

Working Paper 2015/04

Methodology  
for the Government  
Department Strategies  
Index New Zealand

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Government Department Strategies Index New Zealand.  
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**MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE**

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This publication forms part of the *GDS Index NZ*. All documents can be found at [www.gdsindexnz.org](http://www.gdsindexnz.org). Working papers as at November 2015 are as follows:

*Working Paper 2014/01: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014*

*Working Paper 2014/02: Analysis of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014—An overview*

*Working Paper 2015/04: Methodology for the Government Department Strategies Index New Zealand*

*Working Paper 2015/05: Tables Collating and Ranking Government Department Strategies in Operation as at 30 June 2014*

*Working Paper 2015/06: Profiles Scoring Government Department Strategies in Operation as at 30 June 2014*

*Working Paper 2015/07: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2015*

*Working Paper 2015/08: Tables Collating and Ranking Government Department Strategies in Operation as at 30 June 2015*

*Working Paper 2015/09: Profiles Scoring Government Department Strategies in Operation as at 30 June 2015*

*Working Paper 2015/10: Analysis of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2015—An overview*

## 1.0 Purpose

No government institution regularly reviews the content of government department strategies (GDSs). There is no register kept of which GDSs are in operation, and there are no guidelines suggesting how a GDS should be written. GDSs do not need to be signed by anyone or dated, nor do they need to include information about their expected duration or the likelihood of an ongoing review process. There is no institution that the public is able to engage with in order to discuss the content of a GDS or the way that a department might have failed to engage with stakeholders. There is no central register of invitations to comment on GDSs. To put it bluntly, there is no feedback loop, no transparency and no accountability. This is surprising for five reasons:

1. When analysing the data on the creation of GDSs over the last 20 years, it is evident that New Zealand has been creating more GDSs in the last decade. See Figure 9 on page 15 of *Working Paper 2014/02: Analysis of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014—An overview* for an illustration of this.
2. The creation of GDSs requires a lot of resources and therefore must be a large expense and investment for departments.
3. GDSs, once approved by the department or the relevant minister, often drive change over long periods. Sometimes they (and their visions) persist over successive governments. This data is based on analysis which can be read in *Working Paper 2014/02* (Figure 16, page 18).
4. GDSs are public documents which not only provide a window into the working of government but often invite public engagement early on in their creation. The drafting of GDSs provides an opportunity for the crowdsourcing of ideas, the generation of consensus (such as agreements within particular groups to make trade-offs in the short term for long-term gains) and collaboration with the wider community (including businesses, philanthropists and councils).
5. GDSs are critical instruments able to bring about change. They track and describe the means to desired ends. However, if there is no due diligence as to the content and structure of GDSs, they may in fact operate solely as blunt instruments – delivering the public more harm than good.

The purpose of the Institute's research is to put a spotlight on GDSs. By doing so, it aims to add value to a discussion on how New Zealand might create GDSs that are more effective at delivering outcomes, more cost-efficient and more durable through public acceptance. GDSs can be a tool for instilling patience and trust back into the public service and the wider community.

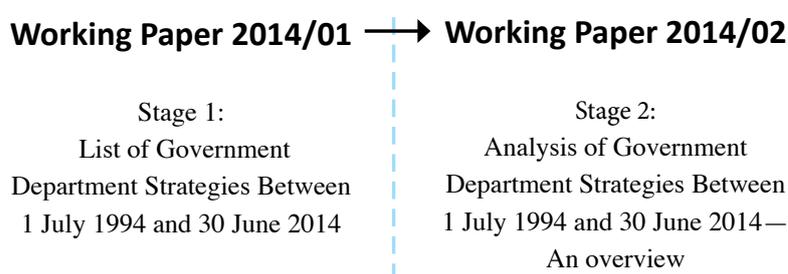
The research question is: To what extent do each of the GDSs in operation contain the essential elements of a good strategy document? It seeks also to highlight existing strategies which are exemplars of good practice.

## 2.0 Background

The Institute has a number of initiatives focused on strategy.<sup>1</sup> The Institute would support consideration of the development of a nationally integrated strategy for New Zealand, which in turn would anchor and align government department strategies. This broader issue will be explored in a report to be published later this year, which will incorporate the key observations from this research.

This publication focuses on strategy development in central government. In 2007 the Institute prepared a report that compiled a list of government department strategies (which were then called ‘central government strategies’). This 2007 report was revisited in 2014, and as a result two working papers were prepared – see Figure 1.

