The Food and Fibre Skills Framework

Case Study: A Skills-First Career Mapping Approach

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Contents

Prepared by:

Kathryn Koopmanschap

Introduction

Background

This case study is one of a series that provide examples of practical application of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework. The Food and Fibre Skills Framework[1] has been developed to:

- Develop a common language to describe skills and knowledge, in order to support simplified, flexible qualifications and transferable skills
- Help understand which skills are relevant across many food and fibre sectors and workplaces, and which are more specialised
- Help recognise skills that are gained outside of the formal qualification system
- Enable the future proofing of food and fibre sector skills and capabilities, addressing new and emerging skills as well as current skills.

The key parts of the framework are:

- Core transferable skills – 'skills to build skills': learning to learn, learning for work, and learning for life. The term 'core transferable skills' has been deliberately chosen as these skill sets underpin the ability of individuals to gain, value, extend and transfer any skills or knowledge to different contexts.
- Core technical skills – generic skills common to most industries in the food and fibre sector
- Specialised technical skills – unique skills or knowledge for a certain industry
- Bodies of knowledge – develop superior knowledge in a particular area.

The current work focuses on the **core transferable skills**, with a website providing further detail to articulate examples of these skills. The aim of providing these examples is for the Skills Framework to be able to be used by the industry – individuals working in it, employers, and educators. It provides an approach that can be contextualised for any organisation, providing a common foundation to build the skills the industry needs to develop an engaged, effective and empowered workforce.

The partner: Muka Tangata

Muka Tangata is the Workforce Development Council for the People, Food and Fibre industry. In September 2023, Muka Tangata produced a scoping report for establishing a Career Pathways Advisor role. Key findings from the report highlight a lack of comprehensive career information, difficulty navigating vocational pathways and programmes, and inequitable access to career guidance across the People, Food and Fibre sector.

A Senior Career Pathways Advisor was appointed in June 2024, and after reviewing industry career pathways information and resources, led this project working with interested industries to collect data on their occupations and associated skills to develop industry-specific career pathway maps. This data will also be used to inform and develop a Skills-first People, Food and Fibre career pathways map.

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[1] _A New Approach to Learner Pathways_ (Muka Tangata, January 2023) put forward concepts and design principles to simplify and streamline qualifications in the Food and Fibre sector, and to support increased flexibility and transferability of skills. From there, a research project co-funded by Muka Tangata and the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FF CoVE) investigated what type of framework would provide the desired outcomes for the sector (See research report here).

An approach to career groupings was necessary. This would enable identification of similar types of roles across multiple industries. Within the Skills Framework Project suitable research had already been identified, with a focus on being applicable for Māori[2]. The seven skills clusters identified in that research are: Makers, Engagers, Carers, Organisers, Designers, Technologists, Informers. Alongside the use of the Skills Framework skills categorisation and terminology, the seven skill clusters provides a mechanism that enables divergent industries to group careers in a similar way, and individuals with core interests and skills to look at careers across the Food and Fibre sector.

Purpose of the case study

This case study reports on the integration of the Skills Framework within a process to clearly articulate the various career options available in the Food and Fibre Sector. Muka Tangata established the project to work with People, Food and Fibre industry experts, including Māori businesses, to expand the number of industry-specific career pathway maps, and to create a skills-first career pathway map to support workforce attraction and retention across all People, Food and Fibre industries.

The purpose of the case study is to provide a methodology and tools for other industries or organisations who are exploring a skills-first approach to describe roles and pathways within their workforce.

Approach

Develop a method

The key components of the method used in this case study are **industry roles and existing skills data**, the **Skills Framework** and the concept of **skill clusters**. These are explored in greater detail in the next section. Food and Fibre CoVE provided support for the development and testing of the methodology by:

- Creating templates and working with industry experts to collate industry roles and skills data in a consistent manner and support the design and development of a range of industry-specific career maps.
- Testing and refining methodology/criteria to enable the mapping of industry-specific data into skill clusters.

Test the method

The approach was to use a template on a Miro Workspace[3] for online interactive sessions with the industry group participants. If preferred, the template could be re-created as a physical whiteboard/post-it note activity and delivered face to face with participants. The participants worked through three exercises that explored aspects of their industry roles, typically in two or three one hour online sessions.

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[2] *Nau Mai Te Anamata: Tomorrow's Skills*, published in April 2022 by Tokona te Raki (Māori Futures Collective) can be found here.
[3] Miro.com is a digital workplace tool. "A single, AI-powered collaboration platform that helps teams move faster from idea to outcome."

The process of using standard categories and skills descriptions proved to be a successful way for participants to look at the skills required for roles, with a focus on what is common and divergent in the career options.

Analyse the data

The data from the Miro workspace was then transferred into an excel spreadsheet and uploaded into Power BI within Muka Tangata to be further manipulated. Further work continues to develop this Power BI tool with the aim to release it as a tool for industry and career advisors later in 2025.

