



Terms of Reference – Mapping New Zealand’s Regulatory Landscape project

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Review is to map New Zealand’s current regulatory landscape to support the Ministry for Regulation’s future work, including:
 - a supporting system-level performance reporting (BIM, annual reviews, OECD comparisons)
 - b supporting broader system stewardship responsibilities, such as:
 - i analysis of cost effectiveness
 - ii identifying areas for possible areas of improvement
 - iii identifying best practice in regulatory design and performance.
2. This will be completed in phases, with each phase used to inform the next phase.

Background

3. New Zealand’s regulatory system is extensive and dispersed across multiple departments, agencies, ministerial portfolios, and public and private sectors. Establishing a shared cross-agency understanding of the system would enable more informed decision-making across the regulatory landscape.
4. The Productivity Commission’s 2014 report, *Regulatory Institutions and Practices*, recommended developing a high-level map of regulatory regimes and regulations across government.
5. More recently, the Regulatory Standards Act 2025, together with reshaped impact analysis processes, aims to support a more coherent Regulatory Management System (RMS) focused on transparency and consistency with the principles of responsible regulation. Reviewing how regulatory institutions and functions are configured could further strengthen RMS coherence and enhance overall cost-effectiveness.
6. The Ministry’s role is to strengthen New Zealand’s Regulatory Management System and to improve regulatory quality, including the experience that New Zealanders have of complying with regulation.

Related Work Currently Underway

7. The Review will complement and build on work already underway, actively avoiding duplication through close communication and collaboration with the Treasury, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), and the Public Service Commission. Key related initiatives are discussed below.

Ministry work – system capability, and stewardship teams

8. The Ministry’s interim database of regulatory organisations that the public interacts with was published on the intranet in 2024 and summarised for the Minister on 12 September 2025.
9. This gathered publicly available information about regulators across several parameters, such as agency role in a system, organisational form, relevant primary legislation. This dataset is suitably broad, but further deepening of the information, including automation and linking with PSC and PCO datasets, has been awaiting prioritisation and a data platform.
10. A tool for agencies to map their regulatory systems has been under discussion during 2025.

Roles

Ministers

11. The Minister for Regulation will have oversight of the Mapping New Zealand’s Regulatory Landscape project.

Agencies

12. This project will be led by the Ministry for Regulation, under its central agency mandate to strengthen the regulatory management system and improve regulatory quality. While the project will involve cross-agency collaboration, the Ministry for Regulation retains its independence and the ability to make comments and recommendations that may not be fully supported by other agencies or stakeholders.
13. That said, the Ministry acknowledges that enduring and successful change is more likely where there is consensus between Ministers and across agencies.

Approach

14. The Mapping New Zealand’s Regulatory Landscape project will be delivered in the following components and will be developed in sprints:
 - Project set up and scope agreed, and production of key planning documents, such as a project plan and an engagement strategy
 - Defining data metrics to be collected in this phase, identifying data sources, and ensuring quality assurance of data
 - Development, testing, implementation, and auditing of an updatable, scalable and repeatable solution to support data collection, interrogation of data and production of reports
 - Identification of insights, themes, observations
 - Finalisation of the draft report and briefing.

Expected outputs

15. It is expected the Mapping New Zealand's Regulatory Landscape project key outputs will be:
 - A database which can be used to form insights and observations about New Zealand's regulatory system, and
 - A report which includes:
 - visual representations including charts, tables and diagrams of data, regulatory systems
 - notable insights and themes
 - advice on possible areas for a deeper dive(s) and possibilities for change.
16. It is expected that near the end of this phase of the Review, consideration will be given to possible next steps, which may include:
 - scoping out further work, including possible areas for expanding data metrics and entities included
 - areas for a deeper dive
 - recommendations.

Reporting and Oversight

17. The Mapping New Zealand's Regulatory Landscape project through the Chief Executive will report directly to the Minister for Regulation. Additional oversight will be provided by a group of senior leaders from the Ministry for Regulation, the Treasury, and the Public Service Commission. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will be kept informed.
18. Progress updates and a final report will be provided to the Minister for Regulation.

Timing and Milestones

19. The project started in late January 2026, with a preliminary report delivered to the Minister by the end of April 2026.