

BASCS

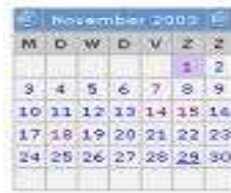
Business Activity Structure Classification System

1 October 2008

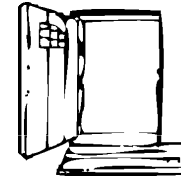
Jon Fotheringham
Recordkeeping Innovations

How do we classify information?

By date, e.g., chronological files



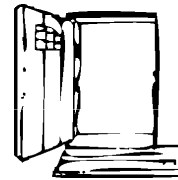
When?



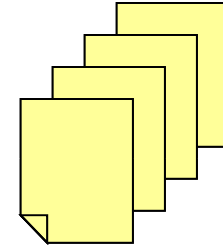
By work group, e.g., org.-based codes



Who?



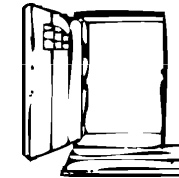
By relationship, e.g., client files



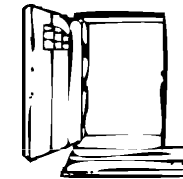
By content, e.g., subject files



What?



Why? How?



By business purpose



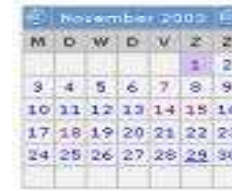
e.g., protect health

e.g., conduct diplomatic relations



Advantages / Disadvantages

By date, e.g., chronological files



Topic A

Topic B



← **Date** →

Advantages / Disadvantages

By work group, e.g., org.-based codes



Old



New

Advantages / Disadvantages

By relationship, e.g., client files



Policies?

Procedures?

Reports and Statistics?

Topic A?

Topic B?

Topic C?

Advantages / Disadvantages

By content, e.g., subject files



What information / knowledge do we have about...

Topic A	(e.g., weapons)
Sub-topic	(e.g., small arms)
Sub-sub-topic	(e.g., automatic small arms)
Sub-sub-sub-topic	(e.g., sub-machine guns)

Question:

How do the topics relate to an institution's mandate?
e.g., DND, RCMP, CSIS, CSC, CBSA, DFO, Public Safety

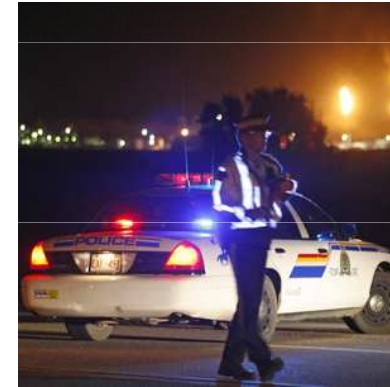
Question:

What does the institution do in relation to the topics?
e.g., determine requirements (specifications, numbers), acquire (purchase, lease), distribute (control inventory), train staff in their use, evaluate their effectiveness, report on their usage, dispose, control their manufacture, sale, distribution, use and disposal within society, etc.

Advantages / Disadvantages

By business purpose

e.g., protect health, conduct diplomatic relations, law enforcement



- +** • **Mandates/missions are typically much more stable than organization structures**
- **Mandates/missions provide the context necessary to understand topics**
- **Classification structures tied to mandates/missions are (or should be) easier for users to engage with than structures encompassing hundreds / thousands of topics**
- **Classification structures tied to mandates/missions facilitate accomplishing the mandate/mission and accounting for having done so**
- • **Developing classification structures tied to mandates/missions require validation by management and program staff**
- **Implementing and using classification structures tied to mandates/missions require a shift in thinking, i.e., away from content and toward context**

Definition of “*function*”

Librarian and Archivist of Canada, MIDA 2001/002, Appendix II

A function is...

any high-level purpose, responsibility, task or activity assigned to an institution by legislation, policy or ***mandate*** – which can be *administrative* in nature (and common to many institutions) **or** correspond to a specific institution’s *operational* function of policy development, program implementation, and/or the delivery of goods or services

Function relates to purpose
(why does an organisation exist?)

Functions entail...

a set or series of activities (broadly speaking ***a business process***) which, when carried out according to a prescribed sequence, will result in an institution producing the expected results in terms of the goods or services it is mandated or delegated to provide

Function also relates to process
(how does that business operate?)

Definition of “*function*”

Function relates to *purpose* (why?)