Not in scope

Further elements of the project will be completed by Muka Tangata independently and are not covered in this case study.

- Design and develop a People, Food and Fibre Skills-first career pathways map.
- Publicise all industry-specific career pathway maps and the People, Food and Fibre Skills-first career pathways map to support learners, employers and employees to navigate the many career pathways and job opportunities within and across People, Food and Fibre industries.

Independently, Muka Tangata is also working with the industry groups to develop visuals for their industry specific career mapping.

The case study: Skills-First Career Mapping

The participants

The initial development and testing of the process was with three participants, all industry groups with an interest in developing their own career pathway resources.

Irrigation NZ

Irrigation NZ is a voluntary-membership, not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to create an environment for the responsible use of water for food and fibre production. They have a strategy to increase awareness of careers in their industry, and the career mapping process is one step to achieve that.

Sheep, Beef and Deer

This participant is a combination of Beef & Lamb NZ, and Deer Industry NZ, and is commonly grouped together for applied training purposes by Primary ITO within these industries. There is currently a one-page career map to cover the multiple roles, and it is in need of updating.

NZ Winegrowers

New Zealand Winegrowers is the national organisation for the country's grape and wine sector, with over 600 grower members and 700 winery members. Recently, NZW, Wine Marlborough and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Sector Workforce Engagement Team released *A Skills-based Wine Workforce*[4] - a report and accompanying dashboard which provide workforce insights to inform business, industry, and government activity to deliver a sustainable wine industry

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[4] A Skills-based Wine Workforce, published in July 2024 by New Zealand Wine, can be found here

workforce. The career mapping process will build on that research to produce tangible resources for NZ Winegrowers.

Summary of the process

For the purposes of this document, "industry group" will be used to describe the party which is creating a career map. However, this could be an individual organisation with sufficient roles and employees to create a career and development map.

A good understanding of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework is a pre-requisite for this process, as well as an understanding of the seven skill clusters (Referenced in the background and approach section of this document).

1. Identification of core roles in the industry
- The pre-work for the industry group is to identify the core roles in their industry which they want mapped. These roles must link to the National Occupation List (NoL)[5] by Stats NZ.

2. Initial review of each role for progression levels, skill cluster, and typical career movement
- Indicate what level of experience is valid for each role.
- Identify the priority skill cluster and any secondary clusters for each of the roles.
- Identify how people most typically progress through/across these roles.

3. Identification of Priority Core Transferable Skills for all the roles
- Identify the key Core Transferable Skills for each role.
- If a particular skill is not listed, a new element can be added to the skill category.

4. Identification of the Core Technical and Specialist Technical skills for each individual role
- For Core Technical skills – identify skills from the master list where possible to keep consistent with other mapping. Document new skills if necessary, using the same skill categorisation headings.
- For Core Specialist roles, create skills for this industry, using the same skill categorisation headings.

5. Data Capture/Reporting
   The use of this mapping will be dependent on the individual organisation. For the Muka Tangata project, an excel workbook was created, and the data from the Miro board input into multiple worksheets. This was then loaded into a Power BI platform to be manipulated.

   However, this is only one option. Having coded the roles in this consistent manner, it can be represented in several ways, for example career maps, skill classification tables, flow charts etc.

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[5] The National Occupation List, first released in November 2024 by Stats NZ can be found here.

Conclusion

There was positive feedback about the process and the mapping sessions from all participants. The skills-first approach provided a singular lens to approach describing the roles. This simplified thinking and enabled the multiple participants to contribute effectively, as everyone was on the same page.

The use of the Skills Framework (categories, skills and elements) provided a clear structure and common language which reduced time taken to complete the tasks. The approach of using Core Technical skills (which can be used across multiple Food and Fibre industries) helped participants to articulate skills at a high level, with more granular detail added to the Specialist Skill category as appropriate.

In the absence of being able to have face to face workshops, the use of a virtual working space (in this case Miro), was a key enabler. Rather than having to discuss each point, or having one person as a scribe, participants could move skill descriptors themselves and see contributions from others. This led to rapid development of the role and kept discussions to key points, or points of difference.

The Food and Fibre Skills Framework was a useful tool to aid the development of career maps for the three pilot industries. Given that there were many differences in those industries, we conclude that this approach can be used by any organisation or industry group in the Food and Fibre sector.

Appendix 1: Process Details

For the purposes of this document, "industry group" will be used to describe the party which is creating a career map. However, this could be an individual organisation with sufficient roles and employees to create a career and development map.

A good understanding of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework is a pre-requisite for this process, as well as an understanding of the seven skill clusters (Referenced in the background and approach section of this document).