Figure 1: 2014 Working Papers



This stream of work has expanded in 2015 and represents Stage 3 of the analysis. The analysis undertaken in compiling the original list of 136 GDSs in operation (Stage 1) has been built upon by conducting an in-depth review of each GDS, with a view to answering the research question set out on page 1. This saw the development of a scorecard which was used to score each of the 136 existing GDSs in operation. Each strategy, department and sector was then ranked. As a result of this process, seven tables and 136 profiles were published in separate documents. Together the *Methodology, List, Tables, Profiles, Analysis* and *Observations* form *The Government Department Strategy Index New Zealand*.

<sup>1</sup> Another stream of this work was the *StrategyNZ* workshop held in 2011 (see [www.strategynz.info](http://www.strategynz.info)). This initiative included bringing together over 100 people from throughout New Zealand, with the aim of exploring an overarching strategy for New Zealand. The idea that most resonated with participants was Sir Paul Callaghan’s idea of making New Zealand ‘a place where talent wants to live’. This evolved into the *TalentNZ* initiative. For more information about *TalentNZ*, see [www.talentnz.org](http://www.talentnz.org).

## 3.0 Method

The following sections describe the approach taken to investigate the research question set out on page 1, explaining how GDSs were identified and scored and how the data was processed to produce the final outputs seen in *Tables* and *Profiles*.

### 3.1 Approach

The Institute produced two key products that enabled the research. These key products are:

- The list of GDSs and the methodology behind their identification and collection contained in *Working Paper 2014/01: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014*. Each of the 136 GDSs in operation as at 30 June 2014 has been provided an operational GDS number. These numbers follow the department order (A–Z) and strategy title (A–Z). See Table 1 in *Tables* for data which is set out in this order.
- The scorecard devised to assess each individual GDS, featured in *Profiles*. This is largely a product of a discussion held on government department strategies (GDSs) on 1 October 2014. These ideas were further explored in December 2014. We would like to thank the following people for their additional insights which helped the Institute develop the elements, structure and questions contained in the scorecard: Stephen Cummings, Professor of Strategic Management, Victoria University; Patrick Nolan, Productivity Commission; James Palmer, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Ministry for the Environment; Rodney Scott, State Services Commission and Treasury; and Simon Wakeman, Productivity Commission.

## 3.2 Terminology

In this working paper, a ‘government department strategy’ (GDS) is defined in terms of four criteria:

A ‘government department strategy’ must:

1. be a publicly available statement or report;
2. be generated by government departments with a national rather than a local focus;
3. contain long-term thinking, in such a way that the strategy links to a long-term vision or aim, and ideally provide clarity over the factors that may impinge on the attainment of that vision or aim; and
4. guide the department’s thinking and operations over the long term (i.e. contain a work programme to achieve change over two years or more).