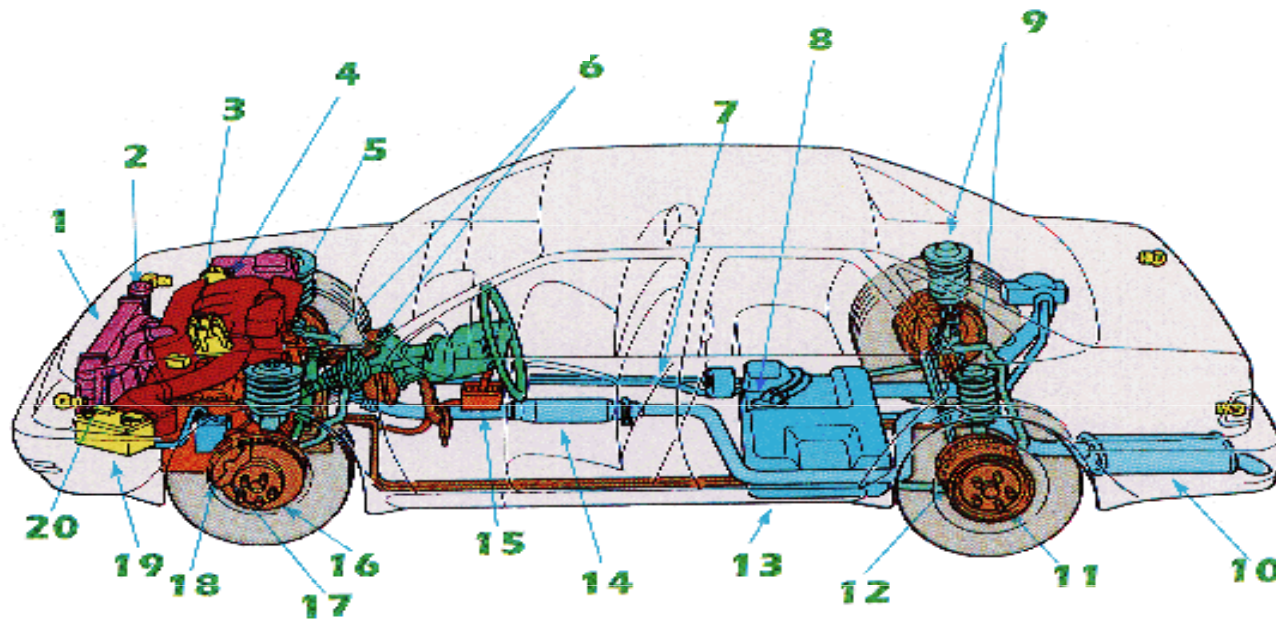
Why do we have vehicles?
...to get from point A to point B



Definition of “*function*”

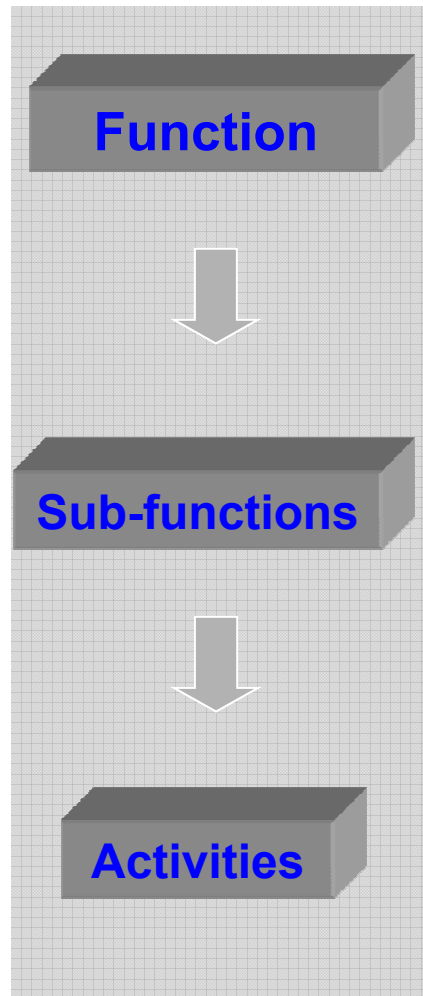
Function also relates to ***process*** (*how?*)

As in, ***how*** does an automobile function?