1. Identification of core roles in the industry
   The pre-work for the industry group is to identify the core roles in their industry which they want mapped. There is no wrong or right number, it will be dependent on the industry to identify. However, it should be noted that they need to be clearly differentiated from other roles and be meaningful for potential employees to see as a career progression option.

   The National Occupation List (NoL) by Stats NZ is useful as a starting point, however not all industries are accurately described there yet, and there may be colloquial names for roles listed on the NoL. The table allows for a one to one, one to many or many to one relationship between roles and NoL classification. However, there should be at least one NoL per role identified.

2. Initial review of each role for progression levels, skill cluster, and typical career movement
   With the above information, it is time to launch the Miro Board[6].

List of Roles

Role / Job Title	NoL Code / Title	Finding your place **Responsibility**: works with supervision **Autonomy**: becoming independent	Building your place **Responsibility**: leading others **Autonomy**: independent	Nurturing your place **Responsibility**: set strategy **Autonomy**: leading direction or innovation

- Place the role information in the table and indicate what level of experience is valid for that role. Some roles may run across all three, some may be just in one column. Use a star to indicate roles.
  1. independent worker (column 1, level 2-3 NZQA)
  2. some responsibility/team leader (column 2, level 3-5 NZQA)
  3. leadership responsibility (column 3, level 5+ NZQA).

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[6] The Muka Tangata template can be viewed here. Use FFSkills2025 to access.

	Manual tasks, construction, production, maintenance, technical customer service. Types of roles: Tractor driver, horticulture worker	Ringa Raupā - Makers
	Interpersonal interaction, retail, sales, hospitality, entertainment Types of roles: Account Manager, Rural Business Partners	Manaaki - Engagers
	Skills and understanding of science, mathematics to design / construct / engineer products and buildings Types of roles: Engineer, Irrigation designer	Hoahoa - Designers
	Health and wellbeing workers, including medical care, social work and personal support Types of roles: Pastoral care, cleaners	Tiaki - Carers
	Requires skills understanding and manipulation of digital technologies Types of roles: Analysts, Technicians	Tūhono - Technologists
	Administration, behind the scenes process or service tasks Types of roles: Operations, supply chain.	Whakarite - Organisers
	Professional providing information, education or business services Types of roles: Finance, Human Resources	Māramatanga - Informers

- For the next two columns, identify the priority cluster and any secondary clusters for each of the role rows. While most roles could have a mix of all of these clusters, focus on the one or two that most describe the role.
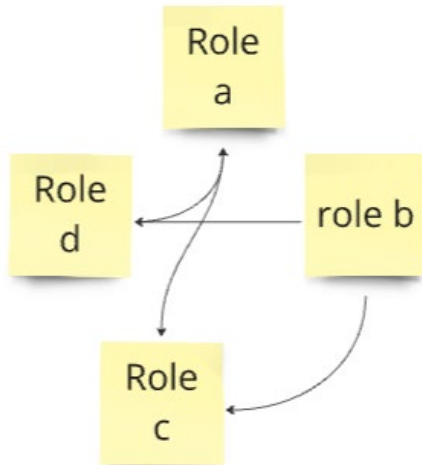
- Use arrows and the stickies on the right to show how people most typically progress through/across these roles.

3. Identification of Priority Core Transferable Skills for all the roles

- Create one row per role heading from the above table, blank out columns that are not needed (i.e. if role is only an entry role, blank out columns 2 and 3)
- While all roles will have elements of these core transferable skills - some roles will have a particular focus. This table should capture only the key skills per role. You can use either the skill set titles, or the individual skills as appropriate.
- Duplicate the skill sticky and put in the correct row and column
- If the particular skill is not listed, find the appropriate skill set heading and duplicate the "Other" sticky of that colour, and add your own skill title, move to the table/role.

4. Identification of the Core Technical and Specialist Technical skills for each individual role

Core Technical Skills - used in a several different industries

|	Finding your place **Responsibility**: works with supervision **Autonomy**: becoming independent	Building your place **Responsibility**: leading others **Autonomy**: independent	Nurturing your place **Responsibility**: set strategy **Autonomy**: leading direction or innovation
Living beings and environmental knowledge			
Machinery and technology skills			
Legislative and regulartory knowledge			
Good practice operation			
Quality Management			

Specialist Technical Skills - only used in your industry, or a couple of other places

	Finding your place **Responsibility**: works with supervision **Autonomy**: becoming independent	Building your place **Responsibility**: leading others **Autonomy**: independent	Nurturing your place **Responsibility**: set strategy **Autonomy**: leading direction or innovation
Living beings and			

- There will be **one table** per role for each of these two skill sets
  - Core Technical - These list technical skills that are core across multiple industries.
  - Specialist Technical - If a skill is only found in your industry, it goes in the specialist table
- Blank out columns depending on the skill progression in each role using the black boxes as per the above tables
- For Core Technical skills - use stickies from the master list where possible to keep consistent with other mapping.
- Create new stickies (select an existing one in the right category/colour and use Ctl D to duplicate, then over-write. Leave one in the master skill list, and Ctl D to create a copy to move into the table) Put the skills title in the correct row and column.

