New approach to data governance

Helping organisations make sense of data

Data has the power to change lives and create better outcomes for New Zealanders by informing government policy and decision-making.

Stats NZ is supporting and empowering agencies to use data more effectively.

Government holds a vast amount of data on behalf of New Zealanders. This data has the potential to be a valuable asset both for government, and outside of government, driving innovation and contributing to economic, social, and environmental progress.

When used securely – protecting privacy and confidentiality – and with New Zealand's trust, confidence, and integrity, data can provide rich insights about us and our communities.

To support the government's priority to get more value from data, Stats NZ Chief Executive Liz MacPherson was appointed as the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS). The GCDS leads this work by facilitating and enabling an inclusive, joined-up approach across government to set standards and establish common capabilities, including developing data policy, infrastructure, strategy, and planning. Ensuring agencies have the capability and right skills to maximise the value they get from data is key.

Recognising that data is a taonga for Māori, Stats NZ stewards data responsibly with, and for, future generations. We're working with Māori to help build data capability, access more data, and use it as a strategic asset.

At the heart of this work is transparency around how government uses the data it holds on behalf of New Zealanders.

Knowing about and looking after data

Effective data stewardship depends on good data governance (the way data is overseen and managed). Traditional data governance approaches across government haven't kept pace with the increasing volume and importance of data.

Typically, government data governance is hierarchical (management-led), and can lack the flexibility to enable and support agencies to maximise the value of the data they hold.

Modern data environments require a governance approach that's closely aligned with operational business needs, where accountability for data management sits with all staff who handle data.

New data governance approach

Stats NZ has partnered across government to design a new operational Data Governance Framework (oDGF).

As the oDGF rolls out, Stats NZ is supporting agencies to build their capability and improve data accountability while keeping pace with

"Data is becoming the new raw material of business."

– Craig Mundie, Microsoft.

the rapidly evolving way data is shaping the way government operates.

Framework based on the principles of knowledge and care

Knowledge

Developing, building and extending agencies' understanding of the data they hold.

Mapping how data flows into, through and out of an agency helps them to better understand the data they hold and how to use it efficiently and to support their strategic goals. This is called 'actionable knowledge'.

Mapping also shows how data interacts with business processes, and how the process of combining (or integrating) data with that from other organisations can be improved.

It also identifies who touches the data, how long it takes to move, where the roadblocks are, and how data adds value.

Care

Enabling agencies to demonstrate best practice data management behaviours.

Agencies can achieve best practice data management by ensuring staff are accountable for the data they handle. This creates transparency, strengthens data quality, and increases customer trust.

To help with this, we've defined some capabilities - that support data accountability - for agencies to include in staff job descriptions.

Benefits

When implemented, the oDGF promotes consistent best practice for data management and helps agencies realise the value of data they hold through:

- monitoring and improving data quality
- promoting accountability and transparency
- embedding a 'by design' data management approach (where good practice is built into the way data is considered, from the start)
- supporting agile business models
- facilitating internal business process monitoring.

Contact us

If you'd like more information, have a question, or want to provide feedback, please email datalead@stats.govt.nz.