Function-based classification tends to focus on context

Business Activity Structure (BAS) Hierarchy



Legislation/
Policy



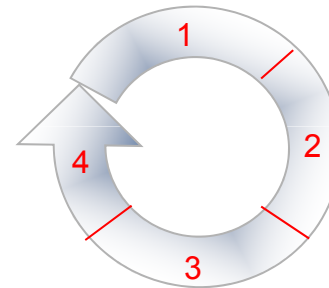
Strategic
Business
Process



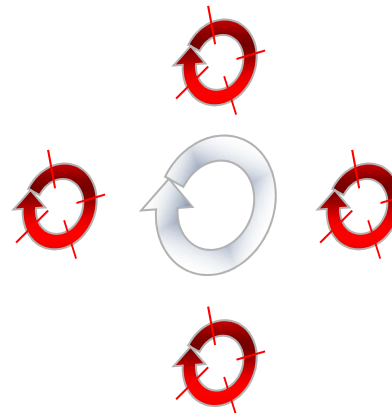
Tactical
Business
Processes



Function: driven by institution's *mandate* (e.g., legislative / policy requirements)

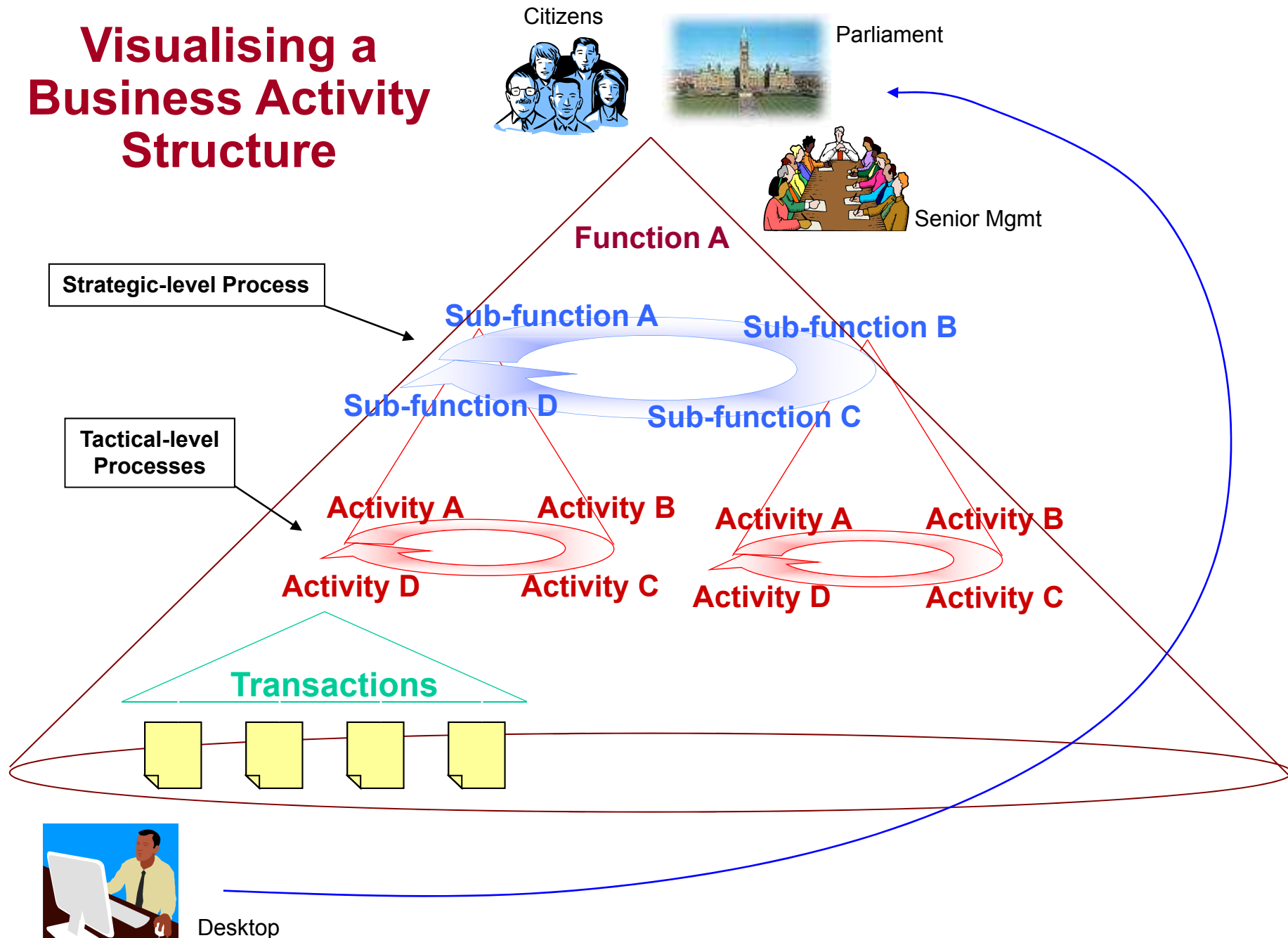


Sub-functions: phases of the *strategic process* used to fulfill a function



Activities: phases of the *tactical process* used to accomplish each sub-function