- Assume that if a skill is at a lower level, it is replicated for the same role at higher levels, only add skills to the higher column if they are new for that level.
- For Core Specialist roles, create stickies based on the colour coding to keep a consistent approach to skill categorisation

Appendix 2: Skills Framework
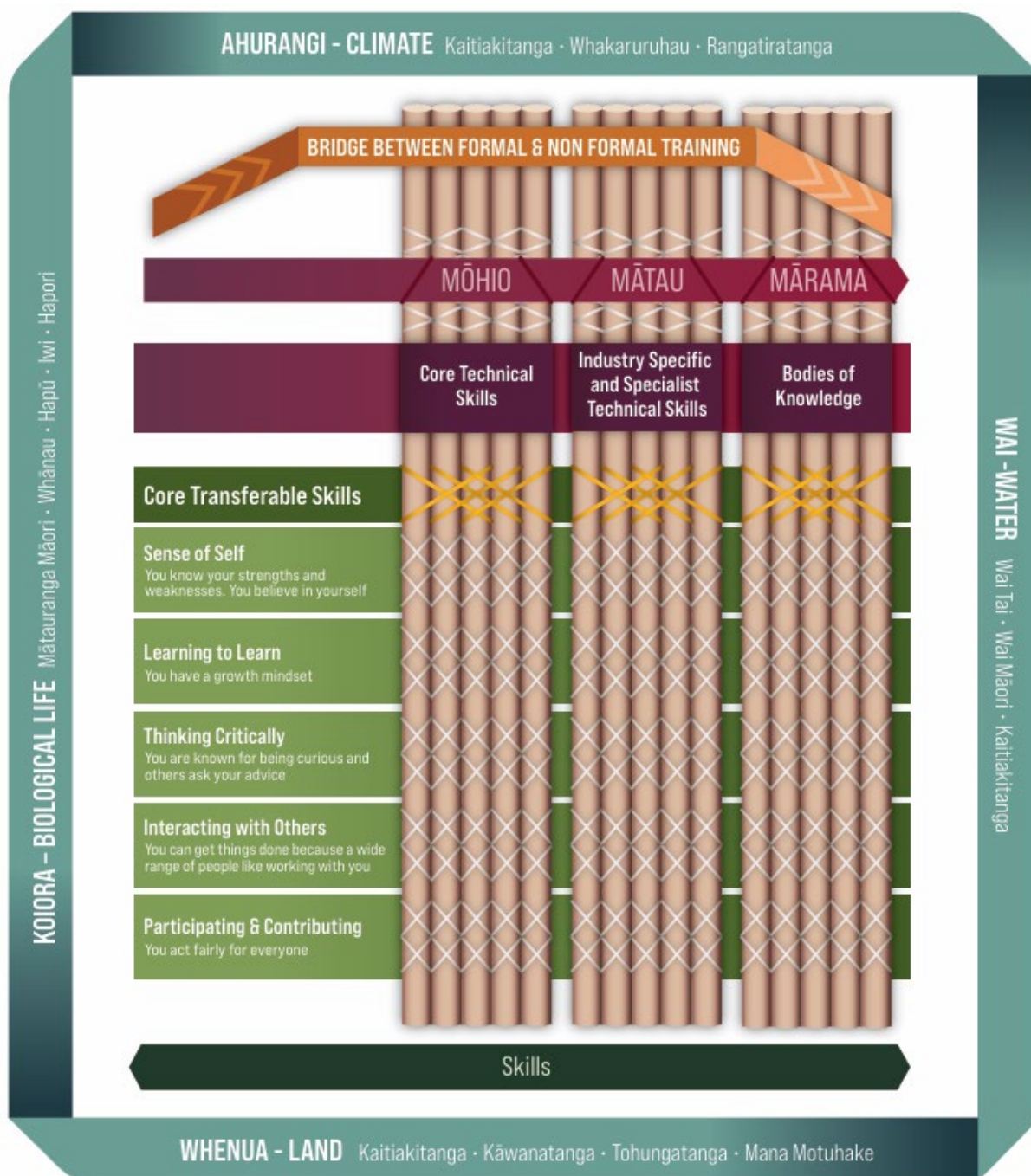
This is a high-level visualisation of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework, which shows the interwoven nature of the core components. Te Ao Māori principles and values are integrated into The Framework, symbolised by toi Māori in the form of Tukutuku Lattice panels which adorn the pakiwaitara (stories) on the walls of the Whare Tipuna.

The Core Transferable skills are woven in the centre of the panel, as they provide the core skills needed by individuals in life and in work.

For further information about the Skills Framework, refer to the FF CoVE website (here).