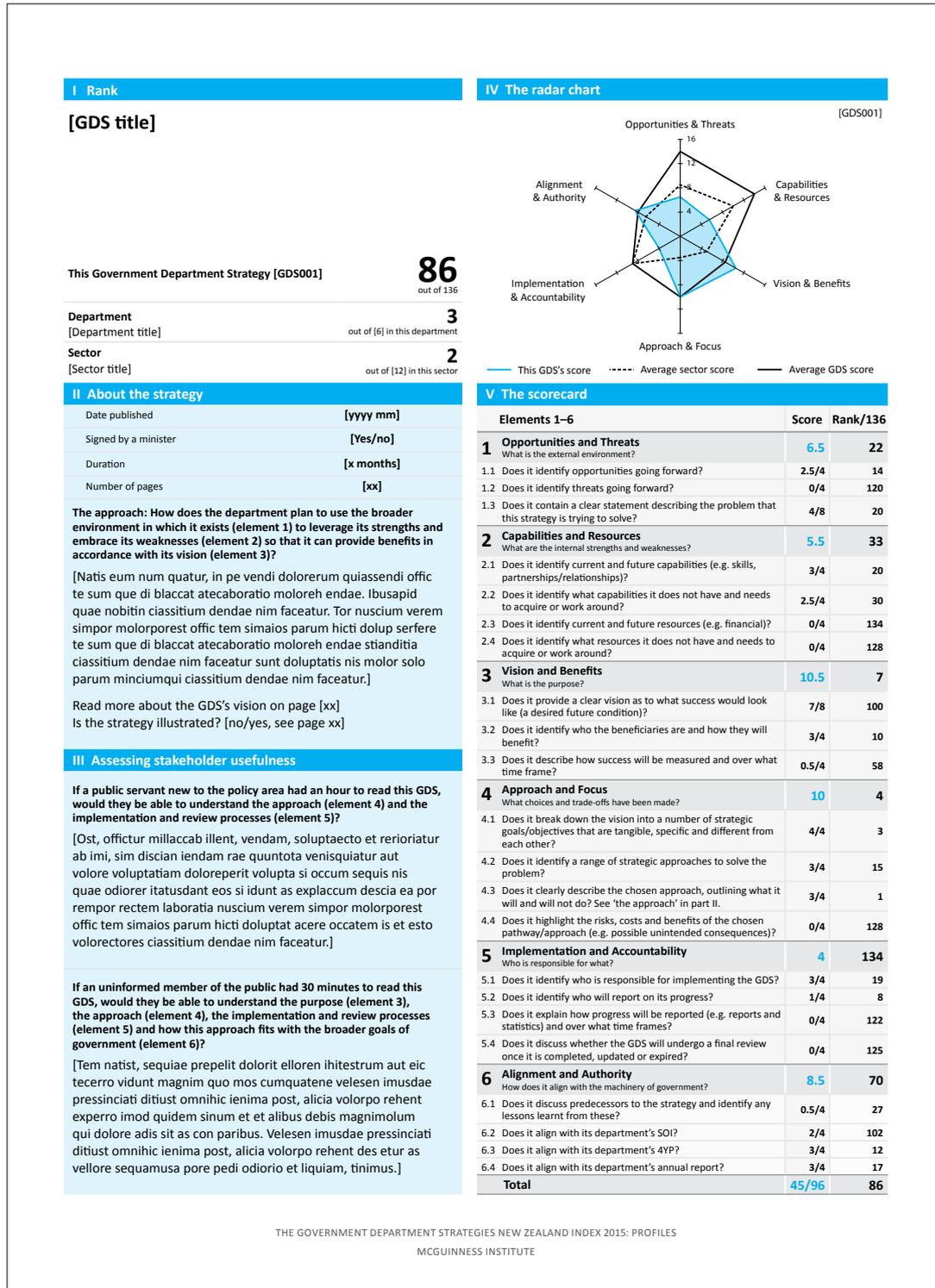
The term ‘government department strategy’ (GDS) was developed by the Institute and is used in place of the term ‘central government strategy’ (CGS), which was used in the Institute’s 2007 report. This change was made to prevent confusion between ‘central government departments’ and ‘central government agencies’, as the latter is used by government to describe the three core departments (the Treasury, State Services Commission and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet).

For the purposes of this working paper, the term ‘government department’ refers to the 29 ‘departments of the public service’ currently listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988. The term ‘departments’ is used in accordance with the State Services Commission’s *A Guide to New Zealand’s Central Government Agencies*, which states: ‘Irrespective of being called a department, ministry or some other title, they are all Public Service departments.’ (SSC, 2014: 1)

### 3.3 Designing the scorecard

For more information on the composition of the scorecard and its five sections, see ‘How to read a GDS profile’ on page 26.

Figure 2: Example of the GDS Profile



Description of the elements:

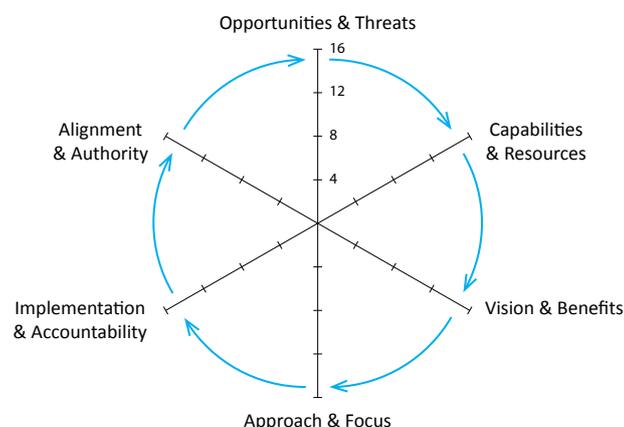
N.B. The order of elements in the scorecard does not reflect the order we expect the GDS to be read in; it represents the order by which we expect the GDS to be formulated.