Visualising a Business Activity Structure



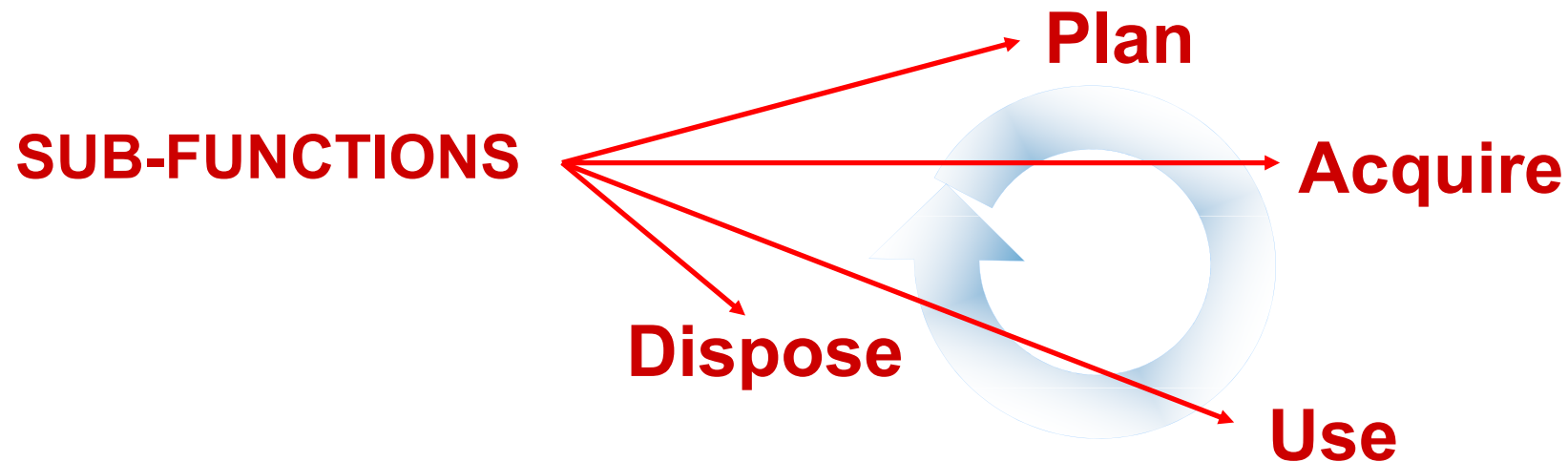
Example Function-based Structure

TBS Materiel Management Policy

Policy objective: “to ensure that materiel meets departmental operational requirements for effective program delivery and that the government and departments achieve value for money when **planning**, **acquiring**, **using** and **disposing** of materiel assets.”

Policy requirements: (a) Departments must manage their materiel resources consistent with a life-cycle approach that incorporates the following phases:

