

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2021

End of Term Report

Commitment 6: Service Design

Lead agency: Department of Internal Affairs

Objective: To develop an assessment model to support implementation of the all-of government Digital Service Design Standard (the Standard) by public sector agencies: <https://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/digital-service-design-standard/>

The Standard provides the design thinking to support the objective of New Zealanders being able to work collaboratively with government to shape the design of public services. Collaboratively designed services will be more trusted, accessible, integrated and inclusive. The assessment model provides the basis to assess and measure agencies' performance against the Standard and it supports a mind-set and culture change, both at an individual agency maturity level and in terms of systemwide change.

Ambition: People experience more responsive, open, citizen-centric and user focused service delivery.

OGP values: Public Participation, Technology and Innovation

What we achieved:

Recognition of the Standard's value

Engagement around the assessment in 2019 found that, once people are made aware of it, the Standard is highly valued and appreciated. Government agencies see its potential value in being a lever for the building and running of government information and services that people can easily find, understand and use, that are both trusted and worthy of people's trust.




The holistic coverage of the Standard means that it is often the only place where an important topic is covered. For example, equitable access to services is part of Principle 4, Be inclusive, and provide ethical and equitable services. The Citizens Advice Bureau values this and has raised the importance of this to the Digital Public Service Branch. The Branch's Digital Inclusion work programme is addressing this concern by scoping the work needed to ensure people who need it have non-digital access to government services and entitlements, which involves whole channel service design.

The Standard's inclusion of Principle 9. Design for our unique constitutional and cultural environment, is also a point of difference internationally. The principle was co-designed with Māori service designers and has received a lot of international interest, especially from countries with an indigenous population like Canada.

Consultation and testing

Alongside reinforcement of the value of the Standard, we consulted on it and took a test and learn approach from piloting it with agencies. This has given us clear recommendations and informed our next steps.

Summary

Milestones		Progress
1	Identify suitable assessment models for supporting agency uptake of the standard, including options for assessment and measurement of performance against the standard. Start/End dates: August 2018-March 2019	
2	Publication of preferred assessment model for implementation. Start/End dates: April 2019 - June 2021	
2A	Piloting of assessment models with agencies through iterative refinements to reach a preferred and suitable framework. Start/End dates: January 2020 – December 2021	
3	Public engagement on a refresh and review of the Digital Service Design Standard. Start/End dates: No longer applicable	N/A

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

What we achieved

Milestone 1 Identify suitable assessment models for supporting agency uptake of the standard, including options for assessment and measurement of performance against the standard.

Consultation was done in 2018/19 with both government and non-government agencies. From this, recommendations for a framework for assessing and reporting on agency use of the Standard, and further recommendations on the Standard itself, as well as ways of better enabling the implementation, use, and support of the Standard came out.

Key recommendations include:

- updating the Standard to include clear, specific, measurable outcomes which can be assessed and reported,
- establishing consequences for non-compliance,
- implementing an assessment model that would see varying levels of reporting and assessment depending on the volume and impact of the services being measured, and
- providing resources to raise awareness and support the implementation of the Standard in agencies.

Milestone 2 Publication of preferred assessment model for implementation.

This work hasn't progressed for the reasons identified below in the lessons learnt section. In short, the Standards need to provide clear, specific, measurable outcomes that can be assessed and reported on and to be supported by improved guidance before this Milestone can be completed.

As a consequence, Milestone 2A was added.

Milestone 2A Piloting of assessment models with agencies through iterative refinements to reach a preferred and suitable framework.

Interviews were conducted with participating agencies about their experiences piloting the Standard. Consistent themes emerged:

- Changes to the structure and language of the Standard need to happen because it is too long and onerous. There is an opportunity to make it easier for agencies to understand and implement by splitting it into a project checklist and wider organisational requirements captured by existing standards, guidance and frameworks (e.g. privacy, security, information management).
- It is also clear that work needs to be done to make it implementable as the design principles don't have measurable metrics. The Standard can't be assessed without specific measures. There is also a lack of information on the 'how' of implementing it.

For government agencies, successful implementation of the Standard would also require support and advice. For example:

- a team of people skilled in the areas of expertise outlined in the Standard, who could be called upon for on-the-ground help, and
- additional frameworks like a Digital Maturity Model, to benchmark services and service delivery and provide clear steps and actions for improvement.

These themes reflect and reinforce the findings from the engagement on the assessment model done in 2018/9.

How we included diverse voices and engaged diverse communities

- Participating agencies have involved staff whose roles include accessibility needs and/or cultural sensitivity as and when appropriate.
- Blogging on digital.govt.nz e.g. progress on development of an assessment model.
- Blogging on New Zealand Government Web Community channel on Yammer.

Commitment links:

- Digital.govt.nz blog: The Digital Service Design Standard - Assessment Framework recommendations: <https://www.digital.govt.nz/blog/the-digital-service-design-standard-assessment-framework-recommendations/>

Impacts:

As the Standard has yet to be implemented, impact can only be seen through its influence. An example of this is the work the team in the Ministry of Health, which developed and now maintains

the COVID-19 Tracer app, did to create a tailored version of the Standard that focused on digital architecture.

What we learned:

Problems with the original intent

Feedback from the consultations and pilots is that when known about, the Standard is valued, but does not provide clear, specific, measurable outcomes that can be assessed and reported on. Nor does it set consequences for non-compliance. These are things that government agencies and people have said they want.

Importantly, for agencies to implement and comply, they also want easy-to-understand guidance, advice and support. In its current state, the Standard is overly long and complex and unable to be implemented.

Although there are issues with the original construction of the Standard, the use of it as it stands by government agencies, shows the value it provides.

What's needed to fix the Standard

Minimum work required to address the issues raised by agencies:

- re-write for clarity, brevity and comprehension;
- combine principles, restructure into separate parts (e.g. project checklist, broader organisational policies like data, privacy, security);
- create/rewrite easy to understand holistic guidance on the creation of government services. This covers gaps like te reo content on websites, creating ethical and equitable services; and
- use data and insights to benchmark system maturity, show weak areas for targeting (e.g. capability build), to create public measures for accountability and transparency.

Where to from here:

Agreement is being reached on a phased approach to implementing the Standard. Phase 1 will focus on developing a minimum set of mandatory standards that will be monitored and enforced. This reflects the core work of the Digital Public Service Branch and is an essential step in ensuring a trusted and trustworthy digital and data system.

Phase 2 would build on digital foundations with investment in service design. A programme of work to explore what resourcing, capability building, guidance and support is required to scale a te ao Māori service design. It would be a Māori led initiative and would require partnering with an organisation with capability in te ao Māori and relationships with iwi/Māori. Additional funding would be required to deliver this.

Phase one would deliver:

- clearly defined set of minimum mandatory standards for government agencies to comply with;

- reviewed/rewritten guidance to support the implementation of the core standards, co-designed with government agencies and other relevant organisations to ensure usability;
- an agreed virtual team of system and standards leads to support the work programme and provide critical skills to government, especially small agencies;
- data and insights on the compliance to the core standards. Knowledge of compliance rates will enable system interventions to be monitored for success;
- options for enforcement will be explored as the programme of work is rolled out; and
- public reporting on mandatory standards compliance to ensure transparency and accountability.