- Element 1, *Opportunities and Threats*, asks ‘what is the external environment?’ and is largely the second part of a standard ‘SWOT’ analysis – the first part being ‘strengths and weaknesses’.
- Element 2, *Capabilities and Resources*, asks ‘what are the internal strengths and weaknesses?’ and is considered by the Institute to be a better metric than the standard ‘strengths and weaknesses’ analysis. ‘Strengths and weaknesses’ as a category is too narrow and would not lead reviewers to think about whether or not the department understood its available (or lacking) resources and capabilities when drafting the GDS.
- Element 3, *Vision and Benefits*, asks ‘what is the purpose?’ and concerns the purpose and the value-proposition that the strategy, if implemented, might deliver.
- Element 4, *Approach and Focus*, asks ‘what choices and trade-offs have been made?’ and directly concerns the strategic approach itself and the strategic choices that have been made.
- Element 5, *Implementation and Accountability*, asks ‘who is responsible for what?’
- Element 6, *Alignment and Authority*, asks ‘how does it align with the machinery of government?’ and is relatively unique to government; therefore, it has been added last. Arguably all the other five elements are applicable in both the private and the public sector.

Formulation of the conceptual framework:

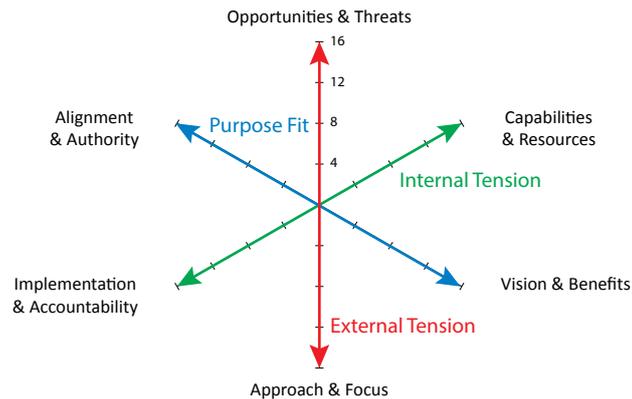
- The elements in the scorecard are in the sequence that is often used to create a strategy, starting with *Opportunities and Threats*. Each element logically flows into the need to develop another element, until the original element is returned to. This is seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The logical sequence to create a GDS



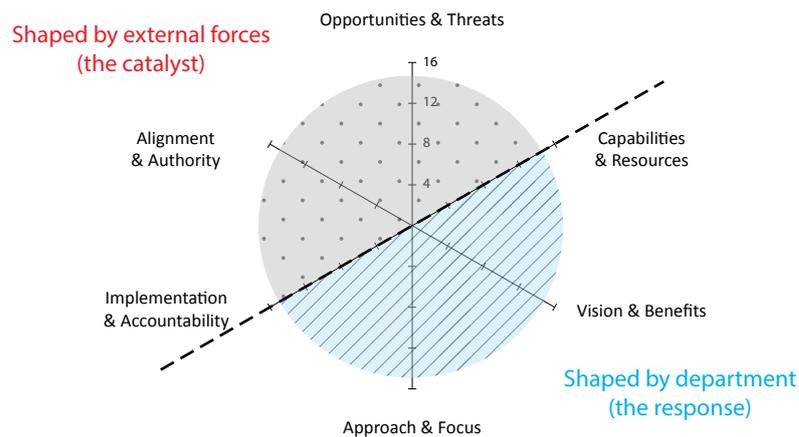
- There are some tensions that naturally exist between elements which help to optimise strategy design. This is seen in Figure 4. The ‘External Tension’ calls for the strategy to balance and match the GDS’s *Approach and Focus* with its scoping of the external environment in *Opportunities and Threats*. The ‘Internal Tension’ calls for the strategy to match *Capabilities and Resources* with *Implementation and Accountability*. Lastly, the ‘Purpose Fit’ calls for the strategy to bring into line the *Vision and Benefits* with the *Alignment and Authority* requirements.

**Figure 4: The three natural tensions that exist between elements to optimise strategy design**



- It is also important to recognise that there are areas where departments have little control when creating their optimal strategy. Their task is therefore to respond to the environment and use their skills, patience and commitment to shape outcomes over the long term. Figure 5 illustrates where this dotted line exists on the scorecard. Elements 1 and 6 and some of elements 2 and 5 are generally outside the department’s control.

