

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2021

End of Term Report

Commitment 9: Increase visibility of government data stewardship practices

Lead agency: Stats NZ

Objective: To increase the visibility of data practices for government-held data.

Ambition: New Zealanders will:

- understand how government is managing, using, and protecting their data and be able to hold government to account.
- have confidence and trust in the management and use of data that government holds on their behalf.

OGP values: Transparency and Accountability

What we achieved:

To help people understand what data stewardship means and what it includes, we defined a data stewardship framework of seven high-level elements that provides a structure and common language for organising and describing the different parts of effective data stewardship.

Through a review of successes and barriers to data access and use across government during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have a better understanding of the diversity of data practices across government and the data challenges government agencies face.

Even though this commitment will not be completed by the conclusion of National Action Plan 3, valuable insights have been gained.

Summary

| Milestones | | Progress |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 | Develop and publish an overview of government's data stewardship practices <i>Start/End dates: August 2018 to 30 November 2018</i> |  |
| 2 | Engage with citizens and government on the data stewardship overview to ensure it provides visibility of the right things and is addressing key needs <i>Start/End dates: 1 December 2018 to 31 April 2019</i> |  |
| 3 | Promote the data stewardship practices to government agencies and support them to implement good practice <i>Start/End dates: 1 May 2019 (ongoing)</i> |  |
| 4 | Engage with citizens and government to identify where effort should be focused to address gaps in government's data stewardship practices |  |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Start/End dates: 1 May 2019 to 30 November 2019 (then periodically ongoing) | |
|--|---|--|

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

What we achieved

Milestone 1 – overview of government’s data stewardship practices

In September 2018 Cabinet authorised the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS) to set mandatory standards and guidelines for the collection, management, and use of data by government agencies, and to direct agencies to adopt common data capabilities. This mandate provides the GCDS with the basis for defining good data stewardship practices.

Following research into system stewardship and data management, and feedback from government agencies, Stats NZ developed a data stewardship framework comprising 7 high-level elements that cover the full scope of data stewardship and work across the various roles and layers of New Zealand’s data system. This framework provides the structure and common language for collating a toolkit of data stewardship guidance, resources, and tools.

Milestones 2 and 4 – engage with citizens and government

Engagement with government agencies and a review of government data access and use practices showed there were different levels of data stewardship awareness, practice, and maturity across government. This diversity makes it difficult to provide a cohesive, transparent picture of how government is managing and using data.

Our intention with these milestones was to engage with citizens to ensure government was to provide visibility of the practices that citizens felt were most important, and to address any gaps in how government looks after their data. The diversity of practice and maturity across government makes this engagement more complex, so we decided to stop our engagement activities until we were in a position for more meaningful and reciprocal engagement.

Milestone 3 – promote and support data stewardship practices

Many initiatives are underway to establish good data stewardship practices across government, and these are included in the refreshed Government Data Strategy and Roadmap. These initiatives include defining data content standards, piloting a data capability framework, helping agencies use Ngā Tikanga Paihere to guide their data practices, and co-designing a Māori data governance model.

How we included diverse voices and engaged diverse communities

It became apparent that the work required to deliver this commitment would require a multi-year work programme, and that we weren’t yet ready to actively and meaningfully engage with communities. As a result, we stopped our engagement activities. Any future engagement planning will consider:

- creating an open dialogue around data issues or concerns
- inviting citizen input into where and how we might standardise data practices across government
- providing transparency of practices and decisions

- using multiple channels for engaging with different communities.

Commitment links:

- [Cabinet paper on strengthening data leadership across government](#) and [Cabinet Minutes](#)
- [Data stewardship framework](#) and [toolkit](#)
- [COVID-19 Lessons Learnt: Recommendations for improving the resilience of New Zealand's government data system](#)
- [Data content standards](#)
- [Data capability framework](#)
- [Ngā Tikanga Paihere](#)
- [Māori data governance](#)
- [Government Data Strategy and Roadmap](#)

Impacts:

Due to the challenges of adequately communicating and addressing the diversity of data practices across government we have achieved only a minimal impact with this commitment.

What we learned:

Achieving consistency and maturity across government will take time

Government aspires to have an integrated and cohesive data system, with consistent practices for creating, managing, and using data. However, engagement with government agencies revealed a diversity in data literacy, stewardship awareness, practices, and maturity across government.

This diversity was reinforced in the review of successes and barriers to data access and use across government during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were inconsistencies and gaps in data practices, and many areas where improvements need to be made.

Given the range and scale of changes required, achieving consistent and transparent data stewardship practices across government will be a multi-year initiative.

Multiple communication tactics and channels are needed

Data literacy is varied both within and outside government. To provide New Zealanders with assurance about government's data practices requires communicating about those practices in multiple ways (plain English, different channels, targeted) appropriate to those different levels of literacy.

There is a need for narratives, case studies, and analogies to explain data stewardship concepts, practices, and benefits. These need to take a citizen-centred perspective rather than a government perspective, focusing on what is important to citizens rather than what we think they should know. A citizen-centred perspective will also inform the language and terminology to use so that the content is accessible and understandable. The effectiveness of these communication approaches needs to be continually assessed through engagement with and feedback from citizens.

Where to from here:

Improving government data practices is a key part of the refreshed Government Data Strategy and Roadmap. This strategy focuses on creating an inclusive and integrated data system so that:

- people trust the data they share with government will be collected, managed, and used safely and responsibly
- Māori and iwi have the data system they need to fulfil their aspirations
- people and organisations have access to efficient and effective government services
- government decisions are informed by the right data at the right time
- government is held to account through a robust and transparent data system.

The strategy includes having the right standards, guidance, and protocols so that data can be found, shared, combined, and re-used while also protecting privacy, security, and confidentiality.