



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# CASE STUDY: STRATEGIC THINKING SKILLS

Department for Business, Energy and  
Industrial Strategy (BEIS)



## What were the requirements?

This programme was specifically designed to equip BEIS staff with the skills required to develop and deliver an effective strategy refresh. Strategic Thinking and Strategy Development in the Public Sector is a challenge like no other. It is crucial that delegates understand both the theoretical issues of Public Sector Strategy and the political context in which BEIS operates and have clear guidance on how to apply those to their real-world situation. To be successful, the learning needed to cover both organisational context and individual responses. BEIS chose Dods to support with this programme because of our longstanding relationships with the Civil Service and our deep understanding of the mechanics of government.

Strategic thinking is about seeing the bigger picture, rather than detail. At Dods we provide a toolkit as to how one can sharpen this skill. The toolkit we created with BEIS started with helping delegates understand why the way you think matters. We recognised that if we simply provided the delegates at BEIS with the toolkit in the first instance then we would be providing them with too much detail, and they would unintentionally disregard the bigger picture. This supports staff to develop ideas and think how they can apply them.

For this programme we blurred the lines between training and consultancy because we wanted people to achieve real-life outputs, organisational value and development of personal skills.



## What did you do?

Our training delivered the following learning outcomes:

- To explore the function of Strategy and Strategic Thinking within the Public Sector Organisation and to critically assess their own context.
- To understand how Complexity informs the Public Sector Context and guides our strategic response to ensure that the approaches we adopt are suited to our specific situation and wider system.
- To introduce and apply a bespoke toolkit of strategic thinking and systems tools (including, but not limited to Scenario Planning, Systems Mapping, Problem Definition, Policy Adaptation.)
- To consider how we evaluate the quality and success of strategy in the Public Sector.
- To reflect on personal contribution to the Departments' strategic process and make a personal action plan for improving their individual practice.

## How did you collaborate and partner with the client?

With our proposal we included time for an in-depth conversation with the client prior to delivery to ensure our understanding of the requirement was correct and met the organisation's needs. We worked on pre-course training questions for the participants to ensure the learning outcomes reflected their needs. This work was awarded to us during COVID-19 and full lockdown in the UK, meaning that these conversations couldn't happen face-to-face, we adapted to this quickly and were able to design and deliver a successful remote training course. The training outline is reflected below:

**A webinar introduction** to the principles of Strategic Thinking and the Strategic Space Model (60 minutes – this can be a 'live' session or pre-recorded so that delegates can access at a time to suit them).

**Half-day facilitated online session** 'Thinking Strategically' exploring Organizational Context, Problem Definition and introducing the Strategic Toolkit. Evaluation and review followed this.

**Small Group Workshops** with groups of 4-5 delegates working together to apply one of the Strategic Tools to the organisational challenge. These small group workshops embedded the learning. This worked as we were able to provide the delegates with a framework for mutual support and encouragement across a team and embed the necessary cultural changes.

**Half-day facilitated online session** 'Developing Strategy' to report progress from each workshop, tie together learning and make recommendations to build towards the strategy refresh. Evaluation and review will follow this.



## **What outcomes were achieved?**

The delegates are now able to see the bigger picture and what Strategic Thinking really means. Strategic Thinking is a high-level skill that cannot simply be 'taught'. That is why our approach to learning was facilitative and based on coaching and reflective practice. What this meant in practice is that our skilled trainers worked with BEIS delegates to develop a live case study based on their team's current challenges (international climate finance) and facilitated small group tasks where the specific tools are applied to challenge and deliver organisational outputs. The course also developed the skills of individual delegates. During the programme, the delegates were able to work collaboratively remotely.

**Contact the Dods Training  
team for more information**

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