

# Business Case Approach learning overview: February 2024

This document has been created as part of the Business Case Approach Community of Practice programme, to support practitioners in creating effective business cases.

We recommend starting by scanning the key themes and topic areas in the coloured sections to get an overview of the range of skills involved in the Business Case Approach. Once you've done that, reflect on your level of confidence and skill across them all: Which ones feel like places where you have room to grow?

After you've identified the themes and topics you'd like to focus on, you can start looking into the capabilities and skills that build them up, then browse the resources that will help you learn. You can get more support through our [BCA online learning material page](#), including information about our community of practice and its mentoring programme. You can learn more about this support, or suggest improvements, by getting in touch with [bcacommunity@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:bcacommunity@nzta.govt.nz).

## Key theme: **Overarching topics**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Investment management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the concept of an investment management system, and can relate to the Waka Kotahi Transport Agency statutory functions under the Land Transport Management Act 2003.</li> <li>Can describe the role of the business case in the Waka Kotahi investment management system.</li> <li>Can describe and compare investment management systems used by Waka Kotahi, NZ Treasury and others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">An introduction to the investment lifecycle</a> animation</li> <li><a href="#">Government Policy Statement for Land Transport</a> document (<i>soon to be updated</i>)</li> <li><a href="#">Online Learning for the Business Case Approach hub webpage</a></li> <li><a href="#">BCA essentials module</a></li> <li><a href="#">Treasury Better Business Cases</a> overview</li> <li><a href="#">Treasury Better Business Cases</a> guidance</li> <li><a href="#">Investment principles</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Overview of the Business Case Approach</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>How the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands how the NLTP is developed every 3 years and managed by Waka Kotahi.</li> <li>Understands the role of the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) and other statutory and non-statutory strategies, plans and policies.</li> <li>Knows 'funding system basics', for example the difference between <i>allocating</i> and <i>approving</i> funding; how to find things in Transport Investment Online (TIO); the decision-making frameworks; understands the Investment Prioritisation Method (IPM) and how this is used to prioritise the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">An introduction to the investment lifecycle</a> animation</li> <li>NLTP <a href="#">Investment principles</a> pages</li> <li><a href="#">About the NLTP</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">About the Investment Prioritisation Method (IPM)</a> page</li> </ul>

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is aware that there are funding sources other than the NLTF, and can identify when these may be appropriate to consider.</li> </ul>	
<b>Engagement skills</b>	<p>These resources are an overview of engagement in general– sections below also refer to engagement skills specific to each topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCA Community of Practice engagement hui recording</li> <li><a href="#">Engagement in the five-case model</a> resource</li> <li><a href="#">Hononga ki te iwi – our Māori engagement framework</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Engagement and the Business Case Approach</a></li> <li><a href="#">Debriefing your business case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Te Arawhiti – Office for Māori Crown Relations engagement resources</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Stakeholder engagement plan</a> template</li> </ul>
<b>Critical thinking skills</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Critical thinking</a> learning module</li> <li><a href="#">How to self-assess your business case</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Telling the investment story</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storytelling skills.</li> <li>Clear and concise writing skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Storytelling</a> learning module</li> </ul>
<b>Manging risk and uncertainty</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Risk and uncertainty in the five-case model</a> page</li> <li>BCA Community of Practice <a href="#">Risk and uncertainty hui</a> recording</li> <li>BCA Community of Practice <a href="#">Second Uncertainty hui</a> recording</li> </ul>
<b>Economic evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware of the Land Transport Benefits Framework, <i>Monetised benefits and costs manual</i> and the <i>Land Transport Benefits Framework measures manual</i>.</li> <li>Understands the basic principles of transport economics: cost–benefit appraisal; do-minimum; different cost estimates and their uses; present value end-of-life (PVEOL) evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Land Transport Benefits Framework</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Do-minimum hui</a> recording</li> <li><a href="#">Do-minimum hui – key messages from Q&amp;A</a></li> <li><a href="#">Land Transport Benefits Framework measures manual</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Monetised benefits and costs manual (MBCM)</a> page</li> </ul>

## Key theme: Building the business case

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>The development cycle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands how business cases are developed from inception to implementation.</li> <li>Understand where business cases come from.</li> <li>Knows the different development pathways and phases and how to use them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">BCA essentials</a> learning module</li> <li><a href="#">Developing your pathway through the business case phases</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Using fit-for-purpose effort</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can undertake risk-based right sizing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Right-sizing your business case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Developing a case through the five-case model – key actions at each phase</a> document</li> </ul>
<b>Point of entry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows how to set up a business case up to succeed.</li> <li>Begins planning engagement from the outset.</li> <li>Knows how to get the scope right – using risk-based right-sizing to decide the level of effort needed.</li> <li>Understands cost estimation and optimism bias.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Point of entry</a> learning module</li> <li><a href="#">Critical thinking</a> learning module</li> <li><a href="#">Engagement and the BCA</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Financial case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Cost estimation manual</a> document</li> </ul>

