We wish to acknowledge the Turrbul and the Yuggera peoples who are the Traditional Custodians of this land, and recognises their ongoing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the First Australians, and their Elders past, present, and any first nations people joining us today and acknowledge the important role First nations people play as knowledge keepers and evaluators across the world.

Creating a shared lens:
Building an evaluation culture – putting theory into practice

Amanda Reeves and **Eleanor Kerdo**

Overview

1 Setting the scene – building an evaluation culture in DE

2 Our process

3 Overview of the Evaluation Culture Framework

4 Next steps and reflections

1

Setting the scene -
building an evaluation culture in DE

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What does an evaluation culture look like in DE?

Want policy and program staff to:

See evaluation as **essential** to their role

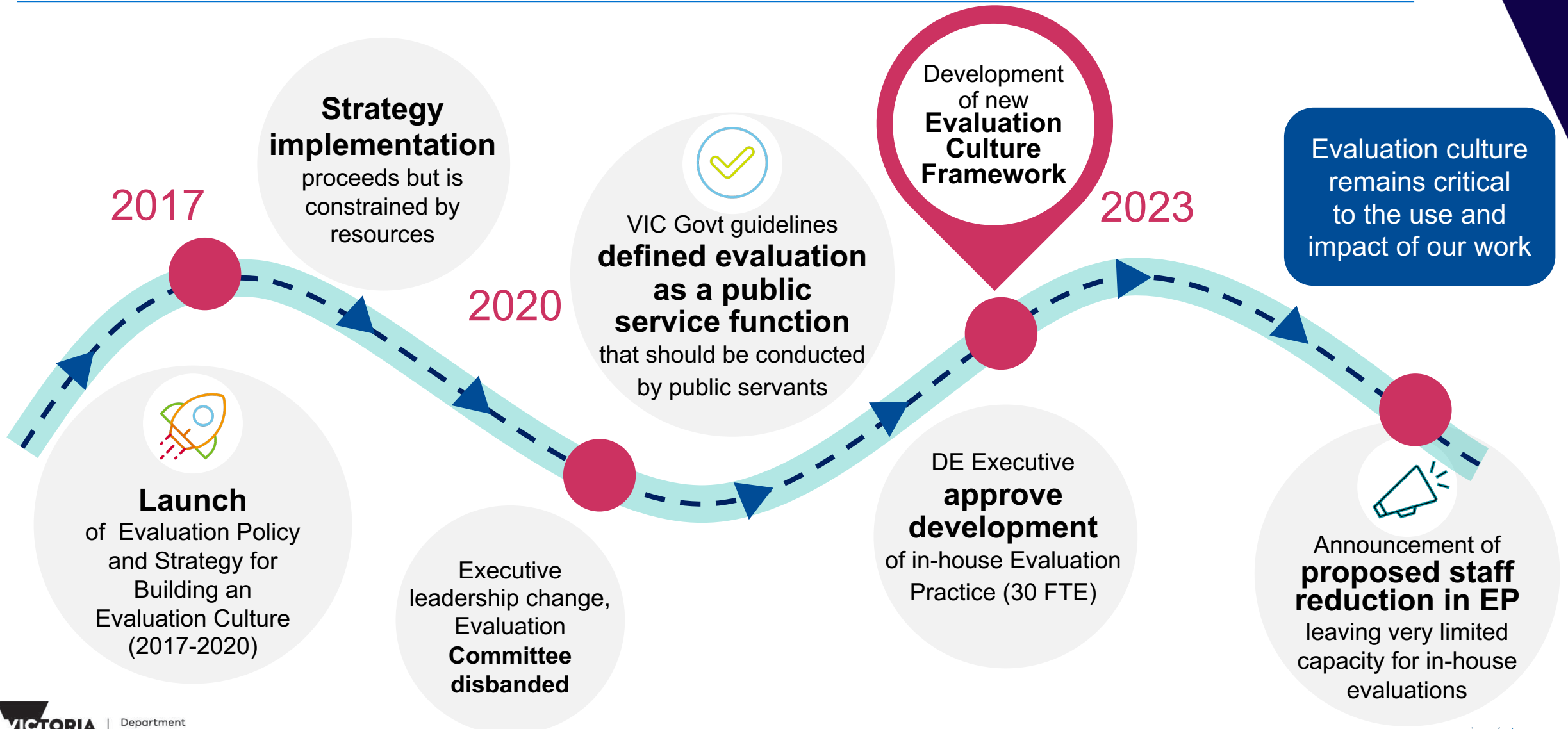Practice **evaluative thinking**

Routinely plan for, manage and use evaluation to make decisions

Focus:

Department of Education (DE) public service employees (approx. 4,500)

The story so far…

Varying levels of executive support and resources for EC activities since 2017

2017

Launch
of Evaluation Policy and Strategy for Building an Evaluation Culture (2017-2020)

Strategy implementation
proceeds but is constrained by resources

2020

Executive leadership change, Evaluation **Committee disbanded**

VIC Govt guidelines **defined evaluation as a public service function** that should be conducted by public servants

Development of new **Evaluation Culture Framework**

2023

DE Executive **approve development** of in-house Evaluation Practice (30 FTE)

Evaluation culture remains critical to the use and impact of our work

Announcement of **proposed staff reduction in EP** leaving very limited capacity for in-house evaluations

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Getting started – looking to the literature

Evaluation Capacity Building

- Preskill & Boyle (2008) A Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building
- Lahey, Mayne, Owen, Gibbs, Cousins, Labin, King & Volkov

Behaviour Change

- Michie, Atkins & West (2014) The Behaviour Change Wheel
- Adult learning theory
- Workplace learning theory

Organisational Development

- Kotter (2014) 8 Steps to accelerate change in your organisation
- Organisational Maturity Frameworks

2

Our process

Setting our objectives | Preskill and Boyle (2008) define 36 ECB objectives

Majority of our objectives are about staff **beliefs and attitudes**

With some core **knowledge and skills**

It's about changing **hearts and minds**

ECB participants **believe** that Evaluation:

- ✓ yields useful information
- ✓ can be a positive experience
- ✓ should be part of a program's design process
- ✓ contributes to a program's success
- ✓ is an important part of their work
- ✓ is worth the time and money
- ✓ adds value to the organisation.

ECB participants **are able** to:

- ✓ Develop a program logic model
- ✓ Develop key evaluation questions
- ✓ Develop an evaluation budget
- ✓ Communicate and report evaluation findings

- VIC Government requires all programs seeking further funding to have an evaluation.

- Need to move staff from compliance to proactive engagement with evaluation

Organisational readiness: Culture of evaluation survey

Survey tool based on ROLE used from 2017-2021 | **Findings:**

Declining trend in staff confidence and attitudes towards evaluation since 2018

Main barriers to doing and using evaluation are:

Perception that executive support for evaluation has reduced over time

lack of time to do evaluation

policy cycle too fast to engage with evidence

decisions about the program had already been made

Organisational readiness: Interviews and reflective practice

Interviewed:

- VPS staff and Executives who commission evaluation and other evaluation units in government organisations

Findings:

- Limited knowledge about evaluation as part of the policy cycle

- Perception as a requirement than as a tool for learning and improvement

- Barriers to accessing evaluations and evidence

> "
> It's a leadership question what they want and understand evaluation to be – specifically with the budget bids initiatives I am looking after – we had high level findings and an interim report to feed into the budget bid – but they really don't know how to use it in the bid they want it to be positive – that is a finding – oh right okay maybe we can use that to support us– they don't think of it as evidence that they can use to improve a program.
>
> **- Senior DE Policy Advisor**
> "

So what does all this mean for our framework?

It needs to be:

1

FOCUSED

on changing staff attitudes and behaviours

2

SUSTAINABLE

Built into the organisational infrastructure to weather the shifts in executive leadership and government policies
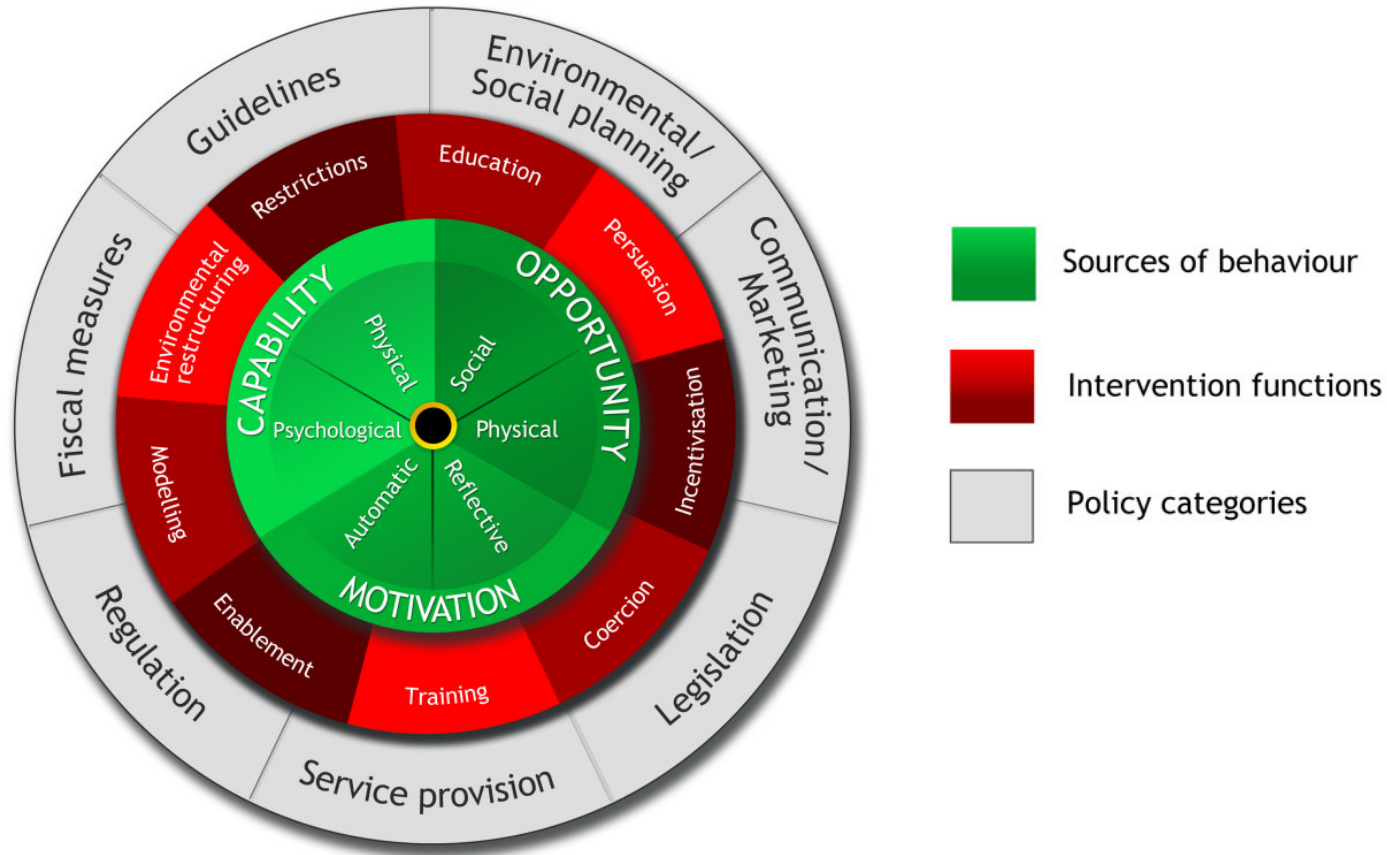
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ADAPTABLE

Account for different levels of maturity in the organisation, tailor strategies, track progress and adapt as needed

Designing the Framework to focus on behaviour change

## The Behaviour Change Wheel (Michie, Atkins & West 2014)

COM-B Model

To change behaviour, individuals need to have the:

- **Capability**
- **Opportunity**
- **Motivation**

Designing the Framework to be sustainable and adaptable

Key findings from the literature:

1 ECB strategies need to be treated as systems and include infrastructure to support both supply and demand of evaluation

2 Change is developmental and occurs in stages. An organisation's evaluation capability exists on a continuum

3 Culture change is a slow process that takes sustained effort over many years
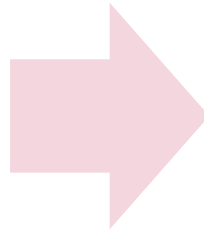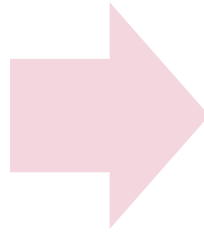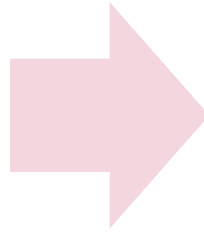
Framework characteristics:

- Systems approach
- Bottom-up and top-down

- Maturity model to assess current behaviours and tailor strategies to different needs across organisation

- Build in monitoring and evaluation to assess progress and adapt as needed

3

Overview of the EC Framework

Organisational Evaluation Culture as a System

Governance Structures and Leadership
(Executive Board, Standing Committees, Deputy Secretaries)

Processes
(Budget submissions, corporate planning, evaluation use)

Executives
(Executive Directors, Directors)

VPS Staff
(VPS 2-6)

Behaviour influenced by:
- Capability
- Opportunity
- Motivation

Evaluation Resources and Supply
(Evaluation Policy, Evaluation guidance and resources, Evaluation Library, Evaluation Panel of external suppliers)

Assess maturity of system components

Governance Structures and Leadership

Processes

Evaluation Resources and Supply

Executives

VPS Staff

1. Assess maturity
of each component using a rubric

? What would a strong and sustainable evaluation culture look like for each component of the system?

? What does that look like at different levels of maturity?
- ➢ Beginning
- ➢ Developing
- ➢ Embedding
- ➢ Leading
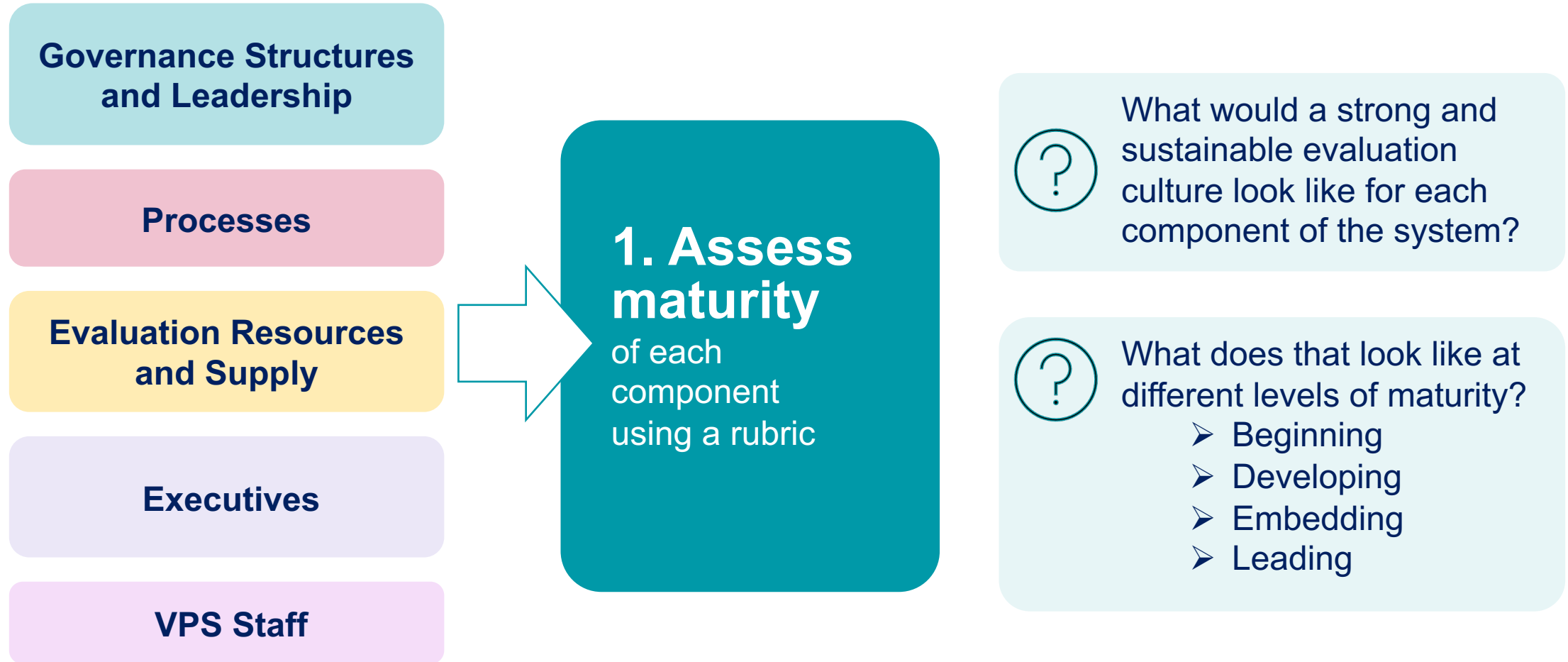
Select appropriate strategies
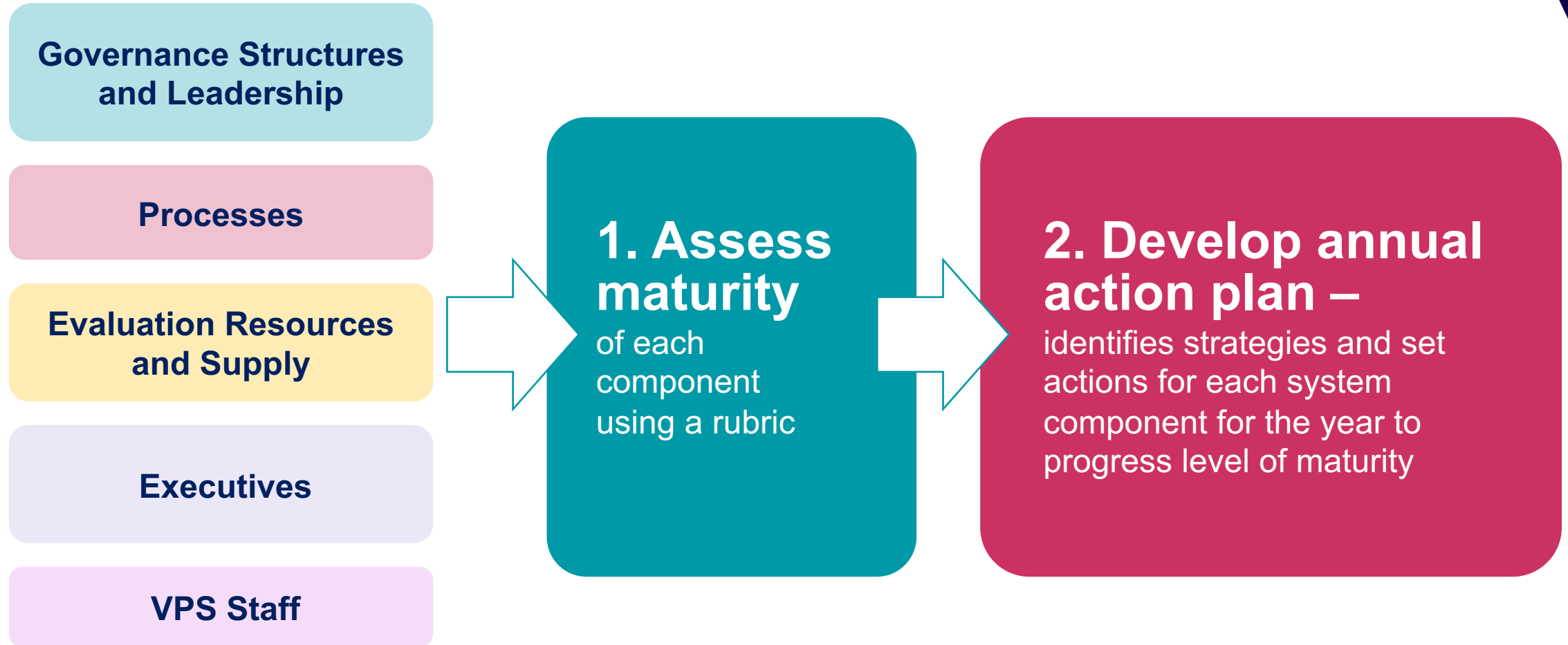
Governance Structures and Leadership

Processes

Evaluation Resources and Supply

Executives

VPS Staff

1. Assess maturity of each component using a rubric

2. Develop annual action plan – identifies strategies and set actions for each system component for the year to progress level of maturity

Develop annual Action Plan

System components	ECB Strategy		
	Building Evaluation Capacity	**Planning and doing Evaluation**	**Using Evaluation**
Governance Structures and Leadership			
Processes			
Evaluation Resources and Supply			
Executives			
VPS Staff			

