraints that affected quality (e.g. timeframes, availability of key people, novelty and so on)?
7. Using the matrix below indicate the complexity of advice being assessed.

Notes (optional)

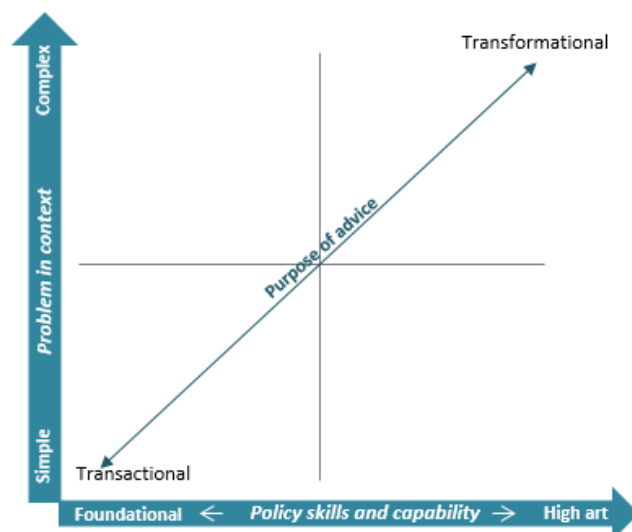


Figure 1: Advice complexity matrix

Assessment of the quality of a paper or briefing

Advice title and date provided:

Review completed by:

Summary of findings and recommendations

Strengths

Weaknesses

Insights and recommendations

Scoring

Total score

Calculate by dividing **B** by **A**

/10

Score against quality characteristics	Scores	Weightings (change from 1 if required)	IMPORTANT 'Right click' and hover over the score in each yellow box & select 'Update field'
Advice engages the decision maker and tells the full story			0
Advice is informed by evidence and insights and is analytically sound			0
Advice is put in context, links to the desired future state and exposes opportunities, risks and implications for affected groups			0
Advice balances what is desirable, can be delivered and is cost effective.			0
Figures to the right are not the final score, they are for calculation purposes only			A 1
			B 0
Working columns only			

What the scores mean

Score 10	Score 8	Score 6	Score 4	Score 2
A very high quality paper, that adds significant value to the decision making process. Without flaws or omissions Mainly 5 stars	A good paper; rates highly against the characteristics that matter most. No significant flaws or omissions. Mainly 4 stars	A satisfactory, but basic paper. May have some flaws or omissions but they have limited impact. Mainly 3 stars	An unsatisfactory paper. Has flaws or omissions that have a moderate impact on advice for decision making. Mainly 2 stars	Has major flaws or omissions, and these have a high impact on how well the advice supports decision making. Mainly 1 star



Assessment of the quality of advice in detail

Advice engages the decision maker and tells the full story.		
Starts with a clear purpose and tells a coherent story	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Conveys the policy intent and what success will look like; links proposed actions to objectives and desired outcomes	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Makes action oriented recommendations and identifies next steps	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Takes account of the decision maker's views, but is frank, honest & apolitical about the best way forward	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Is well staged and well timed – hits the decision maker at the right time	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Is in a format that fits the decision maker's style preferences and intended use; is engaging, easy to digest and error free	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Advice is informed by evidence and insights and analytically sound.		
Is informed by credible evidence and insights from different points of view; admits assumptions, gaps and weaknesses in evidence and the knowledge base	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Accurately identifies the problem or opportunity and its size, scope and immediacy	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Uses analytical frameworks to make sense of information	NA ☆☆☆☆	



Advice is put in context, links to the desired future state and exposes opportunities, risks and implications for affected groups.		
Considers the current state (e.g. infrastructure, norms & attitudes, current strategies, system dynamics, points of leverage), how current policy settings affect it, and prior advice & decisions	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Considers the vision for the future and ongoing stewardship responsibilities (e.g. regulatory stewardship)	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Exposes differing points of view and objectives of stakeholders and the implications of advice for affected parties	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Describes opportunities that can be leveraged and risks to be managed	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Advice balances what is desirable, can be delivered and is cost effective.		
Scopes a range of options (including doing nothing) showing expected results and links to desired outcomes (e.g. using intervention logic and/or benefits realisation)	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Articulates how the options can be delivered and what would be required to implement	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Establishes the best option using criteria that are transparent and focused on results, implement-ability and impact (i.e. costs and benefits) and appropriate to the size and complexity of the decisions being made	NA ☆☆☆☆	

