Six-Step Strategic Capability Assessment

Strategic Capability Assessment

A Framework for Organisational Excellence

Six-Step Model Overview

1. Strategic Framing	**2. Design & Definition**	**3. Reflect & Submit**
4. Synthesise & Cluster	**5. Validate & Prioritise**	**6. Integrate & Govern**

1. Strategic Framing

1

Strategic Framing

Link the assessment to mission, strategy, and risk; identify core capabilities to examine.

Key Activities

- Clarify strategic objectives and value streams
- Identify capabilities critical to strategy execution
- Define assessment scope and boundaries

Clarify why you are assessing capability, what "strategic" means in your context, and where you will and will not look. This step explicitly links the assessment to mission, strategy, risk profile, and key value streams, and identifies the core capabilities to be examined.

2. Design & Define

Design & Definition

Define maturity levels, indicators, evidence types, and assessment method for each capability.

Key Activities

- Specify maturity scales and performance standards
- Define indicators and evidence requirements
- Determine participants and data collection method

Describe each target capability and decide how it will be assessed. This includes defining maturity levels or performance standards, specifying indicators and evidence, choosing rating scales, and deciding who participates and how (surveys, workshops, interviews, document review).
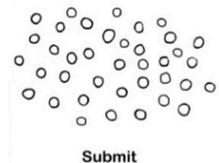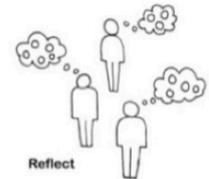
3. Reflection & Submission

Reflect & Submit

Participants assess current capability using agreed criteria and submit evidence-based ratings.

Key Activities

- Conduct structured self-assessment workshops
- Collect evidence and supporting documentation
- Submit ratings via common template or system

Reflect

Submit

Participants reflect on current capability using the agreed criteria and submit ratings plus supporting evidence into a common template or system. The emphasis is on disciplined, evidence-based self-assessment rather than opinionistic scoring.
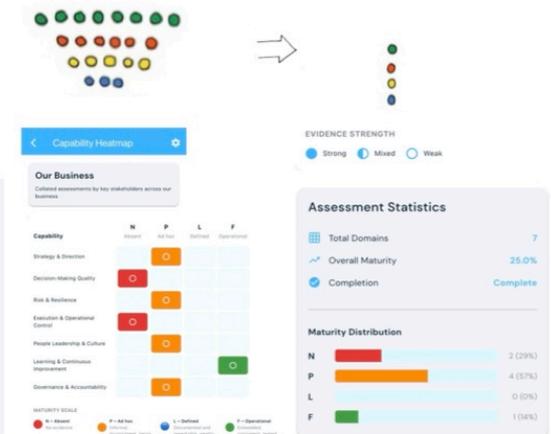
4. Synthesize & Cluster

4 | **Synthesise & Cluster**
Aggregate inputs by capability and theme; visualise patterns, strengths, and gaps.

Key Activities

- Aggregate data by capability, unit, and theme
- Create capability maps and heat-maps
- Identify systemic patterns and vulnerabilities

"Clustering and Consolidation" becomes more analytical. Individual inputs are aggregated and clustered by capability, business unit, and strategic theme to surface patterns, asymmetries, and systemic strengths or vulnerabilities. Visuals such as capability maps or heat-maps are often produced here.
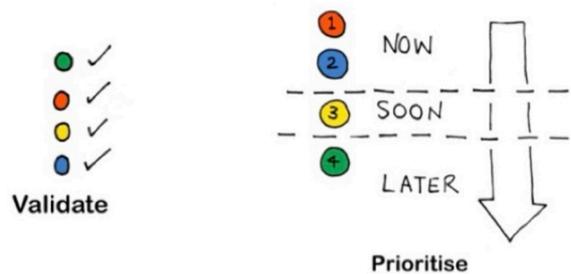
5. Validation & Prioritization

5 | **Validate & Prioritise**
Test findings with decision-makers; rank gaps by strategic importance, risk, and feasibility.

Key Activities

- Sense-check results with executives and stakeholders
- Prioritise gaps by strategic impact and risk
- Assess feasibility and interdependencies

"Validation and Prioritization" is explicitly framed as a strategic decision step. Findings are tested with executives and key stakeholders; priorities are set based on strategic importance, risk exposure, interdependencies between capabilities, and feasibility of improvement - not just perceived weakness.
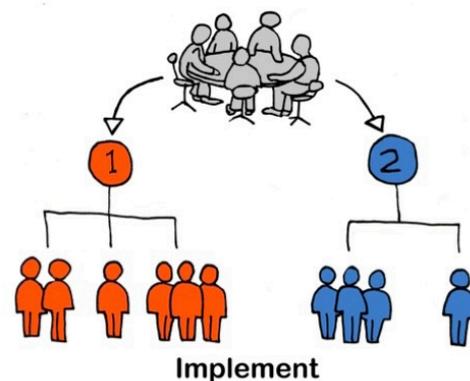
6. Integrate & Govern

Integrate & Govern
Translate priorities into funded initiatives, accountabilities, KPIs, and review cycles.

Key Activities

- Develop funded improvement initiatives with clear owners
- Embed capability targets in KPIs and OKRs
- Establish review cycles and governance

Implement

"Implementation" expands to cover integration into strategy and governance. Prioritised capability gaps are translated into funded initiatives, clear accountabilities, KPIs/OKRs, and a review cycle, so capability development becomes a recurring part of strategic planning and performance management.

Six-Step vs Five-Step

Six-Step Model

- Separates strategic framing from method design
- More explicit governance phase
- Suitable for complex organisations

Five-Step Model

- Merges framing and design for efficiency
- Streamlined for medium organisations
- Faster execution while maintaining rigour

Alternative: Compressed Five-Step Version

1. Frame & Design

Link to strategy, identify capabilities, and define assessment method and maturity criteria.

2. Reflect & Submit

Evidence-based self-assessment by participants using structured criteria and rating scales.

3. Synthesise & Cluster

Aggregate and visualise results by capability, theme, and unit to reveal systemic patterns.

4. Validate & Prioritise

Test findings with executives; rank gaps by strategic importance, risk, and feasibility.

5. Integrate & Implement

Translate priorities into initiatives, accountabilities, KPIs, and governance for ongoing review.