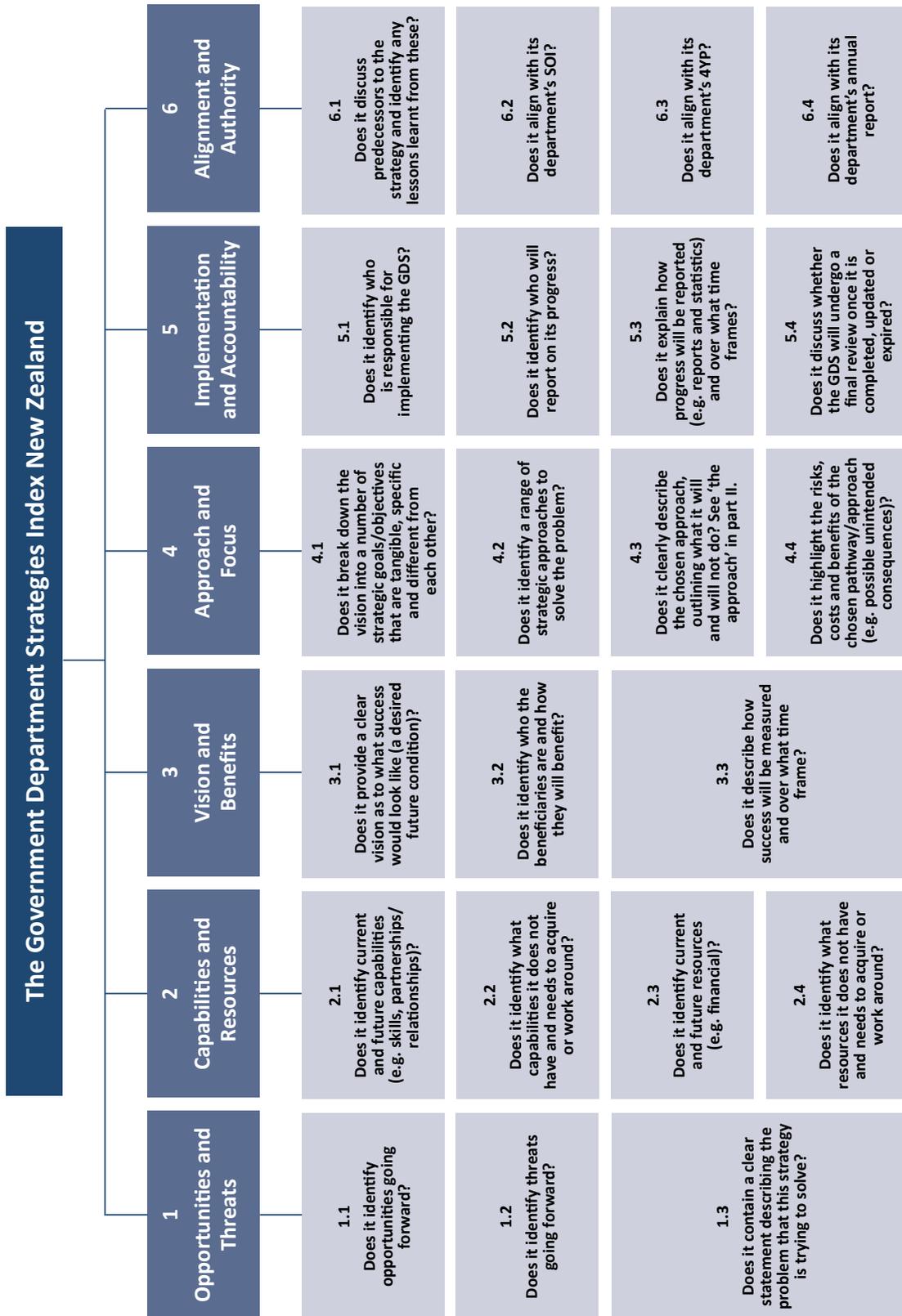
**Figure 5: Understanding what departments can control**



- Two of the sub-elements were weighted more highly than the other 20, as we believed they were more critical to the success of a GDS and were difficult to subdivide further. This weighting is an indication to the reviewers that this is an important sub-element requiring their specific attention.
- The most important aspect of the scoring was the comparisons it raised between GDSs, between departments and between sectors, and therefore the ranking of GDSs was a key focus.

- The inclusion of a radar chart illustrates the comparison between the scores of each GDS and both its sector and all other GDSs. It was decided not to include the average department score on the radar, as it could be easily found using the tables, and the addition of a fourth measure made the radar chart too complex.
- *Strategy Builder: How to create and communicate more effective strategies*, the upcoming book by Stephen Cummings and Duncan Angwin, proved extremely useful when assessing the elements to be used and developing the sub-elements.

Figure 6: The six elements and 22 sub-elements in the scorecard



## 3.4 Developing the scoring method

The elements of the scorecard are found below in the grey boxes, followed by a brief discussion of the indicators reviewers used to assess each sub-element. The indicators are outlined with scales and do not give exact criteria for each possible score.