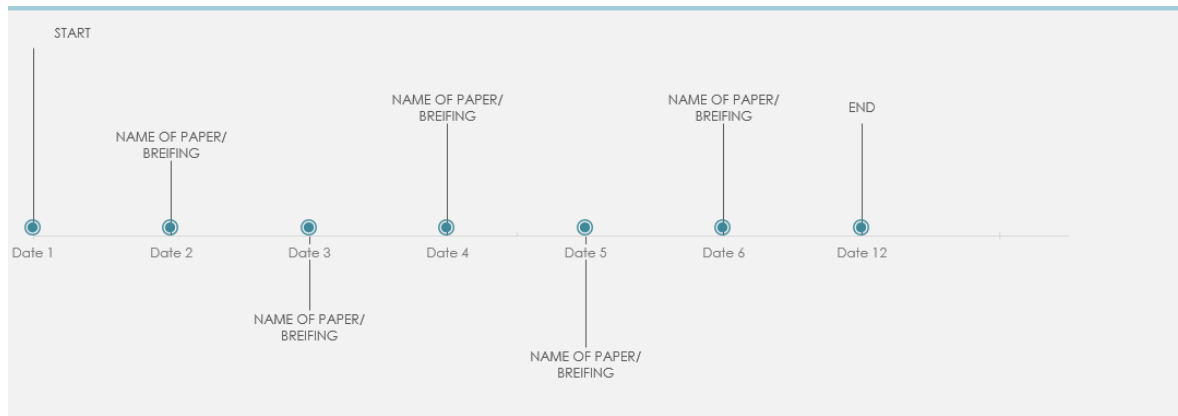
Appendix 3: Advice timeline for Deep Dive Assessments

Time line of advice: Policy team to compete.

To support assessment of the quality of a stream of advice, or the overall quality of advice provided on a policy issue over a given period, the policy team should time line the advice provided.

The Excel-based [timeline template](#) can be used or agencies may have their own template.

<Advice> Timeline



ADVICE DETAILS

DATE	MILESTONE	POSITION
Date 1	Start	25
Date 2	Name of paper/ briefing	10
Date 3	Name of paper/ briefing	-10
Date 4	Name of paper/ briefing	15
Date 5	Name of paper/ briefing	-15
Date 6	Name of paper/ briefing	15
Date 12	End	15

Timeline Tips:

The role of the Position values in the Advice Details table is to prevent the labels from overlapping each other on the timeline. Use positive numbers to position labels above the timeline and negative numbers to position them below.

If required, either insert new rows within the table or start typing below the last table entry and the table will automatically expand to accommodate your newly added data.

Note: This is picture of the excel template. [Click here](#) to access an active template



Appendix 4: Advice in context for Deep Dive Assessments

Advice context spreadsheet: Manager to complete.

Note: This is picture of the excel template. [Click here](#) to access an active template