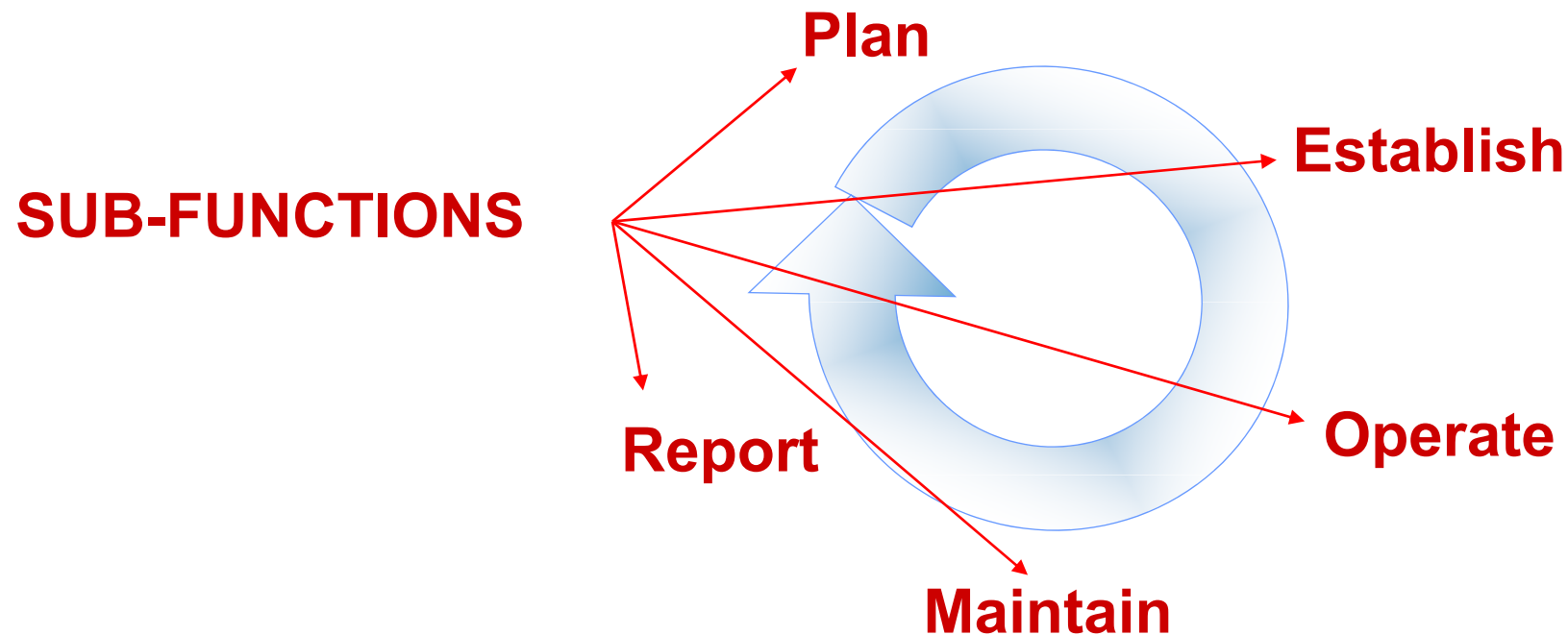
- assessing and planning materiel requirements;
- acquiring materiel resources;
- operating, using and