Australian Government | Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Readiness assessment

Is your organisation ready for
a strategic approach to flexibility?

Workplace Flexibility
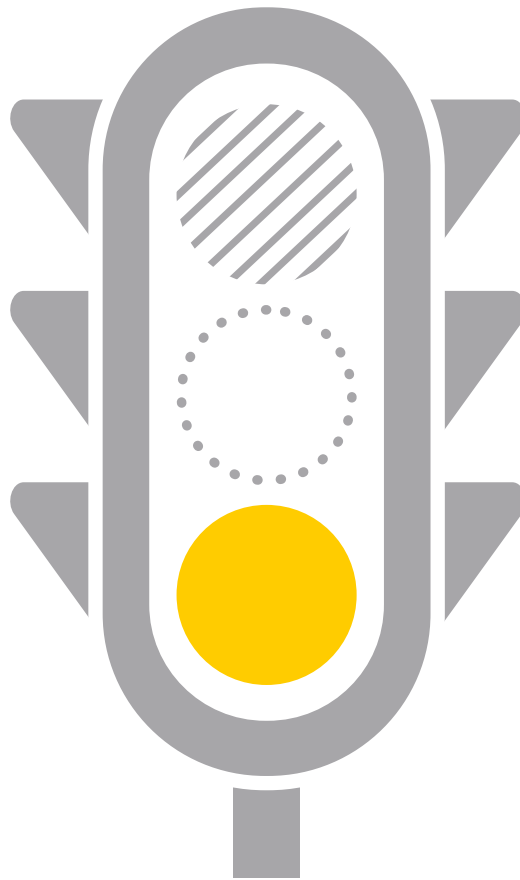
Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Many organisations have identified workplace flexibility as a strategic priority and are committed to moving towards all roles being flexible. Key drivers for taking a strategic approach to flexibility may differ depending on the organisation and may include the prioritisation of flexibility in the gender equality strategy, cultural change programs or through workplace redesign.

Regardless of the driver, it is important to see flexibility through a strategic lens and recognise the change management process required.

A workplace flexibility strategy defines the vision, objectives and actions for flexibility in an organisation. Typically, the strategy will indicate how these objectives will be realised, and will provide an assessment of risks and success factors.

With any strategy process an organisation usually asks the questions 'where are we now, where are we going and how will we get there? There are many different models and proprietary tools for managing organisational change. The diagram below shows the typical steps involved in change.

This toolkit is designed to assist you with the first step of the strategy and change journey. Prior to developing your workplace flexibility strategy, it is recommended that you undertake a readiness assessment. This toolkit provides the framework and practical guide to conducting a systematic diagnosis of 'where are we now' – a key input to building your workplace flexibility strategy.

Specifically, this toolkit aims to:

➡ provide a comprehensive framework for organisational flexibility

➡ enable organisations to plot where they are on the flexibility roadmap

➡ help organisations conduct a flexibility assessment.

Figure 1: The step change process

A) Analyse	B) Design	C) Implement	D) Review
Where are we now? Where do we want to be (and why)?	What is the best route to get there?	How can we start (or keep) moving?	How are we travelling?
FLEXIBILITY **DIAGNOSTIC**	FLEXIBILITY **STRATEGY**	FLEXIBILITY **ACTION PLANS**	FLEXIBILITY **BENCHMARKS**

Who should conduct the assessment?

The readiness assessment has been designed to assist organisations of all sizes and in all industries. It is recommended that the project manager of the workplace flexibility program conduct the initial assessment. Responsibility for this program may often sit within the human resource department, operations or finance.

Once the initial assessment is conducted it is useful to test the assessment with other key stakeholders including: CFO, COO, members of the finance department, diversity practitioners, managers and employees who are managing and taking up flexibility, change managers and their teams, senior executives and organisational leaders, information and technology professionals, and facilities and accommodation teams. The assessment may also seek input from the diversity council.

Depending on the size of your organisation, it may be useful to conduct the assessment at both the organisation level, as well as the divisional level to determine how different flexibility is embedded in different parts of the organisation.

The structure of this toolkit

This toolkit has two main parts. Section two outlines the flexibility roadmap and capability framework. Section three provides a comprehensive readiness assessment for organisations to gain a deeper understanding of the current state of workplace flexibility as a foundation for developing a flexibility strategy.

This section outlines the flexibility roadmap and capability framework. The framework outlines 10 specific areas required for achieving organisation-wide and strategic flexibility.

The flexibility roadmap

Understanding at a high level where you are on the flexibility roadmap will help your organisation determine the starting point of the journey and set clear strategic objectives, as well as identify which specific flexibility capabilities to focus on as your strategy develops.
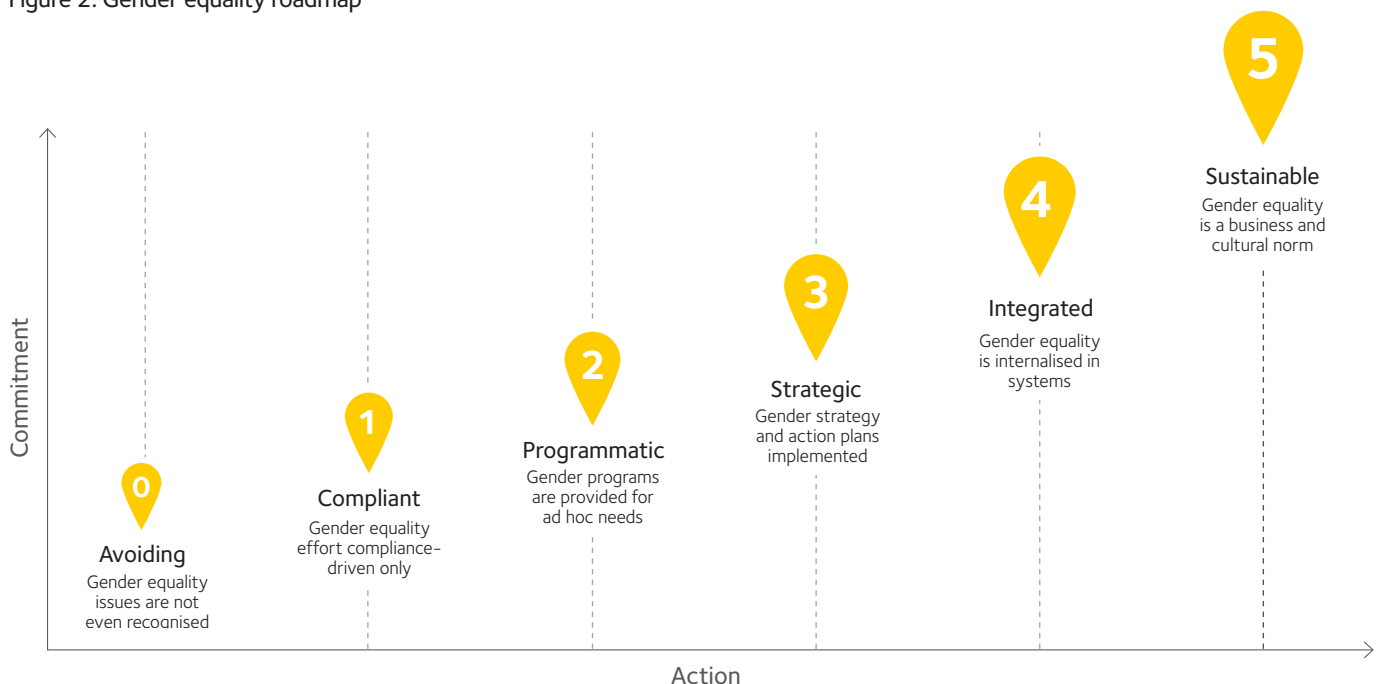
Aligned to the gender equality roadmap