Factors		How important was this factor (to success)?	Score 1 to 5 based on guidance in green boxes	Scoring guide: Managers should use judgement in scoring each classifier between 1 -5. Scoring generally runs from low to high; the green boxes below give some guidance.				
				1 (e.g. simplest)	2	3	4	5 (e.g. most complex)
Complexity	Level of change: What is (or was) the scope of intent/change being explored?	critical	4	No change - we are advising on the current state / or how to maintain the current state	Advising for or against change at margins e.g. activities to improve efficiency while essentially doing the same thing	We're advising on starting or stopping a new tactical approach (e.g. a different way to deliver our agreed strategies)	We advising on a change that will have very broad impact i.e. will be sector or system wide change	We are advising on transforming what we do/how we do it.
	Public interest: What is (or was) the level of public interest?	critical	5	Limited - 1% or less of citizens care	Contained - 5% or less of citizens care	Substantial - 10% of citizens care	This is an important issue for particular demographics or industry, service group or workforce	Widespread e.g. > most citizens care, or > most businesses care, or > most workers care
	Stakeholders: How much divergence is there (or was there) in stakeholder views and goals?	critical	4	Very little				Very high level of divergence
	Context: How complex is (or was) the ecosystem surrounding the issue? (For example consider the range and diversity of stakeholders, the spread of business branches and functions, complexity of legislation or regulation)	critical	4	Simple, straightforward - e.g. a proposed change will have limited knock on effects on the broader ecosystem surrounding the issue				Complex and enmeshed - change in one part of the ecosystem is likely to have impact in other areas
	Scale and spread: How big / widespread is the issue/problem/opportunity and solution?	critical	5	Contained	A significant but one-off and highly targeted issue	Contained to specific populations: e.g. a region or sub population	Significant populations e.g. Auckland/Christchurch / the elderly	National
	Dependencies: How much is (or was) successfully meeting the policy intent dependent on (tied to) other initiatives or policy work that is planned or in train ?	relevant	4	None	Low level of dependencies with other work	A significant dependency with another business/function/initiative	Significant dependencies across multiple agency functional/policy/business areas	Significant dependencies that are controlled outside of the agency
Uncertainty	Certainty of goals or solutions: How certain are the goals or solutions (or were they at the outset of the work?)	important	2	Very certain		Moderate		Low levels of certainty
	Knowledge of this issue in context: What is (or was) the level of understanding of how this issue plays out across /within the broader (eco)system?	relevant	5	High		Moderate		Very low
	Certainty of key information: How certain/reliable/accessible is (or was) key information?	relevant	3	Available, accessible and credible				Low - no/small existing evidence base; assumptions will have to be made in key areas
	Innovation: What was the scope for innovation?	marginal	1	Low		Moderate		High
	Novelty: How novel is (or was) this policy issue/problem/opportunity or the solution?	marginal	1	Low		Moderate		High -no/small knowledge base; assumptions may need to be made in key areas
	Advisory team's experience: What is your team's level of experience in this issue type /solution type?	critical	1	Very experienced		Moderate		Limited experience
	Implementation experience: What is our agency/ the sector/the providers experience in implementing the most likely solutions?	relevant	1	Very experienced		Moderate		Limited experience
	Risk: What is (or was) the highest level of risk or known issues to be managed (as assessed by likelihood and consequence/impact)?	important	4	Low risk / low impact issues		Carries a high risk that requires mitigation		Carries high/major risks that require substantial mitigation activity across a number of fronts
Impact / effect	Resourcing impact: How fixed are the 'due dates', what level of resourcing is likely to be (or was) required?	critical	5	Low impact on resourcing / very flexible due dates	Moderate resourcing requirements. Due dates can be extended if required	Moderate resourcing requirements, inflexible due dates	High resourcing requirements but due dates can be extended if required	High resourcing requirements, inflexible due dates
	Customer impact: What is likely to be (or was) the impact on businesses/trade/citizens or customers of public services?	important	4	None	Limited - less than 1% business / trade or citizens will be directly impacted	Contained - 5% or less of business / trade or citizens will be directly	A substantial proportion of business/ trade/citizens or customers	Most NZ businesses/trade/citizens will be directly impacted (highly and/or

Suggested questions for interviews on the approach to developing advice

The questions below stem from eight enablers of good advice described in the [Policy Quality Framework](#). The questions should not be used as a script, but as a starter-for-ten. Not all questions or themes will be relevant in all circumstances; assessors can use their own judgement.

The work was commissioned, planned and managed well

- What was the commission?
- How clear was the commission? How was that established and communicated? Was this done early enough to avoid rework?
- Were the key components that framed what to do and how to do it (e.g. scope, stakeholders, risks, deliverables, timeframes and so on) agreed early and made known?
- Was there early thinking about who needs to be part of the work, and were those people engaged early enough?
- Was the work broken down into manageable parts? Were the deliverables for each part clear? Were the links between each part clear? How well was the work phased and staged?
- Who, and how and how well, were the following managed: governance, scope, communications, change, risks & issues, reporting on progress, assurance, dependencies, timely delivery, resources, roles, stakeholder engagement?
- Was planning and scheduling as controlled, or as flexible and responsive as required? Does the policy shop have a basic understanding of project management principles? Was the level of 'project and planning' documentation too heavy, too light or just right, given the context? Did it give confidence to the senior responsible officer and governing body?
- Were roles and responsibilities clear? Was there a clear distinction between governing, managing and doing? Did governance ensure that it was always objective-focused and that intent was met?
- How well were links/ dependencies between this work and other work understood and managed?
- How joined-up did policy and implementation need to be to ensure success? How well was that achieved?