maintaining materiel; and
- disposing of and replacing materiel.



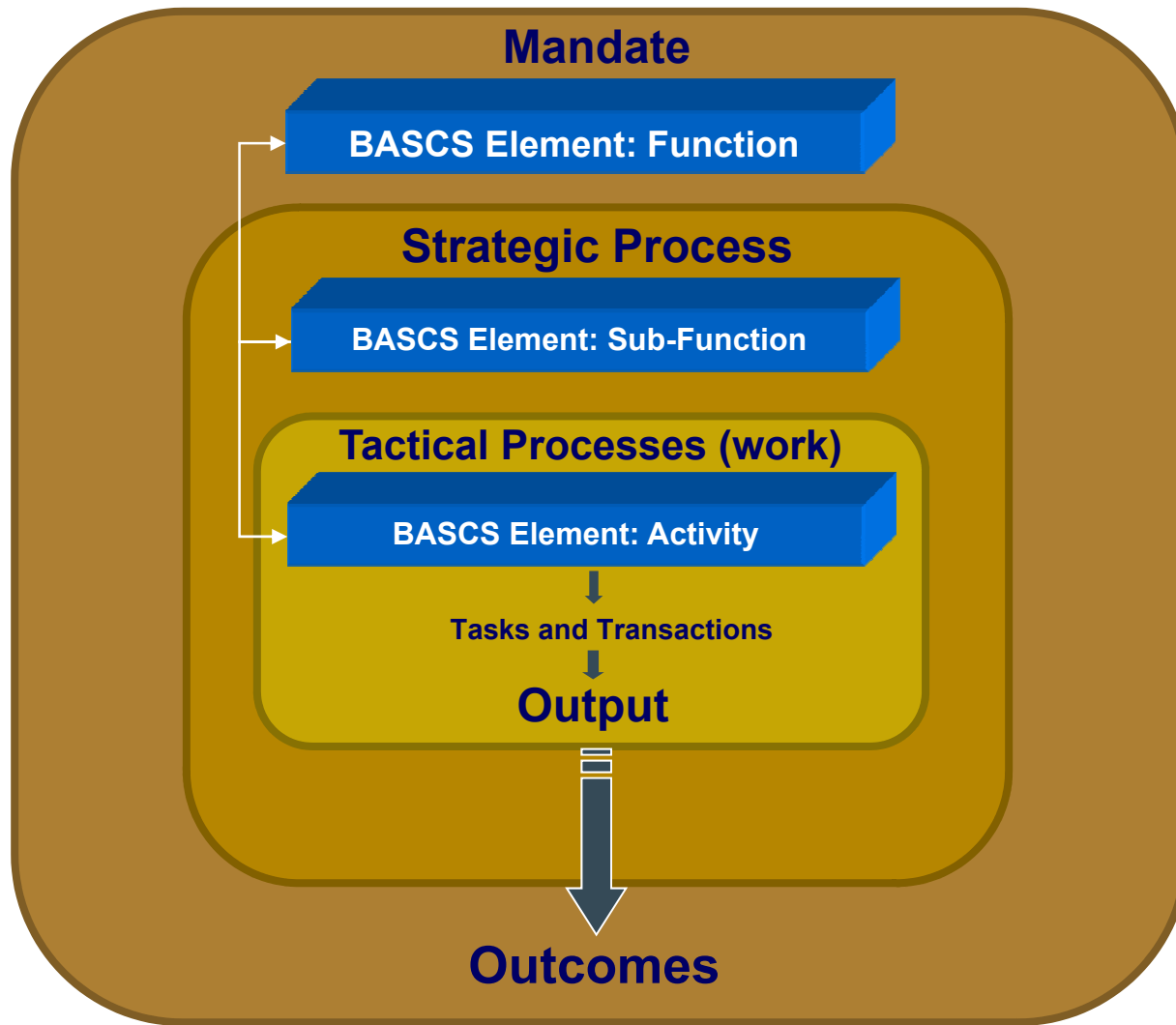
Example Structure (unconfirmed)