## Key theme: Strategic case

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Effective problem definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the role problems play in a business case.</li> <li>Be able to use a range of techniques (investment logic mapping (ILM); 5 whys; Ishikawa analysis and others) to identify and communicate problems for a range of transport investment types.</li> <li>Can describe a problem clearly and concisely in terms of cause(s) linked to consequence(s).</li> <li>Can apply critical thinking to problem definition (own and others), using appropriate evidence and knowledge of biases including optimism bias and confirmation bias.</li> <li>Understands the role of engagement in problem definition</li> </ul> <p>Optional:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Strategic case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Investment logic mapping</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Investment logic mapping</a> NZ Treasury page</li> <li><a href="#">Problem statements in the BCA</a> document</li> <li><a href="#">5 whys</a> document</li> <li>State of Victoria Investment Management Standard <a href="#">information on Investment Facilitation</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Problem definition for business cases</a> recording</li> <li><a href="#">Critical thinking and the importance of asking questions</a> resource</li> </ul> <p>See also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overarching topics &gt; Critical thinking skills</li> </ul>

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is able to facilitate workshops to help others define problems (content-free).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overarching topics &gt; Engagement skills</li> </ul>
<b>Benefit management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the concept of benefits as a ‘golden thread’ that links: Strategic goals=&gt;investment benefits=&gt;investment objectives=&gt;recommended/preferred option=&gt;outcomes and monitoring=&gt;feedback.</li> <li>Can identify the strategic goals or objectives that are the reason for considering investment.</li> <li>Can use informed discussion to identify appropriate benefits, measures, baselines and targets, together with responsibilities for benefits.</li> <li>Understands the role of engagement in benefit management.</li> <li>Can produce a benefit map and statement of responsibilities and reporting.</li> <li>Understands the role that investment objectives play in a business case, and can develop SMART investment objectives from problem and benefit definitions.</li> <li>Can apply critical thinking to assess benefits, investment objectives, and whether they are being used appropriately in a business case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Using the benefits framework in business cases</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Benefits management guidance</a> pages</li> <li><a href="#">Land Transport Benefits Framework measures manual</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Monetised benefits and costs manual (MBCM)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Developing investment objectives</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the description of problems and benefits, can assess and describe the degree of strategic alignment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying the specific strategic goals or objectives the investment will contribute to, and</li> <li>describing the level of contribution the investment will make.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Developing the strategic context</a> page (covers alignment)</li> <li><a href="#">Strategic case (in the five-case model)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Strategic case phase</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can describe context in terms of both local, regional and national influences, and relate to the investment being considered.</li> <li>Understands how stakeholder engagement informs the context for the investment.</li> <li>Can describe context clearly and concisely, focusing on relevant information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Developing the strategic context</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Strategic case (in the five-case model)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Strategic case phase</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Arataki</a> 30 year plan for the transport system</li> <li><a href="#">One Network Framework</a> page</li> </ul> <p>See also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overarching topics &gt; Engagement skills</li> </ul>

## Key theme: **Economic case**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Developing potential responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing an appropriate range of possible responses to consider.</li> <li>Encouraging innovation when seeking possible responses.</li> <li>Role of the intervention hierarchy, demand, productivity and supply type responses.</li> <li>Working with stakeholders to identify potential responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Economic case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Optioneering</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Intervention hierarchy</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Innovation and creativity in business case development</a> document</li> <li><a href="#">Benefits in optioneering and prioritisation</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluating options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking multi-criteria analysis (MCA).</li> <li>Using effective engagement in option evaluation.</li> <li>Use of tools to help evaluation (AST; EAST).</li> <li>Informing option evaluation with relevant elements of commercial, financial and management cases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Multi-criteria analysis (MCA)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Appraisal summary table (AST)</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Indicative Efficiency Rating tool (IER)</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Recommending the best value option</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating the story behind the recommended option.</li> <li>Identifying residual risks and uncertainties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Storytelling</a> learning module</li> </ul>

## Key theme: **Commercial case**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Procurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describing the approach to procurement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Commercial case</a> page</li> </ul>

## Key theme: **Financial case**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking whole-of-life cost estimation, including use of the <i>Cost estimation manual</i> SM014.</li> <li>Understanding cost estimation ranges, and refining cost estimates as the business case develops.</li> <li>Aware of the impact of optimism bias on cost estimation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Financial case</a> page</li> <li><a href="#">Cost estimation manual</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Develop the funding plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining funding availability.</li> <li>Identifying and considering a range of funding sources.</li> <li>Considering risk and uncertainty in relation to funding.</li> <li>Identifying and engaging with funding stakeholders (for example with activity class managers).</li> <li>Communicating about funding (to decision makers, stakeholders).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">2021–24 Funding Sources Policy</a></li> <li><a href="#">2024–27 Funding Sources Policy</a></li> </ul>

## Key theme: **Management case**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining programme or project governance arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Management case</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Project management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying the <i>Transport Services project management guide</i> SM011</li> <li>General PM skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Project management guide SM011</a> page</li> </ul>
<b>Risk and uncertainty management</b>		<p>See also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overarching topics &gt; managing risk and uncertainty</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits realisation plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating benefits maps.</li> <li>Creating statements of benefits responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Example benefits map</a> document</li> <li><a href="#">Example statement of benefits responsibility</a> from State of Victoria Investment Management Standard</li> </ul>

Key theme: **Debriefing**

Topic	Capabilities	Resources
<b>Debriefing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using debriefing as an opportunity to learn.</li><li>• Seeing debriefing as an essential step in continuous improvement of business case practice.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Debriefing your business case</a> page</li><li>• <a href="#">Debriefing</a> learning module</li></ul>