

19 December 2024

Kia ora,

**OIA 2025/01: 2024 Government Department Strategy Index (2024 GDS Index)**

We are pleased to advise that the *2023 GDS Index* is now published. It can be found on our website's [GDS Index page](#). Thank you so much for your assistance with it. We have decided to move quickly in the new year to prepare a *2024 GDS Index*.

**Stage 1: Collection**

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.

We would appreciate a quick turnaround on this OIA request. This includes: (i) an immediate acknowledgement and (ii) a detailed response within the OIA request timeframe. FYI, the Institute keeps a record of all responses (with officers' names redacted) on our website [here](#).

**Stage 2: Verification**

The Institute will review the information provided and may come back to you with points of clarification.

We hope to publish the *2024 GDS Index* by late March 2025.

Thank you for your assistance.



Wendy McGuinness

## **Background Information**

### **A: GDS Definition**

For the purposes of the GDS Index, a ‘government department strategy’ must meet these seven criteria:

1. be a publicly available document that is published by a government department
2. be a public-facing document that is written for the public to read
3. be an externally facing document (i.e. not written for internal management purposes)
4. be a strategic document that contains long-term thinking (i.e. it sets out the approach (the means) and the purpose (the ends) of the strategy)
5. be a national document (i.e. it excludes local and regional strategies)
6. be a document that looks out at least two years or more, and
7. not be a corporate document (i.e. not a statement of intent, a four-year plan or an annual report).

### **B: Changes to our process**

To streamline our GDS Index going forward, we have decided to:

- accept strategies that are published only on the department’s website (previously, the Institute required a strategy to be a document)\*
- complete the Index annually, as at 31 December every year
- maintain all correspondence in a unique email address: [GDSIndex@mcguinnessinstitute.org](mailto:GDSIndex@mcguinnessinstitute.org)
- assign 30 minutes to completing each scorecard by one member of the research team, to reduce time taken in the transparency scorecard process (i.e. no longer two reviewers)
- not complete a radar diagram, to reduce the time taken by our designers, and
- reduce the number of GDSs by excluding internally-focused GDSs (i.e. those strategy documents that solely focus on the internal operations of departments, such as diversity strategies, digital strategies or carbon-footprint strategies).

The reasons for the above are as follows:

- Feedback from officials and others is that an annual list is more valuable than a comprehensive scoring system.
- A list published shortly after the end of the previous calendar year is extremely useful (i.e. time is of the essence).

Please note, we continue to recommend that:

- Government departments publish a comprehensive list of strategies in their annual reports.
- A central public register of all active GDSs should be maintained by government for use by Ministers, officials and citizens. We intend that a GDS register will in due course be maintained by government, rather than the Institute.

\* The Institute will review this decision as part of the final verification process in 2025. We welcome your thoughts on this broadening of what counts as a GDS document.