Indian Act

- section 114. (2) “...*establish, operate and maintain* schools for Indian children”

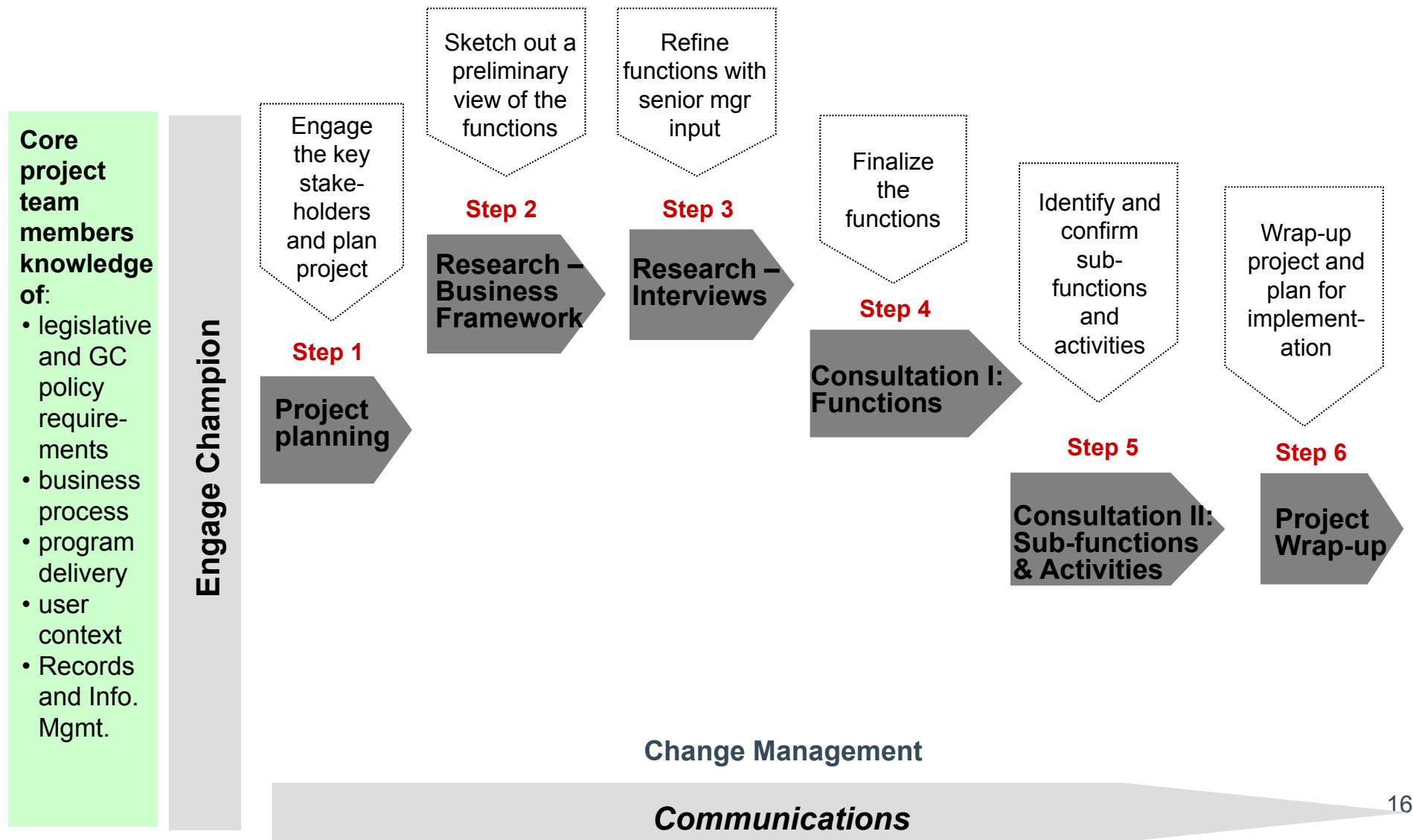


BASCS Model



A BASCS Model is derived from a department's mandate and GC policy, business processes, and work performed to accomplish that mandate

Business Activity Structure Development Plan



Business Case

Problem Statement

The nature of recordkeeping has changed...

- there are capacity issues
 - lack of skilled resources
 - direct staff engagement
- there are infrastructure issues
 - existing systems designed for a greater resource base
 - existing systems lack function-based context
 - need to take advantage of current technological capabilities
- the obligations are deepening
 - *FA Act* (DM responsible for “maintaining effective internal systems of control”)
 - RPP / MAF / MRRS

Business Case

Qualitative Benefits

For business managers...

- provides a disciplined and systematic analysis of an organization's function(s)
- provides a corporate view of the organization's business
- provides a means for linking information resources (knowledge) to the business

For staff...

- easier for them to understand the organization's business (and how they fit in)
- easier for them to engage in the organization's knowledge infrastructure, e.g.,
 - to link what they create/receive to the organization's business
 - to find corporate knowledge relevant to their work
 - to make use of process specific tools, templates, practices
 - to participate in managing the organization's knowledge resources

For RK specialists...

- increases the value of the organization's knowledge resources
- provides a knowledge infrastructure tied to the organization's business

Function Identification

Principles

1. Top-down approach

- The focus is on the impetus or action that created the business i.e., the organization's mandate

2. The source of GC business (departmental mandates)

- Legislative arm of the Government of Canada, which articulates its direction in legislation; regulations; rules; orders of the Governor-in-Council; speeches from the throne

The work involves research into what was intended by the 'mandate' direction, and an analysis of the *strategic* and *tactical* processes used to fulfill the mandate

Function Identification

Principles

3.a) Correlating legislative direction to the identification of functions / sub-functions

- **Clarity**

Is there an explicit relationship between a potential function and the related legislative direction?

- descriptive language

- **Accountability**

...a function is an activity (job/task) that has been “assigned to the accountability agenda of an institution”...

Consider how the institution can be held to account, for example:
how many GC institutions are involved in the Canadian economy? Industry, DFAIT, AAFC, NRCan, ACOA, WD...

For which aspect is each institution specifically responsible?

Function Identification

Principles

3.b) Correlating legislative direction to the identification of functions / sub-functions

- *A single piece of legislation might not equate to a single function*
 - the requirements of separate and distinct policy instruments may correspond to an overriding theme or objective that can be accomplished through a single business function

For example, a single business function of “protecting intellectual property” responds to the requirements of the *Patent Act*, the *Copyright Act*, the *Trade-marks Act*, the *Industrial Design Act*, the *Integrated Circuit Topography Act*

- *Conversely, a single piece of legislation may establish multiple functions*

Function Identification

Principles

4. Confirmation of function identification

- The “high level” status of a function is confirmed through an institution’s acknowledgement of its mandate direction

This acknowledgement takes the form of declaring to government authorities (e.g., Parliament, Treasury Board of Canada) that the function corresponds to a “strategic outcome” of the institution, that it is a principal activity of the institution's Program Activity Architecture or that it is an institutional priority explicitly listed in the Main Estimates for government planning and funding purposes

- This acknowledgement is re-confirmed through senior management validation in the course of function-based analysis