The conversation with decision makers is ongoing. Certainty increases over time

- When, how and how soon was the policy intent, objectives, direction of travel tested with the decision maker? Was the above clarified early enough to avoid rework/to generate buy-in?
- Was the decision maker's appetite for risk or innovation clear? What was the appetite for innovation internally? Who set those boundaries? What enabled innovation, and what held it back? Did all members of the team, the managing body and the governing body have a shared understanding of the decision maker's appetite for risk and innovation?
- Did early advice sets up the subsequent advice? Was there agreement gained at a high level before dropping into detail? Did the advice progress from high level to more finely-grained over time?
- Were there any key assumptions that underpinned analysis? Were they revisited and validated? Were resulting changes to benefits, costs, risks and issues re-assessed? Was the decision maker told about any high impact changes?
- Were there clear 'decision-making gates' (e.g. stage gates) in place? Were possible exit points required, and were they factored into advice?

The team was agile and responsive while doing the work

- Did the team, manager and decision makers meet or communicate often enough?
- How were changes managed and communicated upwardly, within the team and across collaborators?
- Was internal decision making as fast as it needed to be?
- Did the timing of pieces of advice help maintain momentum and keep pace with the issue in the real world or what the Minister was hearing from other sources?

The team drew on diverse perspectives to add rigor to analysis and advice

- Which parts of the operations/functional areas/ frontline are/have been impacted by the policy? Were they sufficiently consulted as the advice was developed?
- What different lenses/points of view was the problem viewed from? Was that sufficiently broad? To what extent did insights about user needs, from the front line and from others with a different and relevant points of view influence policy options? How were these insights gathered? Was this done well enough?
- Were key stakeholders engaged in the policy process (including early in problem definition, not just consulted on solutions)?
- Did the policy team recognise its own biases? What did it do to counter these?
- To what extent did the agency look beyond institutional boundaries? When and how was that evident to others?
- Did the team have enough experience to fully appreciate and consolidate multi-disciplinary perspectives?

The agency understands what works; it has a story to tell

- Was there a clear story on short, medium and longer term outcomes to tell in this advice? Were key agency documents referenced?
- Was there a knowledge base on this subject that was readily accessible?
- Was there an existing evidence base that could be leveraged for this advice?
- How easy was it to identify sources of expertise and evidence outside of the agency?
- Were there any significant gaps in knowledge or evidence? How was this managed?
- How will effectiveness be measured? Who will do the measuring and when? Is there a benefits management plan (if there should be)? Is there an evaluation plan?
- Were there any lessons from the past that were applicable? How well were they incorporated into how this work?

Overall work programming and resourcing is managed

- Does the policy shop have a forward work programme? What priority was this work and how well did that reflect the resources put to it? Is/was the overall work programme manageable?
- Did any of the pieces of work go on for longer than six months? Did this create any risks, uncertainties or issues? In hindsight could it have been broken down more?
- Was the policy team able to access the required resources and expertise? How were resourcing requirements scoped?

Systems, processes and habits that assure quality are in place

- Were there any Cabinet/Central Agency or Agency requirements that had to be met? Were there people in the team (or otherwise) that were familiar and confident in meeting those requirements? Were they available to do the work or to coach/supervise/guide others? Were there enough time and resources to meet those requirements?
- Did team members have the right level of skills and experience to do a good job? Was this a source of risk?
- Was advice being reviewed as it was developed and at each significant 'stage' of developing advice? Was sufficient time allowed for review and sign-out?
- Was the senior responsible officer/ person always clear? Were they accessible?
- Was it always agreed, clear and communicated who was signing off and signing out what? Were those who best understood the risks (and so could test if the advice was credible and robust) signing off advice?

The policy team has relationship capital; it used it to good effect

- How deep and wide are the policy shop's networks in this policy domain/issue? How did that help (or hinder if they were too shallow)?
- Does the policy shop's network include operational and functional areas and the frontline? Was thinking /operability tested with those close to the problem?
- Did the policy team understand who was making decisions and who and what was influencing them (and why)? Was there anything that was done or could have been done, in terms of connecting with decision makers and influencers?
- Were opportunities leveraged?