The gender strategy toolkit outlines the gender equality roadmap. The 'gender equality roadmap' (roadmap) is designed to help organisations understand the nature of the gender equality 'journey' and the identifiable phases within it, from least effective practice to highly effective best practice. The roadmap enables organisations to plot where they are on their journey. Stakeholders can then identify what progress looks like and plan accordingly. The roadmap acts as both a framework for identifying and understanding gender equality progress (or absence of it), and as a common language for stakeholders to discuss progress.

Within the gender strategy toolkit there are 12 key focus areas that make up essential components of a comprehensive gender equality strategy: stakeholder engagement, leadership accountability, strategy and business case, measurement and reporting, policies and processes, supply chain, gender composition, gender pay equity, flexibility, talent pipeline, leader and manager capability and gender inclusive culture.

For more information on the gender equality roadmap and ensuring alignment between your overarching gender equality and flexibility strategy visit the Agency's website.

Figure 2: Gender equality roadmap

Commitment

0
Avoiding
Gender equality issues are not even recognised

1
Compliant
Gender equality effort compliance-driven only

2
Programmatic
Gender programs are provided for ad hoc needs

3
Strategic
Gender strategy and action plans implemented

4
Integrated
Gender equality is internalised in systems

5
Sustainable
Gender equality is a business and cultural norm

Action

The flexibility roadmap

We have adapted the gender equality roadmap model specifically for workplace flexibility to help organisations think about the flexibility journey and where they are positioned overall. Does the organisation view flexibility as a compliance or programmatic issue, in the sense that flexible working arrangements are offered in a limited way, or does the organisation view flexibility in a more holistic way, where flexibility is part of the organisation's strategy and factored into the way work is done? Or does the organisation lie somewhere in between?

Figure 3: The flexibility roadmap

The flexibility roadmap has been simplified into three distinct stages: 'limited', 'basic' and 'embedded', which are aligned to the six broad phases outlined in the gender strategy toolkit. You can use your assessment against the capability framework to plot your position on the flexibility roadmap. Each phase is outlined below.

No	Stage	Description / characteristics
1.	Limited	➡ This is consistent with the 'avoidance' or 'compliance approach' on the gender equality roadmap. ➡ No recognition of how effective flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices can promote gender equality and diversity. ➡ Generic flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices only exist to the extent they are required by legislation or regulation.
2.	Basic	➡ This is consistent with the 'programmatic' approach on the gender equality roadmap. ➡ Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are provided to meet the needs of specific groups or individuals. ➡ Typically flexibility is seen as a human resource function only.
3.	Embedded	➡ This is consistent with the 'strategic', 'integrated' and 'sustainable' approach on the gender equality roadmap. ➡ Enabling progression as flexibility becomes strategic in the mindset, systems and culture. ➡ Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are designed and accessible to benefit all employees; the flexibility business case is established. ➡ Flexible work and family-friendly policies / practices are leveraged as a business enabler; no value judgements are made about flexibility needs. ➡ Flexible, family-friendly working is expected, normalised and equitably accessible; it is integral to all business and people practices (e.g. workforce planning). ➡ The flexibility strategy is aligned to the business strategy and the organisation is moving towards the workplace of the future.

Flexibility capability framework

In order to achieve powerful, effective flexibility, core capabilities are needed in a number of areas. The strategic approach sees flexibility capability as an important organisational issue. When issues are seen as organisational, rather than individual, there is often a parallel realisation that they need to be dealt with comprehensively, taking into account every part of the organisation.

In the case of flexibility, the transformation that occurs when an organisation improves its flexibility capability is far-reaching. It can involve creating new processes and systems around work to enable a wholly different way of doing work. It can require managers and employees to change the way they work. It can also require new infrastructure or technology. Organisations need to create a holistic, integrated implementation approach that involves all the key players who can enable flexibility.

The 10 capability areas are illustrated in figure 4. The next section provides a description of each of the 10 capabilities and provides an assessment tool to assist organisations diagnose their current status on each capability (as either limited, basic or embedded).
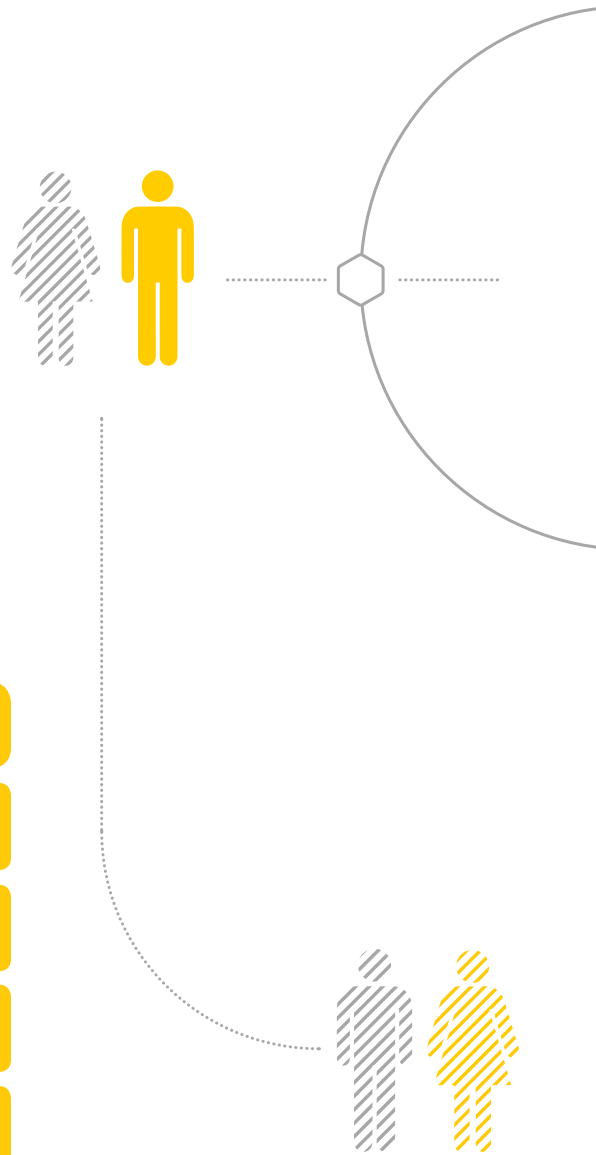
Figure 4: Flexibility capability framework