Function Identification

Principles

5. Functions entail processes

*“...a set or series of activities (broadly speaking a **business process**) which, when carried out according to a prescribed sequence, will result in an institution producing the expected results in terms of the goods or services it is mandated or delegated to provide”*

- The inherent logic of a function-based business activity structure is not characterized by an alphabetized listing of activities, but by an arrangement that is sequentially or **process** oriented
- This sequence is mapped out by performing process analysis and modeling through such techniques as program review and evaluation, workflow charting, program/project planning, or critical path mapping

Function Identification

Principles

6. Legislative direction re: business process

- The legislative source of an institution's mandate may also contain direction regarding the process to be used to fulfill the mandate

For example, the *Library and Archives of Canada Act* directs not only that there be a function relating to the documentary heritage of Canada, but explicitly states that the “objects” of LAC are to *acquire* and *preserve* the documentary heritage, *make it known* and *facilitate access* to it

- This direction equates to a mandated “strategic business process”, the phases of which are referred to as “sub-functions”

Function Identification

Principles

7. Analysis of process proceeds from the *general* to the *specific*

- A fundamental understanding of an organization's role is necessary for understanding increasingly detailed aspects of that role, e.g.,
 - the ***strategic processes*** that decompose into
 - ***tactical processes***, which result in
 - ***transactions*** that are broken down into
 - ***desk procedures***
- For the purposes of creating a function-based classification structure for information resources, the analysis must ultimately strike a balance between what becomes part of the structure in terms of groupings and what remains as content, e.g., at the document level

Function Identification

Principles

8. Validation

- Functions, sub-functions and activities must be validated by the people who manage and conduct them
 - the analyst undertaking the research and design of a structure is, typically, an outsider to the actual work
- To ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness, a structure cannot be validated from a single perspective
 - it must be validated from all key perspectives, i.e., senior managers, managers, subject matter experts
- Validation must be achieved through group consultation, wherein all perspectives of the business are addressed and reconciled – face-to-face, in real time
 - it should not be left to an analyst struggling to piece together potentially contradictory input obtained through one-on-one interviews or surveys

Function Identification

Test Questions

Could the proposed function exist as the only line of business?

This “isolation test” helps determine whether or not a particular business activity can be considered a function

Example – *developing (training) staff*

Question: can the activity exist in isolation?

Answer: having staff to train results from another business activity – *recruiting*

Further, an organization recruits staff based on another, earlier business activity – *planning* (determining HR needs and how these resources will be managed over time)

Yet another business activity involves *retaining* HR resources (by compensating them with salaries and benefits, by protecting their health and safety, by engaging in collective bargaining, etc.)

Each of these business activities (sub-functions) has a “process” relationship to the others; all of them together form part of a single strategic business process for managing human resources

Function Identification

Test Questions

Could the activity exist as the institution's only line of business?

Example: a piece of legislation might direct a GC institution to cooperate, coordinate and/or consult with external jurisdictions e.g., provincial governments

This direction would likely not equate to a separate and distinct function, rather, it would constitute a duty to be followed in the course of – and in reference to – the institution's other primary business activities

In other words, cooperation / coordination / consultation with other jurisdictions would take place *within the context of* business activities, not outside of, or in parallel to, those activities

Function Identification

Test Questions

Does the activity have a process relationship with other activities?

Example: would an evaluation activity take place before a design activity or an implementation activity – if its purpose is to evaluate an implemented design?

Is there a hierarchical relationship involved?

Example: specific steps in an evaluation process, such as gathering information and evidence, analysing it against a set of criteria, and reporting findings should be put into the context of the broader activity of 'evaluation'

Value Proposition

Function-based classification provides a means for an organization to establish a structured view of its business activities...

- a view that is validated by key participants (executives, managers, staff) as a comprehensive and accurate picture of what is being done, and how
- a view that helps people understand, manage and do the business, and explain it to others (render account)
- a view that is used as the context for dividing labour (and establishing accountabilities (organization / governance structures)
- a view that is used as the context within which business priorities are identified and justified

Value Proposition

Function-based classification provides a means for an organization to link its information resources (its corporate recorded knowledge) to its business activities

Function-based classification creates a link
between
information and *business objectives*
(information as a resource for achieving objectives)
and between
information and *accountabilities*
(information as evidence)

Information...

For more information, visit our web pages at:

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html>

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Business Activity Structure Classification System (BASCS)

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The Liaison Centre

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