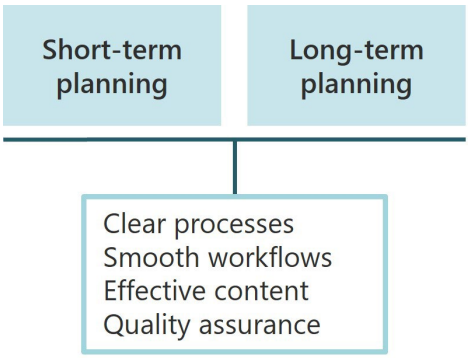
Futureproof your content

Content becomes outdated when information changes, or your organisation's goals change, or your audiences' needs change. For complex information, content also becomes outdated as new science and data become available. Thinking about how and when your content may need updating will help you set up a smooth process for keeping it accurate and current.

Planning before you create any type of content will help you publish something that meets both your communication needs and the needs of your audiences.

Before you write or design any content, think about what the content needs to achieve in the short term, and how it needs to be managed in the long term.



Short-term planning

Considering these questions will help you make a plan and keep your content on track:

- What is the purpose (e.g. is it to inform, persuade, instruct, amuse or warn)?
- Who is the audience (e.g. the general public, government and other decision makers, scientists, industry, children, adults)?
- What is your message (what are the key points you want your audience to understand, remember or act on)?
- What does your audience already understand and what must you include or explain?
- How will the content be published (e.g. book, brochure, webpage)?
- Does the content need to be AI-ready (i.e. do you want online content to be picked up by AI platforms)?
- What are the constraints (e.g. document length, budget, deadline, whether you have to use a template)?

The answers to these questions will determine the key messages, level of detail, format, length and accessibility considerations.

Long-term planning

Thinking about how the content might need to change, or be revised or removed, will help you plan an effective process for maintaining your content. Consider these questions:

- Will the document need to be repeated (e.g. is it a report that is published each year)?
- Will the information need updating (e.g. if guidelines change or new data are collected)?
- Will the content be expanded or cut (e.g. if new sections are added to a website)?

Futureproofing tips

Structure

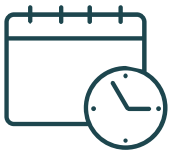


A clear, logical structure will help you to repeat, update or expand content.

Make sure web content has a robust information architecture that can absorb additions without reducing navigability.

Create a structure that allows you to add, remove or change sections without having to heavily rewrite or rearrange other sections.

Schedule



Make a schedule for when information will be collected, drafted, approved and published.

Allow enough time for any required reviews and revisions.

For complex information, allow time to involve subject matter experts in the review process.

Governance and workflow



Think about how the process worked this time, and how it could work better next time.

- Did you allow enough time for approvals and sign-off?
- Were there unexpected delays? What caused them?

Considering the experience this time can help you plan for future content development.

Documentation



Keep a record of every aspect of the process, especially for complex documents. This helps others follow the process for future updates or similar content projects.

Documentation should include:

- where information comes from
- the writing and editing process
- the approvals and publication process
- key contacts for each stage of the process.