Leadership

Business case	Management capability
Flexibility vision, strategy & policy	Employee experience
Technology and infrastructure	Client and supplier experience
Results management	Learning cycle

Change management

Section 3: Flexibility readiness assessment

Completing the flexibility readiness assessment enables your organisation to understand the status quo – an important first step in constructing a tailored strategy to improve flexibility.

In order for the assessment to be useful to most organisations, its focus is on observable aspects that are readily assessable. Together these observations provide a strong picture of an organisation's overall flexibility capability, while providing clarity about which individual capabilities require particular development.

How to complete the readiness assessment

The flexibility readiness assessment is a diagnostic tool, which provides a basis for consistent and robust assessment of your organisation's progress and performance against best practice indicators (which we have called 'signposts'). For each capability, a roadmap is provided that enables you to identify whether your organisation sits closest to either the 'limited' or the 'embedded' end of the roadmap.

Stakeholder engagement in the assessment

Different stakeholders may have varying perspectives and score the organisation differently, according to the nature of their role and connection to the gender equality agenda (e.g. business leader, team leader, team member, human resource manager, diversity practitioner etc.).

This is not only to be expected, but also represents a valuable insight. Exploring the reasons behind different stakeholder perspectives may uncover issues, which are specific to particular parts of the workforce. The more diverse the stakeholders that are consulted, the more robust the assessment process will be.

Consulting with stakeholders in this way is also an engagement and support-building process in itself.

Data sources for the readiness assessment

In using the diagnostic tool, you may also find it useful to draw information from the following sources.

- annual WGEA compliance reports (GEI 4)
- WGEA Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports (GEI 4)
- WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality submissions and outcomes
- policies, procedures and people management frameworks (e.g. capability models)
- results from employee engagement or diversity surveys
- quantitative metrics (e.g. flexibility utilisation)
- leadership communication relating to gender equality and flexibility, including the business case and policies.

⚙️ Capability 1 assessment: leadership

Organisations with strategic flexibility have strong executive leadership commitment to flexibility, together with clear leadership in the change process. Taking the journey towards strategic flexibility can require significant change, which simply fails without strong leadership commitment or involvement
in the process.

Leaders play particularly important roles in several ways.

➥ Leaders establish accountability for the change program's outcomes.

➥ Leaders are the natural example or 'model' of flexibility that sets the tone for the whole organisation.

➥ Leaders provide clear direction to managers and employees.

➥ Leaders facilitate the engagement of managers and other staff in the change process through inspiration, clarity and the provision of resources to support the change.

1.1 Visibility of leadership: an organisation's executive leadership sets the tone for the other leadership and management teams.

Tick the signpost that best describes the executive leadership's approach to flexibility.

Status	Signpost	Your org
🚦 Limited	Executive leadership team is silent: the organisation's executive leadership is silent or negative about the benefits of flexibility for the organisation.	☐
🚦 Basic	Limited discussion at the executive level: the organisation's executive leadership has publicly stated its commitment to exploring the benefits of flexibility.	☐
🚦 Embedded	Highly visible executive leadership: the organisation's executive leadership makes strong, consistent statements about the importance of flexibility to achieving the organisation's goals.	☐

1.2 Role modelling of flexible working arrangements by executive leadership: when an organisation empowers its leaders to work flexibly, powerful role-modelling is established that influences the workplace culture towards a positive approach to flexibility.

Tick the signpost that best describes executive uptake of flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
🚦 Limited	Limited senior executive uptake: a proportionally small number of Senior Executives have no or limited flexibility arrangements.	☐
🚦 Basic	Minimal uptake: a moderate number of senior executives work flexibly. As a guide, these executives comprise less than 15% of the senior executive team.	☐
🚦 Embedded	Widespread senior executive uptake: a significant number of senior executives work flexibly. As a guide, these executives comprise upwards of 35% of the senior executive team.	☐

1.3 General uptake of flexible working arrangements by management: when an organisation's management takes a positive approach to flexibility, uptake of its flexible work program is higher.

Tick the signpost that best describes management uptake of flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Limited general uptake: a proportionally small number of employees at all level take up flexible work options.	☐
Basic	Minimal uptake: a moderate number of employees at all levels take up flexible work options. As a guide, this could be less than 15%.	☐
Embedded	Widespread general uptake: a significant number of employees at all levels take up flexible work options. As a guide, this could be at least 35%.	☐

Capability 2 assessment: business case

A clear business case is an essential prerequisite for building commitment to a flexibility strategy that can lead to effective implementation. Weakness at this stage in the strategy development process has the potential to undermine the success of everything that follows. In particular, it is important the leadership team is 'on side' in the early stages. Without a strong business case that establishes the organisation's return on investment, leaders are unlikely to invest in improving capability of any kind. In the case of flexibility, leaders' investment is not only financial but also personal, as they play an important role in championing and 'modelling' flexibility by working flexibly themselves.

2.1 Formally articulated business case: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's flexibility business case.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	No business case: there is no business case, or if one has been done in the past it has remained largely unknown.	☐
Basic	Generic business case: the business case for flexibility is generic, un-compelling, limited or fails to demonstrate the contribution of flexibility to business performance.	☐
Embedded	Strong business case: your organisation has a clear business case that outlines how flexibility contributes to business performance.	☐

2.2 Flexibility needs analysis: conducting a stakeholder needs analysis can form part of the business case stage. A needs analysis considers who will be affected, what they want or expect and their actual needs (for example, this may include access to flexibility, training in flexible team management, and support for flexible working arrangements).

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's stakeholder needs analysis.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Limited understanding of the need and demand for flexibility: the need or demand for flexibility has not been investigated or established in the organisation.	☐
	Basic	Basic needs analysis: the need for flexibility has been identified for specific stakeholders.	☐
	Embedded	Comprehensive needs analysis conducted: the need for flexibility has been identified as being essential to all roles in the organisation.	☐

Capability 3 assessment: flexibility vision, strategy and policy

It is important for organisations to define what flexibility means in their organisation – what is the vision – and how will it be achieved. In addition, organisations leading the way in workplace gender equality have in place a policy that specifically supports flexible working arrangements for all employees. A formal policy on flexible working arrangements states the principles, guidelines and procedures related to flexible working arrangements and conditions.