Pillars: 1 2 3
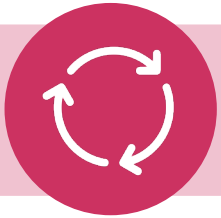
Foundational Principles Best Practice Evaluation: takes an intentional equity stance and is grounded in rigorous standards of ethical conduct
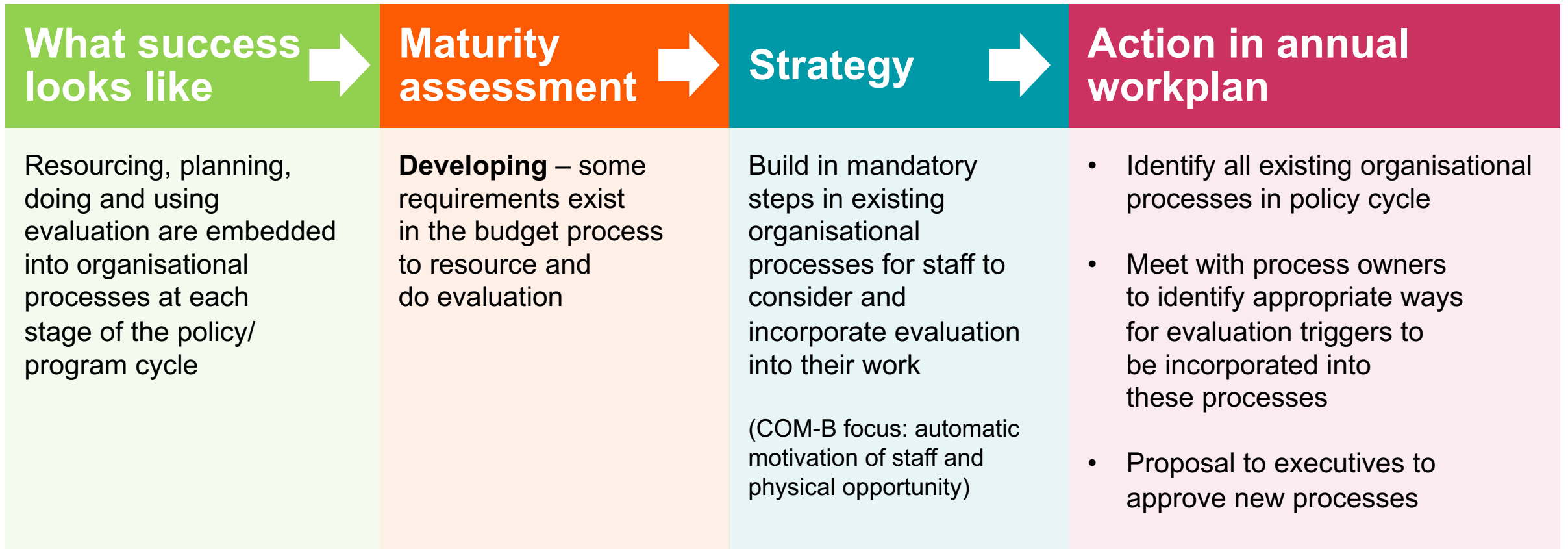
Plan done initially at central level