Deep dive assessment of the quality of advice

Advice scope and intent:

Time period that this advice was provided in: From <insert date> to <insert date> (see *Figure 2 Timeline of advice provided to the decision maker* for details)

Summary of findings and recommendations

Strengths

Weaknesses:

Insights and recommendations

Scoring

Total score

Sum scores below and divide by 5

/10

Score against quality characteristics

Scores

Advice engages the decision maker and tells the full story	
Advice is informed by evidence and insights and is analytically sound	
Advice is put in context, links to the desired future state and exposes opportunities, risks and implications for affected groups	
Advice balances what is desirable, can be delivered and is cost effective.	
Advice maturation	

What the scores mean

Score 10	Score 8	Score 6	Score 4	Score 2
Very high quality advice, that adds significant value to the decision making process. Without flaws or omissions Mainly 5 stars	Good advice; rates highly against the characteristics that matter most. No significant flaws or omissions. Mainly 4 stars	Satisfactory, but basic. May have some flaws or omissions but these have limited impact. Mainly 3 stars	Unsatisfactory. Has flaws or omissions that have a moderate impact on advice for decision making. Mainly 2 stars	Has major flaws or omissions, and these have a high impact on how well the advice supports decision making. Mainly 1 star



Appendix 6: Assessment template – Deep dive assessment

People interviewed

Name	Role

Advice assessed

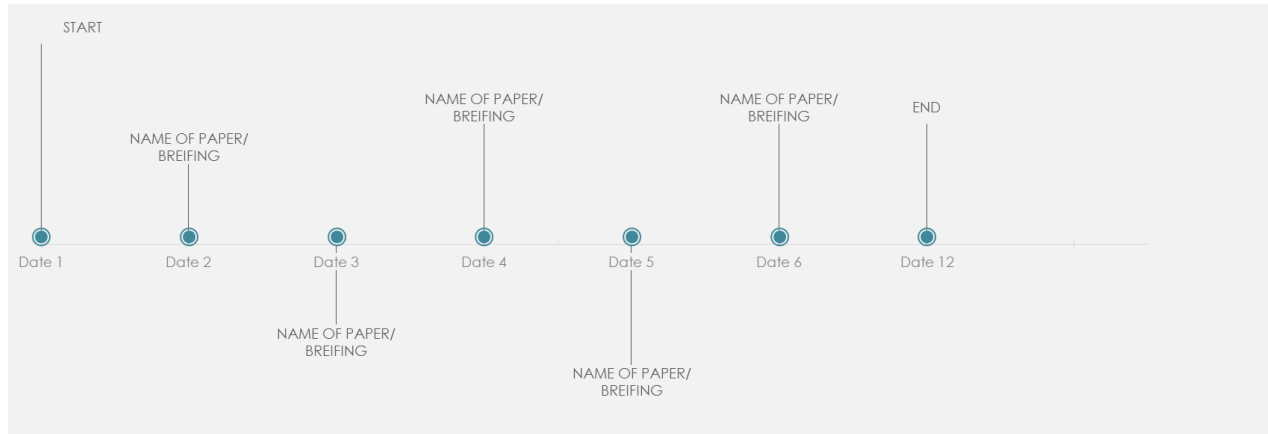


Figure 2: Timeline of advice provided to the decision maker

Assessment sign off

	Name and role	Signature
Assessor		
Assessor		
Manager		
Senior responsible officer		



Details of assessment

Findings on the approach to developing advice

Replace this example chart with assessor's findings.

