



13 February 2025

s 9(2)(a)

**Official information request**

**Our ref: R00697**

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your Official Information Act (OIA) request on 2 January 2025, seeking information and input from the Ministry for Regulation (Ministry) into the *2023 Government Department Strategies (GDS) Index* and the *2024 GDS Index*. Your request is as follows:

*“Please find attached our OIA request. It relates to the Institute’s upcoming 2024 GDS Index and consists of two attachments:*

- Attachment 1: A letter outlining what information we are requesting and why.*
- Attachment 2: An Excel consisting of two sheets for you to update yellow-highlighted columns.*

*Please could you review the two sheets in the attached Excel to answer these questions:*

**Sheet 1: Review of the 2023 GDS Index**

*Please update the status of each GDS in the yellow-highlighted column F:*

*1. Write in one of three options: (i) ‘still active’, (ii) ‘archived’ (i.e. no longer in operation), or (iii) ‘no longer owned and operated by this government department’. If this is the case, please say who it has been transferred to (e.g. your comment might be ‘transferred from MOH to Health NZ in March 2024’).*

**Sheet 2: Potential ‘new’ GDSs**

*Has the department published a new strategy document in the 2024 calendar year that may meet the GDS definition? (Find the definition and learn more about the Index on the next page.) If so, please add a new row – one for each strategy document – and complete the yellow-highlighted columns A to D:*

- 1. Add the strategy’s title and PDF link in columns A and B. In the rare case you know of another strategy that should have been included in the 2023 GDS Index but was not, please add a further row to this sheet and provide an explanation in Column D. We are happy to retrospectively add and even archive GDSs to ensure the GDS Index keeps an accurate record.*

2. *In column C, write either: (i) ‘replacing an existing GDS’ (and please also name the GDS it replaces in column C), or (ii) ‘completely new strategy document’.*
3. *Add any additional information in column D.”*

On 22 January 2025, we contacted you to seek clarification on the definition of ‘government department strategy’ for the purposes of the GDS Index. You replied on 29 January 2025, and indicated:

*“We would welcome any suggestions on how we can make criterion 7 clearer as I can see how it could be confusing.*

*If you could clarify whether any departments are still publishing four-year plans, that would be great.”*

### **Response to your request**

As you will note, **Sheet 1** regarding a review of the 2023 GDS information is not applicable to the Ministry as it was established on 1 March 2024.

Regarding **Sheet 2** on any new strategy document for calendar year 2024, while we do have some strategy documents, such as the “strategy on a page” published on our website, we do not have a document that meets the seven criteria outlined in your request (as clarified by you on 29 January 2025).

We therefore refuse your request under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA as we do not hold the information you requested, and we have no grounds to believe that said information is held by another department or agency.

### **Feedback on recommendation 2 in the 2023 GDS Index Handbook**

You mentioned in your email of 2 January 2025 that recommendation 2 in the *2023 GDS Index Handbook* suggests that the Ministry for Regulation maintain a central register of GDSS.

This is not aligned with the Ministry’s role and so we do not agree with this recommendation. The Ministry for Regulation has been established to improve the quality of regulation in New Zealand, which is a very different function from one relating to the quality of other Government agencies’ strategies. Accordingly, we do not have a mandate to review or comment on those strategies, nor to maintain a central register of them.

### **Criterion 7 in the GDS definition**

In your email of 29 January 2025, you invited suggestions on how to make criterion 7 in the GDS definition clearer. It may interest you to note that sections 38-42 of the [Public Finance Act 1989](#) (PFA) were updated to require government departments to provide information on strategic intentions. The term “statement of intent” is no longer used by government departments as these have been repealed in the context of the PFA. Crown entities, on the other hand, are still required under sections 138-149 of the [Crown Entities Act 2004](#) to produce a statement of intent.

You also raised a query on whether any departments are still publishing four-year plans. We refer you to [The Treasury webpage on strategic thinking and planning](#), which contains references to Cabinet’s decision to rescind the requirement for departments to produce four-year plans.

**Right of review**

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we may publish this response (with your details removed) on the Ministry for Regulation website.

Ngā mihi

s 9(2)(a)



Aisling Risdon

**Head of Ministerial Services**  
**Ministry for Regulation**