Every flexibility policy should also take into account legal considerations. Guidance on how to develop a flexibility policy is available on the Agency's website.

3.1 Flexibility vision: tick the signpost that best describes the extent to which your organisation has articulated the long-term vision for flexible working arrangements.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Limited view as to what the future of the workplace looks like in the organisation and little acknowledgement of change from traditional ways of work.	☐
	Basic	Consideration of flexibility in a basic or programmatic way with a focus on defining flexible working arrangements rather than business transformation.	☐
	Embedded	Clear vision about the future ways of work in the organisation and all roles being flexible.	☐

3.2 Flexibility strategy: tck the signpost that best describes the extent to which your organisation has a dedicated workplace flexibility strategy.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Limited or no strategy: no strategy or plans exist around organisational flexibility.	☐
Basic	Basic strategy or plan outlining how employees may access flexible work: A basic flexibility exists, either within a gender equality strategy or people strategy, however, transformational change is not recognised.	☐
Embedded	Established organisation-wide flexibility strategy: An organisation-wide strategy outlining the vision, objectives and actions towards organisation-wide flexibility.	☐

Note: assessments 3.3–3.9 relate to the organisation's flexibility policy.

3.3 Range of flexible working arrangements: a limited number of flexible work options is a strong indication that an organisation hasn't made the necessary adjustments to embed flexible work.

Tick the signpost that best outlines your organisation's range of flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Limited range of flexibility options: the organisation has a limited number of flexible work options available to employees. These may include part-time work, time in lieu and carers leave.	☐
Basic	Moderate range of flexibility options: a broader range of flexible work options is available to employees. These may include flexible hours of work, unplanned leave and choices about the timing of work.	☐
Embedded	Wide range of flexibility options: more involved types of flexible work are made available to employees. These may include compressed work week, job sharing, and telecommuting.	☐

3.4 Response options to flexibility requests: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's range of response options for flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Low number of acceptable reasons: the organisation has a limited number of acceptable reasons for requesting flexible work, for example relating mainly to child care or elder care.	☐
Basic	Moderate number of acceptable reasons: the organisation considers a range of reasons for requesting flexible work, but has some limitations.	☐
Embedded	High number of acceptable reasons: the organisation does not prescribe the reasons why flexible work can be requested and any reason is acceptable.	☐

3.5 Formality of documentation of flexible working arrangements: documentation, such as written flexible work agreements, indicates an organisation's acceptance of flexible work as a valid option.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices for documenting flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Informal flexible working arrangements: some individuals may have informal arrangements with their manager, which are usually not documented.	
Basic	Some documentation of flexible working arrangements: some individuals may have documented arrangements with their manager for small portions of work flexibility.	
Embedded	Formally documented flexible working arrangements: flexibility is consistently documented.	

3.6 Availability of flexible working arrangements: one of the key differences between a limited approach and a strategic flexibility approach is whether the flexibility is implemented on an individual basis or whether there is an organisation-wide policy that establishes a general expectation of positive responses to flexible work requests.

Tick the signpost that best describes the degree to which flexibility is available across the organisation.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Available to individuals: individual arrangements are entered into between managers and employees. These are unusual compared with the rest of the organisation.	☐
Basic	Limited availability: individual arrangements are entered into between managers and employees. These are not unusual but are also not the norm.	☐
Embedded	Available organisation-wide: flexibility is made available to every employee or most employees.	☐

3.7 Type of roles: organisations that are inexperienced with flexible work typically make an overly cautious assessment about which roles can be worked flexibly. Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's approach to the types of roles that may access flexibility.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Low number of acceptable roles: leaders and managers in the organisation view most positions as unsuitable for flexible work.	☐
Basic	Limited number of acceptable roles: around half of the organisation's roles may be excluded, whether formally or informally.	☐
Embedded	High number of acceptable roles: the organisation starts from the point of view that all roles can be worked flexibly. Flexibility is made available to all roles in all areas of the business.	☐

3.8 Frequency of flexible working arrangements: is flexibility available on an ad hoc basis or is it mainstream within the organisation. Ad hoc arrangements set no precedent or expectation of flexibility, while mainstream, consistent availability of flexibility contributes to an expectation amongst employees that a flexible work request will be positively received.

Tick the signpost that best describes the level of frequency of flexible working arrangements within your organisation.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Ad hoc: arrangements are made on an ad hoc basis, with no guarantee of increasing the frequency. Employees tend to expect a negative response to a flexible work request.	☐
	Basic	Limited: arrangements are made on a part time or infrequent basis. Employees tend to expect their flexible work request may be accepted if a sound business case is made.	☐
	Embedded	Mainstream: arrangements are mainstreamed as a regular, consistent way of working. Employees have a reasonable expectation of a positive response to a flexible work request.	☐

3.9 Level or tailoring of flexible working arrangements: organisations that are more readily able to implement individualised arrangements are more likely to succeed with embedding flexibility.

Tick the signpost that best describes the level of tailoring of flexible working arrangements in your organisation.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	One limited approach: if flexible work options are utilised, managers and employees are provided with little opportunity to tailor the arrangements.	☐
	Basic	Moderate tailoring: the organisation's policies and approach can be tailored however operational requirements or other limitations prevent fully tailored individual arrangements.	☐
	Embedded	Tailored individual arrangements: the organisation's policies and approach give managers and employees full flexibility to tailor individual arrangements to create an ideal scenario.	☐

3.10 Consideration of legal requirements: every flexibility policy should also take into account relevant legal considerations.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's legal requirements policy.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Legal requirements absent or signalled: the flexibility policy may or may not signal the relevant legal framework, but does not outline the organisations' steps to meet these obligations.	
	Basic	Legal requirements met: the flexibility policy outlines the organisations' steps to meet its legal obligations.	
	Embedded	Legal requirements exceeded: the flexibility policy outlines the organisation's steps to meet and exceed its legal obligations.	

⚙ Capability 4 assessment: management capability

The role of managers in flexibility is crucial. Managers of flexible workers need to be strong communicators and great project managers who are able to use technology to their advantage and are aware of the strengths and potential pitfalls of flexible work. Managers can have the most significant impact on the success of flexibility, through their direct impact on an employee's working arrangement.

Organisations wanting to improve their flexibility capability must ensure managers of flexible workers receive specific learning and development opportunities to enable the development of strong capabilities in communication, results management and the use of technology for flexible work.