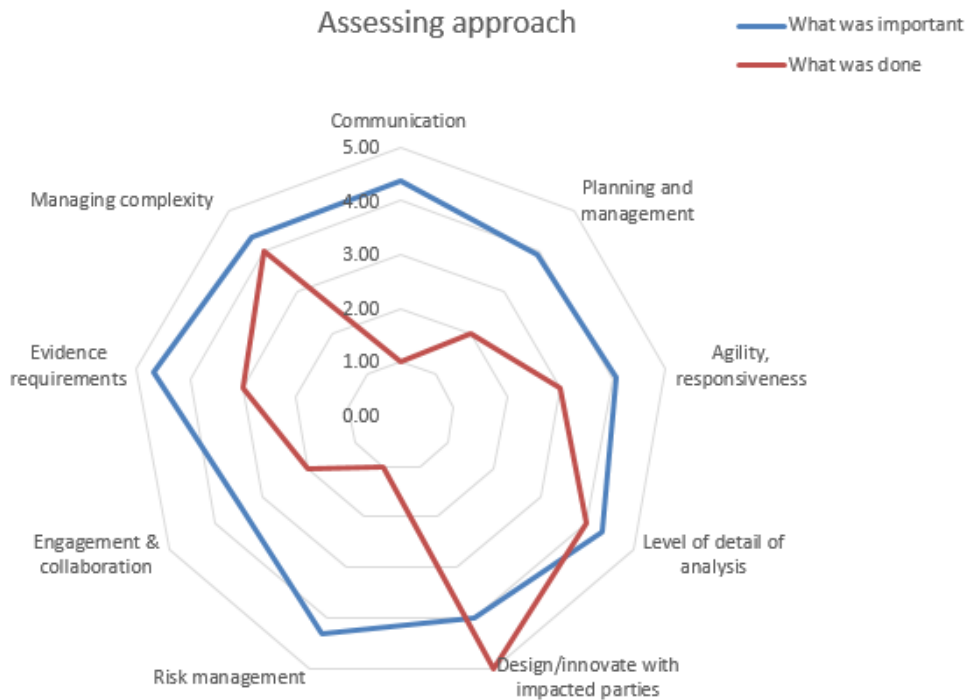


Figure 1: Factors that were important given the context, against the level of rigour/attention given to each.

Commentary on approach

Reflecting on the graph above and interviews, comment on any significant gaps between what should have been done well and was not, as well as what was handled well.

Insights and recommendations on approach

Findings of the quality of advice provided

Advice engages the decision maker and tells the full story.		
Has a clear purpose and tells a coherent story	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Conveys the policy intent and what success will look like; links proposed actions to objectives and desired outcomes	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Makes action oriented recommendations and identifies next steps	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Takes account of the decision maker's views, but is frank, honest & apolitical about the best way forward	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Is well staged and well timed – hits the decision maker at the right time	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Is in a format that fits the decision maker's style preferences and intended use; is engaging, easy to digest and error free	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Advice is informed by evidence and insights and is analytically sound.		
Is informed by credible evidence, and insights from different points of view; admits assumptions, gaps and weaknesses in evidence and knowledge	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Accurately identifies the problem or opportunity and its size, scope and immediacy	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Uses analytical frameworks/strategies to elevate analysis and make sense of information	NA ☆☆☆☆	



Appendix 6: Assessment template – Deep dive assessment

Advice is put in context, links to the desired future state and exposes opportunities, risks and implications for affected groups.		
Considers the current state (e.g. infrastructure, norms & attitudes, current strategies, system dynamics, points of leverage), how current policy settings affect it, and prior advice & decisions	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Considers the vision for the future and ongoing stewardship responsibilities (e.g. regulatory stewardship)	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Exposes the objectives of stakeholders and implications of advice for affected parties	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Describes opportunities that can be leveraged and risks to be managed	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Advice balances what is desirable, can be delivered and is cost effective.		
Scopes a range of options (including doing nothing) showing expected results and links to desired outcomes (e.g. using intervention logic and/or benefits realisation)	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Articulates how the options can be delivered and what would be required to implement	NA ☆☆☆☆	
Establishes the best option using criteria that are transparent and focused on results, implement-ability and impact (i.e. costs and benefits) and appropriate to the size and complexity of the decisions being made	NA ☆☆☆☆	



Appendix 6: Assessment template – Deep dive assessment

Advice maturation.		
The advice flows well; early advice set up the subsequent papers.	NA ★★★★★	
Advice seems credible and impactful as a whole.	NA ★★★★★	
Assumptions and uncertainty lessened over the stream of advice provided.	NA ★★★★★	
Advice was delivered in a structured and manageable format to decision makers at the appropriate stages.	NA ★★★★★	
Advice is complete: all of the information that was required to make a robust decision was provided.	NA ★★★★★	