and over time individual plans at a group/division level
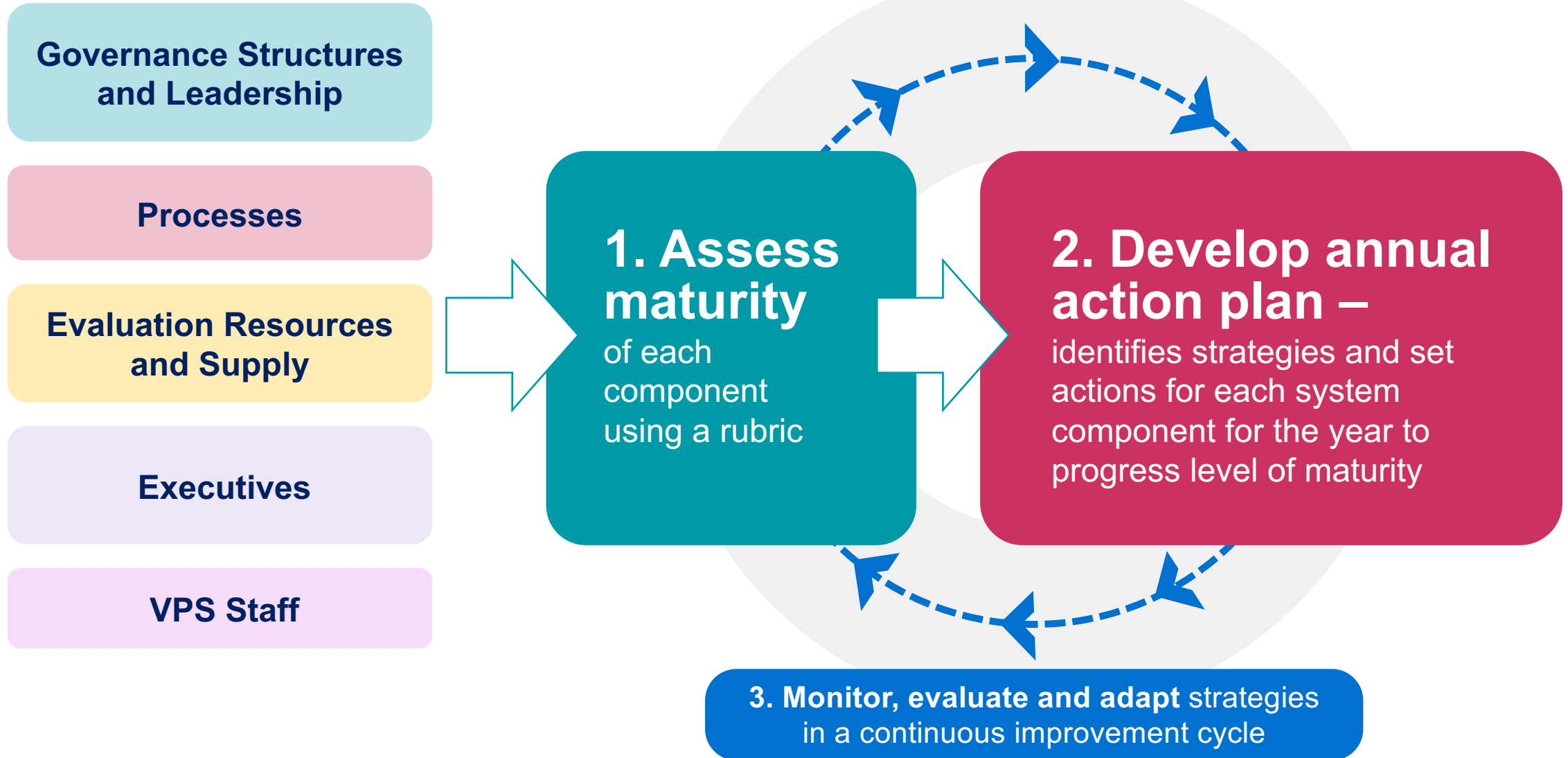
as organisation matures

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Example

Processes

What success looks like	Maturity assessment	Strategy	Action in annual workplan
Resourcing, planning, doing and using evaluation are embedded into organisational processes at each stage of the policy/ program cycle	**Developing** – some requirements exist in the budget process to resource and do evaluation	Build in mandatory steps in existing organisational processes for staff to consider and incorporate evaluation into their work (COM-B focus: automatic motivation of staff and physical opportunity)	• Identify all existing organisational processes in policy cycle • Meet with process owners to identify appropriate ways for evaluation triggers to be incorporated into these processes • Proposal to executives to approve new processes

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Monitor and evaluate in a continuous improvement cycle

Governance Structures and Leadership

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1. Assess maturity of each component using a rubric

2. Develop annual action plan – identifies strategies and set actions for each system component for the year to progress level of maturity

3. Monitor, evaluate and adapt strategies in a continuous improvement cycle

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Next steps and reflections

Next steps

- EC Framework approval paused due to organisational change

- Plan to get executive endorsement and launch in 2024

- Implementation and evaluation plan drawing on literature

  o Communication

  o Timing of activities

  o Evaluation

Lessons learned and challenges

- More targeted communication with leadership to build support

- Commitment of resources doesn't equate to leadership buy-in

- Juggling evaluation delivery with capacity building

Questions?

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