4.1 Level of manager awareness: an organisation at the limited end of the roadmap has a low number of leaders and managers who recognise and accept the importance of flexibility for their organisation. Often this low degree of acceptance is due to misunderstandings about flexible work and little or no leadership positioning about the importance of flexibility for the organisation.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's level of manager awareness on flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
🚦 Limited	Low acceptance: low awareness, negative misunderstandings about flexible work.	☐
🚦 Basic	Moderate acceptance: a supportive leader with possibly some supportive managers.	☐
🚦 Embedded	Recognition of the organisation's mandate for flexibility: widely held recognition of the importance of flexibility amongst leaders and managers.	☐

4.2 Support for managers: organisations at the strategic flexibility end of the roadmap ensure their managers are trained effectively in the skills required for effective flexible work management, through specifically relevant learning and development opportunities.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's level of support for managers to enable flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
🚦 Limited	Minimal support for managers: the organisation makes little or no commitment to providing learning and development in the specific skills required for effective flexible work management.	☐
🚦 Basic	Moderate support for managers: the organisation offers limited or generic learning and development opportunities that provide only partial support for effective flexible work management.	☐
🚦 Embedded	Significant support for managers: the organisation offers dedicated learning and development opportunities that train managers in the specific skills required for effective flexible work management.	☐

4.3 Effective team management: when teams work flexibly, managers need to establish team practices that continue to support excellent communication, task management and resource allocation. Team flexibility increases the organisation's potential gain but can raise the level of challenge for managers.

Tick the signpost that best describes your managers' level of experience managing flexibly working teams.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Minimal experience: managers have very little experience managing teams working flexibly.	☐
	Basic	Moderate experience: managers have had some experience managing teams working flexibly.	☐
	Embedded	Significant experience: managers have significant experience managing teams working flexibly.	☐

⚙ Capability 5 assessment: employee experience

Employees' experience of flexibility is the litmus test of whether an organisation has fully developed its flexibility capability. When an organisation's flexibility capability is limited, employees who work flexibly are at risk of experiencing work intensification, isolation, increased stress, reduced access to information and stigma. As a result, the employee's working relationships with their teammates can be significantly affected.

Employees themselves play an important role in making flexibility effective. Employees who work flexibly need to be great communicators who are able to negotiate the balance between their work and home lives and understand how to use technology to support their work. Capable organisations tend to provide support to their employees so they can develop in these areas.

Other issues to consider with the employee experience include: equality in performance reviews (i.e. not letting flexible working arrangements affect perception of work outcomes achieved at the time of performance review), sense of belonging, appropriate access to feedback from managers, ability to participate in meetings and ability to engage with the team.

5.1 Employee acceptance of flexibility: when all roles are flexible, it is important not only to consider the employee's individual experience but also the team dynamic and experience.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's level of employee acceptance of flexible working arrangements.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Low acceptance: limited acceptance of flexible work within teams.	☐
	Basic	Moderate acceptance: some acceptance of flexible work within teams, with pockets of unacceptance.	☐
	Embedded	Widespread team acceptance: widespread acceptance of flexible work within teams, flexible work is widely seen as the norm.	☐

5.2 Risk of work overload: flexible work options, particularly where the use of technologies is part of the arrangement, can lead to work overload if an employer does not have adequate protection in place. Work overload carries risks to employee health, wellbeing, satisfaction and engagement and can have a negative impact on productivity over time. Employers need to have processes in place to ensure employees undertake appropriate workloads, while employees need to be prepared and empowered to negotiate appropriate workloads.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's risk of work overload for employees as a result of flexible working arrangements.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	High risk of work overload: the organisation is unaware of, or does not manage, the risk of work overload for flexible workers. There are no appropriate systems in place.	☐
	Basic	Moderate risk of work overload: the organisation supports employees to manage the risk of work overload but places the responsibility on them, without systems to reduce the risk.	☐
	Embedded	Low risk of work intensification: the organisation has systems in place to provide a check and balance to work overload, such as monitoring stress levels.	☐

⚙ Capability 6 assessment: results management

Results management focuses on work outputs such as goals achieved, rather than inputs such as time spent in the office.

Organisations that do this effectively establish specific outcomes, goals, aims or other results that are important to each person's work. These results are described in sufficient detail to become the primary source of information against which employee performance is determined, so that it is no longer important to monitor inputs such as time spent in the office.

Managers play an important role in developing this capability by establishing specific results required, monitoring staff and rewarding performance. The human resources team can also provide valuable support by establishing the job description, competencies or KPIs for each position.

The results management framework should capture everything about an individual's work and describe it in a way that is quantifiable, so it becomes the basis for performance and productivity measurements and increases transparency around work being done. It may consist of a weekly reporting template, a guide or agenda for open conversations about results being achieved and a performance management template that refers back to the position's stated outcomes, goals, aims or expected results.

A results management framework also addresses trust issues by supporting an open, transparent description of work.

6.1 Results-focused culture: results-focused cultures include a clear description of the outcomes, goals, aims or results expected of each position, as well as a reporting procedure, whether formal or informal. It may also include a guide or agenda for open conversations that monitor the achievement of results.

Rather than a passive approach, leaders and managers actively manage the results being delivered in their teams by monitoring and following up on progress.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's level of results-focused culture to support flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Passive results management: results are not actively managed after an employee is recruited, beyond monitoring attendance and participation.	☐
Basic	Moderate results management: some results management is evident but is infrequent, uncommon or only utilised when an employee works flexibly.	☐
Embedded	Active results management: the organisation has a clear system of results management for each position in the organisation, regardless of whether the person works flexibly or not.	☐

6.2 Nature of management: organisations that tend to encourage autonomy are more likely to be aligned with a flexible work approach.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's management style with regards to flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Micromanagement: leaders and managers tend to view employees as a performance risk that needs to be closely managed.	☐
Basic	Moderate level of trust-based, results-focused culture.	☐
Embedded	Management on the basis of autonomy: leaders and managers tend to see employees as capable individuals. Autonomy is empowered and encouraged.	☐

⚙ Capability 7 assessment: technology and infrastructure

Organisations use technology to establish effective collaboration between people who work together but may not share the same work location or time. There are a range of technologies that support collaboration – whether primarily for purposes of communication or project management – and enable organisations to avoid disruption when employees work flexibly.

Some of the most prevalent communication technologies being used today are not good tools for collaboration. Communication can be described in many ways but a simple dichotomy between verbal and non-verbal communication helps to understand which collaboration technologies provide the best communication experience. Email, for example, is a poor collaboration tool because it provides only non-verbal information. At the other end of the roadmap, high quality video conferencing provides an experience that is almost as good as face-to-face communication.

Project management tools and technologies vary greatly but their main purpose is to provide a system for managing resources – such as time, money and information – so that work gets done. Some project management tools build in communication technology to combine communication between team members with the system for managing resources.

