



Systems Awareness

Developing

Applies tools for making sense of systems and their behaviour. Advises on changes to system settings to improve policy proposals.

- Developing an understanding of:
 - system thinking and how it can help you in your day-to-day work, including making sense of systems
 - what it means to take action within different systems
 - systems relevant to your work, including how past decisions have impacted on the current state, and how drivers and constraints can influence system change going forward.
- Learn about how drivers and constraints can influence system change.

70% on-the-job learning

Develop an understanding of the key people, organisations, and elements in the systems that your agency works in and any relationships between them.

Learn the basic skills of systems mapping and how you can use it to understand the context for a policy issue.

Develop your understanding of mātauranga Māori as a way of thinking about and seeing the world (e.g. He Ara Waiora).

Find out what data and insights your organisation collects about what is happening in the systems relevant to your work.

Take the opportunity to find out about tools that can help with making sense of systems such as [The Cynefin Framework – A Leader's Framework for Decision Making and Action](#), the [Waters of Systems Change](#) and the [Stacey Diagramme](#).

Look into how past decisions and events have shaped the systems relevant to your work. Consider the key drivers that create both positive and negative behaviours within the system, and whether those drivers can be changed to influence those behaviours in a different way.

20% learning from others

Discuss with other parts of your organisation how the people and other organisations interact within systems relevant to your work. Consider whether the behaviour of that system impacts on your policy work.

Consider joining a community of practice (e.g. systems thinking, complex systems) or an agency-based learning group focused on building and sharing systems awareness capability.

Look at other reports and papers produced within your organisation that have included systems thinking in their approach.

Read texts on systems awareness such as:

- [Thinking in Systems](#) by Donella Meadows and edited by Diana Wright
- [From Transactional to Strategic: Systems approaches to public service challenges](#) by Justin W. Cook and Piret Tõnurist
- blogs by Dave Snowden and others at the [Cynefin Company website](#)
- [The civil servant's systems thinking journey](#) from the United Kingdom's Government Office for Science.

10% formal training

- Read about mātauranga Māori to develop understanding of how Māori see the world and how this can significantly inform systems awareness.
- Attend a course that can build your systems awareness knowledge and skills.