



Systems Awareness

Practising

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

- Has knowledge of different tools for making sense of systems and how they're functioning.
- Identifies opportunities to take action within systems relevant to your work.
- Uses system awareness to contribute to future policy development priorities for systems in your work domain.

70% on-the-job learning

Use system sensemaking tools (such as the [Cynefin Framework](#), the [Stacey Diagramme](#), the [Waters of Change Model](#)), to determine whether any problem you are working with is within an ordered or complex system state.

Learn about and apply tools to build a sense of the system and the behaviours in it. This could include:

- System mapping using tools such as [kumu](#) and the [System Mapping Tool](#) from miro
- [Guide to Actor Mapping](#) (actor-based mapping tools)
- [Network Analysis 101](#) by the Center for Public Health Systems Science
- [Cynefin St David's 2023](#) (constraints mapping)
- [Introducing the Field Guide to Human-Centred Design](#) from The Design Kit.

Participate in cross-government systems communities of practice and networks.

Identify any constraints affecting behaviour within systems relevant to your work, and which ones may lend themselves to being changed, removed, or added, to shift behaviour of the system.

When you design policies, maintain systems awareness by continually testing whether the options you design are fit for the state of the system (simple, complicated, complex, chaotic).

Use tools and techniques to explore the implications of new practices and behaviours on systems relevant to your work.

Discuss with the teams responsible for data and insights about what system data relevant to your work could be useful to collect or is already being collected and not fully being utilised.

Contribute insights from your systems work into your group's strategic planning and policy projects.

20% learning from others

Attend seminars that provide examples of how other agencies have incorporated systems awareness into their policy development processes.

Actively seek input from others familiar with the systems you are operating within.

Work with specialists and more experienced colleagues to identify and use systems techniques and approaches to inform policy development and to expand your knowledge and skills.

- Ask more experienced colleagues to reflect on their experience of selecting and applying systems awareness tools and frameworks and using the results to inform policy work. Ask them to explain what went well and what they would do differently next time.



20% learning from others (continued)

Consider ways that mātauranga Māori can be woven into your organisation's systems awareness approach. Use experts in your organisation or from other domains who can support and test your work. An example of this is the [Mātauranga framework](#) and associated guide developed by the Environmental Protection Authority Te Mana Rauhi Taiao.

Read blogs and watch videos of influential thinkers and leaders in systems awareness.

For example:

- thought leaders from the [Cynefin company](#).
- thought leaders from the [Center for Systems Awareness](#).

Stay up to date with developments in systems approaches in the Public Service from websites such as:

- OPSI – [Observatory of Public Sector Innovation](#).
- [Apolitical](#) – a platform for public servants around the world to share and discuss practice, insights and innovation.

10% formal training

Seek to widen your knowledge about systems awareness by attending courses on:

- complex systems
- system mapping
- sensemaking
- incorporating systems awareness into policy making
- mātauranga Māori or Te Ao Māori.