An organisation's particular technology needs will depend on its goals for flexibility, the nature of the work and the prevalence of flexible work that occurs across timeframes and locations. In some cases, additional technology won't be needed at all, while in other organisations, new technologies will be essential, particularly in those organisations looking to embed flexible work and significantly improve their flexibility capability.

7.1 Technology infrastructure: organisations undertaking strategic flexibility usually adopt collaboration tools and systems that enable a high-quality communication experience. Organisations that don't understand flexibility tend to rely on communication technologies such as email and file transfer, which provide a low-quality communication experience.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's technology to support flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Low-quality communication technologies: email and file transfer are used as the primary tool to communicate. Other communication tools that enable a higher-quality communication experience are used infrequently.	☐
Basic	Moderate quality communication technologies: managers are encouraged to move beyond email for communication with their flexible workers. They may use the phone, instant messaging or social media. These tools are used in addition to email to enhance the communication experience.	☐
Embedded	High quality communication technologies: organisations use a range of collaborative platforms to enable employees to communicate effectively with their team members and managers, including collaborative project management platforms, simultaneous document sharing and video conferencing, which enable a high-quality communication experience.	☐

7.2 Telecommuting technology: one of the most important aspects of strategic flexible work is focused attention on the technology that supports flexible work. Strategic flexible work often includes some form of work offsite which requires supportive technology, including telecommuting, mobile work or other offsite work. Other types of flexible work such as job sharing and compressed work weeks also benefit from the use of supported collaboration technologies.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's available technology to support flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Minimal technical support: the organisation makes little or no commitment to providing supportive technologies or to training or troubleshooting support.	☐
Basic	Moderate technical support: the organisation provides basic supportive technologies, sufficient to perform some offsite work. Training and troubleshooting support is provided.	☐
Embedded	Substantial technical support: the organisation offers dedicated technical support to ensure supportive collaboration technologies are able to support the work and are effectively used and maintained. Corporate security and systems are integrated.	☐

7.3 Workplace facilities: it is critical that organisations have the appropriate infrastructure to enable flexible working arrangements. This includes the physical infrastructure in the workplace / space, as well as process related infrastructures.

The location of work can be a key enabler of flexibility, enabling work to be done in a variety of locations provides a wide range of flexible work options. When the place of work suits the work activity, organisations have the potential to further improve productivity. On the other hand, when the place of work is a bad fit with work activity, there is a risk not only to productivity but also to health and safety.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's physical work environment to support flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Traditional work environments: the organisation has limited or rigid offices and does not provide ergonomic chairs, desks etc. for home offices.	☐
Basic	Home office support: the organisation has limited or rigid offices but provides all the physical equipment needed for staff to work from home or offsite.	☐
Embedded	Flexible work environments: the organisation's main office environment is designed to be used in various ways and supports working in and away from the main office.	☐

7.4 Systems and processes: process related infrastructure includes the range of systems and processes that enable or limit how the organisation functions in key domains. These may include knowledge management systems, communication methods, location trackers, strategic resource management, human resources policies and procedures.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's processes and systems that either support or limit flexible working arrangements.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Limiting process infrastructure: the organisation has limited or rigid process infrastructure that could get in the way of flexibility.	☐
	Basic	Basic process infrastructure: the organisation has one or two processes or systems in place that will make flexibility easier.	☐
	Embedded	Strategic process infrastructure: the organisation's processes and systems fully support flexibility.	☐

7.5 Paperless office: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's reliance on paper that either supports or limits flexible working arrangements.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Paper reliant: the organisation is heavily reliant on paper based systems, records management and communications.	☐
	Basic	Mixed reliance on paper and electronic: the organisation has moved to a combination of paper based and digital records management.	☐
	Embedded	Paperless office: the organisation has implemented a paperless office with records and communications being electronic.	☐

⚙ Capability 8 assessment: client and supplier experience

Varying client or customer expectations may impact an organisation's approach to flexibility as client expectations regarding meeting tight timeframes for deliverables may be high and some clients or customers may provide short lead times.

Some organisations may make assumptions about whether the client would or would not be supportive of flexibility in teams providing service. There are opportunities to engage with clients and customers in a strategic way around flexible working arrangements.

8.1 Client experience: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's approach to engaging with customers on flexibility.

Status		Signpost	Your org
🚦	Limited	Limited or no consideration is given to discussions with clients regarding workplace flexibility. Assumptions are made about client expectations and flexible workers on client projects.	☐
🚦	Basic	Some discussions are held with clients on managing specific flexible working arrangements of specific team members.	☐
🚦	Embedded	Strategic planning and conversations are held with clients regarding the culture of workplace flexibility and maximising the value for both the organisation and the client.	☐

8.2 Supplier / procurement principles: organisations have an opportunity to work with their own suppliers on workplace flexibility and drive change through the supply chain.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's approach to flexibility in supply chain management and procurement selection procedures.

Status		Signpost	Your org
🚦	Limited	Limited or no inclusion in supply chain: no consideration is given to the workplace practices, in terms of flexibility of suppliers.	☐
🚦	Basic	Basic inclusion: some conversations are held with suppliers about workplace flexibility.	☐
🚦	Embedded	Embedded in procurement practices: gender equality or flexible workplace practices are embedded within procurement criteria. Strategic conversations are held with suppliers on driving a culture of workplace flexibility through the supply chain.	☐

⚙ Capability 9 assessment: learning cycle

Establishing an effective learning cycle is absolutely vital for an organisation to maintain its ongoing flexibility capability. Due to the complex nature of flexibility, organisations can find it difficult to achieve productive, flexible work options if there is no concerted effort to learn what works and what doesn't for the organisation and its people.

Establishing a feedback loop enables the organisation to learn what works and doesn't in its particular circumstances. Flexibility needs to be tailored to suit the organisation's goals, values and other unique business needs, while creating attractive flexible work options for staff. A feedback loop enables solutions generated in one area to be adopted more broadly across the organisation. In addition, risks such as isolation and stress need
to be monitored so they can be managed.

9.1 Value of innovation: organisations that are highly innovative tend to have a degree of familiarity with the innovation process, which involves piloting, testing, learning, adjusting and re-testing. Non-innovative organisations are less likely to be comfortable with 'untested' work arrangements and tend to be unfamiliar with how to establish a learning process that can establish robust, tailored and effective work arrangements.

Tick the signpost that best describes the value your organisation places on innovation and learning to improve flexible working arrangements.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Low value on innovation: innovation occurs in small, discrete patches, for example within an individual's work. These innovations have little impact beyond an individual's work.	☐
Basic	Moderate value on innovation: innovation processes occur within teams, for example by brainstorming improvements to team processes or service delivery. These innovations are carried through to effect real change.	☐
Embedded	High value on innovation: innovation processes occur within the organisation, for example by harnessing employee suggestions and these innovations are carried through and are widely publicised within the organisation.	☐

9.2 Incorporating adjustments: tick the signpost that best describes how your organisation incorporates learnings into the ongoing strategy development and implementation.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Minimal ongoing adjustment: flexible working arrangements are limited and firm. The employee may be responsible to initiate reviews of the arrangement's effectiveness.	☐
Basic	Regular adjustment: flexible working arrangements are reviewed more frequently than yearly, with the possibility of adjustments. Either the employee or manager can initiate a review.	☐
Embedded	Dynamic adjustment: flexible working arrangements are reviewed more frequently than yearly, and are able to be adjusted by employee or manager with reasonable notice, at any time.	☐

Capability 10 assessment: change management

A successful move to strategic, productive flexibility leads to a new culture of work within an organisation, one where new norms are established and where the systems and behaviours within the organisation all reinforce the value placed on flexibility. This cannot be achieved without a tailored, adequately resourced and supported change management program.

Key aspects to consider in the change management process:

- alignment of the change program to the organisation's objectives and strategy
- alignment to other large scale change programs and touch points across the organisation
- the engagement of the organisation's project management office or change managers
- project management capability, risk assessment and mitigation strategy
- culture change implications and other aligned culture projects that may be underway.

10.1 Change management resources: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's flexibility change management practices and resourcing.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Minimally resourced: the organisation's change management team is unfamiliar with flexibility and lacks the resourcing for transformational change.	☐
	Basic	Some resourcing: the organisation's change management team is either unfamiliar with flexibility or lacks the resources for transformational change.	☐
	Embedded	Substantially resourced: the organisation's change management team is familiar with flexibility and has the resourcing for transformational change.	☐

10.2 Strategic alignment to other change programs: typically an organisation will have many strategic projects underway simultaneously. In developing and implementing your flexibility strategy, it is important to consider how it aligns with other projects. This is critical to ensure the project and the organisation does not suffer 'change fatigue'.

Tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's flexibility change management alignment with other projects.

Status		Signpost	Your org
	Limited	Limited alignment: the workplace flexibility project is viewed as a human resources function only.	☐
	Basic	Some alignment: the workplace flexibility project is developed in consideration of the organisation's strategy and broad set of initiatives.	☐
	Embedded	Organisation wide alignment: the flexibility project is aligned to the organisation's strategy and other strategic initiatives and is part of a formal project management office project tracking process.	☐

10.3 Communication plan: tick the signpost that best describes your organisation's communication and engagement practices with key stakeholders across the organisation.

Status	Signpost	Your org
Limited	Limited communications: there is limited or no communication plan on workplace flexibility for either the current or planned program.	☐
Basic	Basic communications: there is some ad hoc communication on the availability of flexible working arrangements.	☐
Embedded	Comprehensive and proactive communications plan: a detailed communications plan has been developed. Communications is considered from the outset of the workplace flexibility program.	☐

Overall scoring

Transfer your results from the capability framework assessment to this overall summary sheet (page 27) to obtain a comprehensive view as to the current state of flexibility in your organisation.

Establish your score to determine whether your organisation is operating at the limited end of the roadmap for each capability or is closer to flexible or fully flexible.

One of the most useful features of the diagnostic is identifying priorities for action. Inevitably, organisations will perform more strongly against some areas than others and weaker scores suggest an area for prioritisation.

Scoring

Each capability has a number of questions that assess different aspects. In order to establish your score, complete each question and provide a score as 'limited', 'basic' or 'embedded' against that question, as indicated. Once each capability is completed, transfer your total score to the graph at the end of the assessment.

This is not intended to be a formulaic or algorithmic methodology. Assessment against each capability requires application of judgment, informed by direct observation or experience, and supported by relevant data sources (both qualitative and quantitative).

Scoring is a two-step process:

Step 1: detailed assessment - score your organisation against each of the capability areas by reviewing the 'signposts' provided. The signposts describe a level of organisational practice for a given capabilities which is aligned to each roadmap phase. Place a tick against the signpost that best describes your organisation's practices.

Step 2: overall assessment – aggregate your detailed scores to provide an overview of your organisation's current gender equality position and performance. Do this by copying each of your ticks for each capability into the master table (page 27), then allocate a numerical score for each tick:

➡ Limited = 1 point

➡ Basic = 2 points

➡ Embedded = 3 points

Aggregate the scores and divide the total by 34 (the number of sections under the 10 capabilities) to produce an overall average. Round the average up or down to identify your organisation's overall indicative flexibly roadmap phase.

The Agency has provided an excel format of the summary sheet to assist you with this scoring process. The excel file is available at https://www.wgea.gov.au/lead/strategic-approach-flexibility.
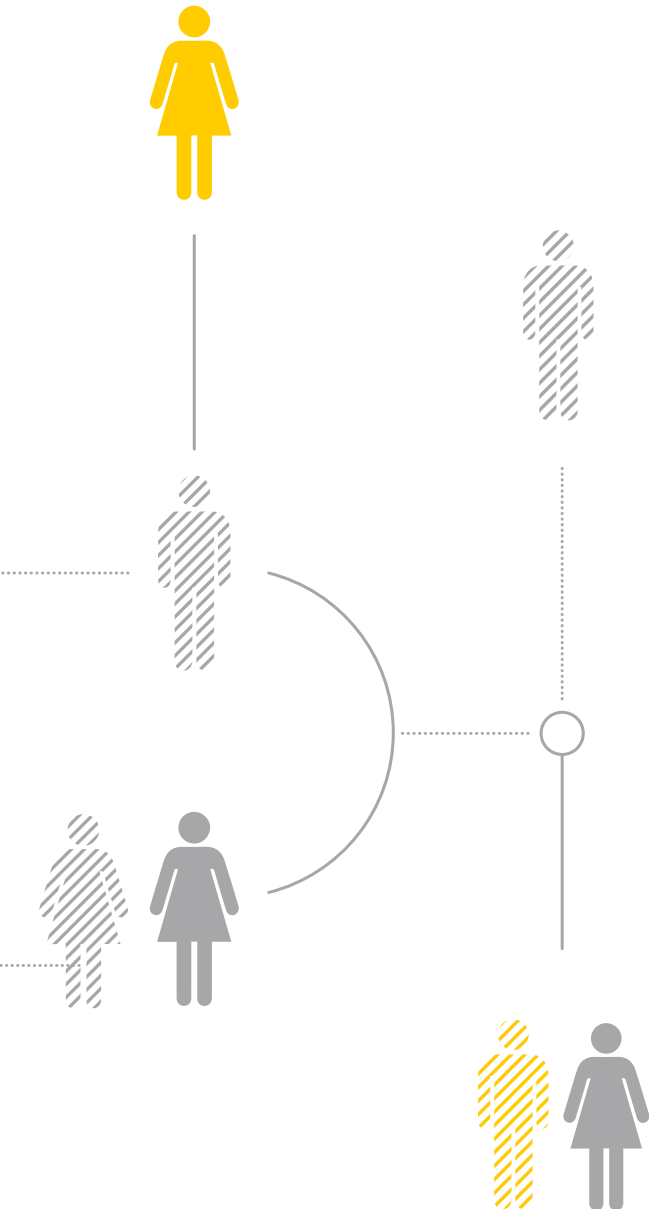
	Capability	Limited (1)	Basic (2)	Embedded (3)
1	**Leadership**			
1.1	Visibility of leadership	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Role modelling of flexible working arrangements by executive leadership	☐	☐	☐
1.3	General uptake of flexible working arrangements by management	☐	☐	☐
2	**Business Case**			
2.1	Formally articulated business case	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Flexibility needs analysis	☐	☐	☐
3	**Flexibility vision, strategy and policy**			
3.1	Flexibility vision and end-point	☐	☐	☐
3.2	Flexibility strategy	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Range of flexible working arrangements	☐	☐	☐
3.4	Response options to flexibility requests	☐	☐	☐
3.5	Formality of documentation of flexible working arrangements	☐	☐	☐
3.6	Availability of flexible working arrangements	☐	☐	☐
3.7	Type of roles	☐	☐	☐
3.8	Frequency of flexible working arrangements	☐	☐	☐
3.9	Level or tailoring of flexible working arrangements	☐	☐	☐
3.10	Consideration of legal requirements	☐	☐	☐
4	**Management capability**			
4.1	Level of manager awareness	☐	☐	☐
4.2	Support for managers	☐	☐	☐
4.3	Effective team management	☐	☐	☐
5	**Employee experience**			
5.1	Employee acceptance of flexibility	☐	☐	☐
5.2	Risk of work overload	☐	☐	☐
6	**Results management**			
6.1	Results-based culture	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Nature of management	☐	☐	☐
7	**Technology and infrastructure**			
7.1	Technology infrastructure	☐	☐	☐
7.2	Telecommuting technology	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Workplace facilities	☐	☐	☐
7.4	Systems and processes	☐	☐	☐
7.5	Paperless office	☐	☐	☐
8	**Client and supplier experience**			
8.1	Client experience	☐	☐	☐
8.2	Supplier / procurement principles	☐	☐	☐
9	**Learning cycle**			
9.1	Value of innovation	☐	☐	☐
9.2	Incorporating adjustments	☐	☐	☐
10	**Change management**			
10.1	Change management resources	☐	☐	☐
10.2	Strategic alignment to other change programs	☐	☐	☐
10.3	Communication plan	☐	☐	☐
	Score			
	Overall score (divide by 34)			
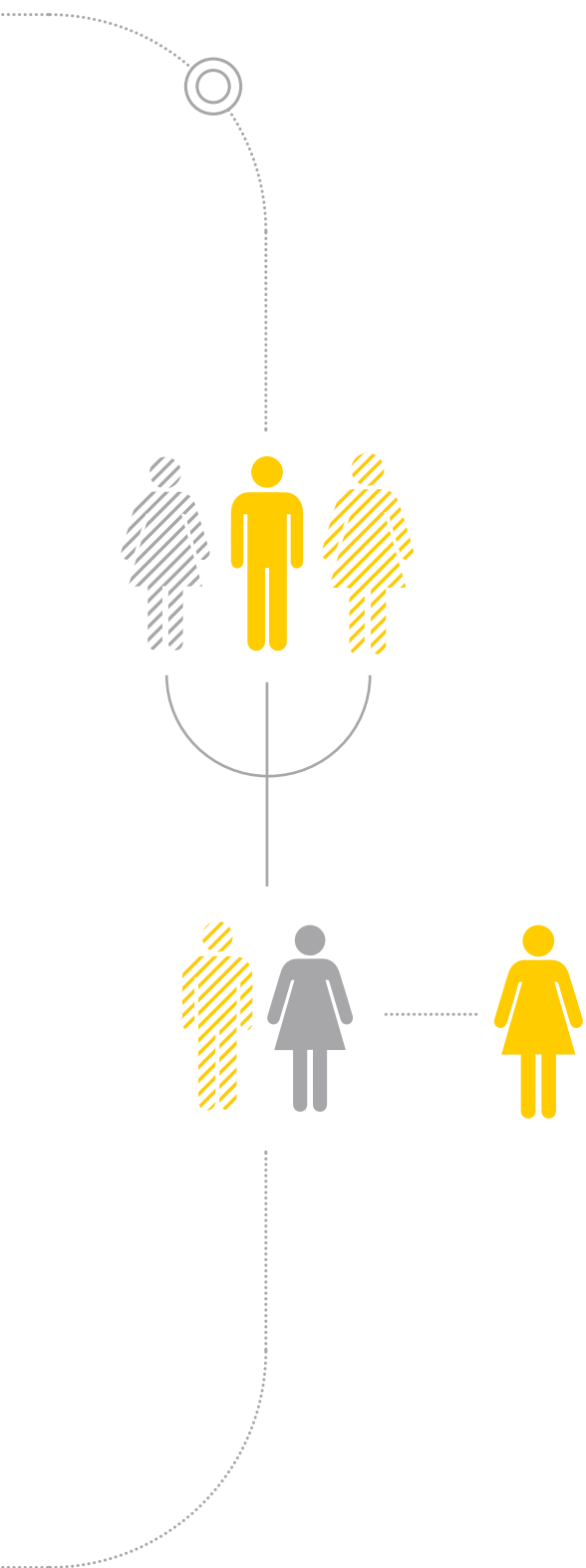
Where to next?

Consider additional assessment

Once you have completed the assessment, you may consider testing your findings with different stakeholders and using additional data collection methods. For example.

➡ Discussion and testing of assessment results with diversity council members

➡ Discussion and testing with other key stakeholders

➡ Conduct employee focus groups

Strategy development

Based on our review the top 5 priority recommendations are as follows:

➡ Further demonstration and communication of leadership commitment

➡ Development and communication the business case to relevant stakeholders

➡ Develop dedicated flexibility strategy covering the vision and goals for flexibility and specific goals and actions for each of the 10 flexibility capabilities

➡ Gain strategic alignment between related projects

➡ Development of internal communication and engagement plan for all stages of the flexibility journey.

For each of these next steps the Agency has provided dedicated tools and resources.

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TransformedTeams
Creating high performing workplaces

Advice and assistance

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