Aside from the two sub-elements which were weighted with values of eight (in order to represent their greater importance), each sub-element was scored in integers out of four. Although this resulted in a total possible score of 96 (which is not the most intuitive total – 100 being the obvious choice), this decision was made to encourage reviewers to judge each GDS as precisely as possible. The reviewers had to consider the sub-element score carefully, as they were unable to pick the uncontroversial ‘middle mark’ (3, if the sub-element were scored out of five, for example).

### 3.4.1 Opportunities and Threats

*What is the external environment?*

1.1 Does it identify opportunities going forward?

1.2 Does it identify threats going forward?

1.3 Does it contain a clear statement describing the problem that this strategy is trying to solve?

#### Sub-element 1.1. Does it identify opportunities going forward? [4 points]

The purpose of this question is to assess whether the GDS in question has outlined the opportunities which may come about within the focus area if the strategy is implemented. Points are awarded based on the following scale:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of any opportunities which may result if the strategy is implemented.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions opportunities which may result if the strategy is implemented, but they are not discussed in detail.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses comprehensively the opportunities which may result if the strategy is implemented. Examples and scenario case studies may be used, for example.

#### Sub-element 1.2. Does it identify threats going forward? [4 points]

The purpose of this question is to assess whether the GDS has outlined the threats which may result within the focus area if the strategy is implemented. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of any opportunities or threats which may result from the implementation of its strategy.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions some opportunities and threats which may result from the implementation of its strategy in minimal detail only. No examples are included.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses comprehensively the opportunities and threats which may result from the implementation of the GDS. Examples are included.

**Sub-element 1.3. Does it contain a clear statement describing the problem that this strategy is trying to solve? [8 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS identifies clearly the problem on which it focuses and aims to solve. This is important as a succinct identification of the issue is necessary for both the public and the public servants reading the GDS. This question was given a weight of eight points to represent its importance. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no reference to the specific problem.

**2 points:** The GDS makes reference to the problem, but with no supporting detail.

**4 points:** The GDS makes reference to the problem, but the discussion of its nature and extent is limited, with no supporting evidence or examples.

**6 points:** The GDS discusses the specific issue it is focusing on, with reference to evidence describing the current situation. However, discussion is short or lacks depth.

**8 points:** The GDS makes detailed reference to the problem and describes its nature and extent. The GDS provides concrete details and supporting examples to illustrate any complexities of the problem.

### 3.4.2 Capabilities and Resources

*What are the internal strengths and weaknesses?*

2.1 Does it identify current and future capabilities (e.g. skills, partnerships/relationships)?

2.2 Does it identify what capabilities it does not have and needs to acquire or work around?

2.3 Does it identify current and future resources (e.g. financial)?

2.4 Does it identify what resources it does not have and needs to acquire or work around?

**Sub-element 2.1. Does it identify current and future capabilities (e.g. skills, partnerships/relationships)? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS outlines the partnerships and capabilities currently available and necessary for implementation of the GDS. It asks whether this stocktake of partnerships, skills and capabilities also takes into account when and how they will be used in the future. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of current partnerships or capabilities.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions partnerships or capabilities currently available, but detail is limited.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses available partnerships and resources, and it details comprehensively when and how these will be used to implement the GDS in the future.

**Sub-element 2.2. Does it identify what capabilities it does not have and needs to acquire or work around? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS outlines the partnerships and capabilities which are necessary for the implementation of the GDS but are currently lacking. It asks whether this identification of lacking partnerships, skills and capabilities constructively discusses ways to account for or work around this need. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of missing current partnerships or capabilities.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions missing partnerships or capabilities, but detail is limited. There is no discussion of how to work around the identified missing capability, resource or skill.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses missing partnerships and resources, and it details comprehensively ways in which this can be accounted for or worked around so that the vision is still achieved.

**Sub-element 2.3. Does it identify current and future resources (e.g. financial)? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS outlines the financial resources available to its lead agency for its implementation. It asks whether this identification of available resources discusses when and how they will be used in the future. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of financial resources.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions financial resources, but detail is limited.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses available financial resources, and it details comprehensively how and when these will be used to implement the strategy.

**Sub-element 2.4. Does it identify what resources it does not have and needs to acquire or work around? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS outlines the financial resources which are necessary for its implementation but are currently lacking. It asks whether this identification of lacking resources constructively discusses ways to account for or work around this need. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no mention of missing financial resources.

**2 points:** The GDS mentions missing financial resources, but detail is limited. There is no discussion of how to work around the lack of resources.

**4 points:** The GDS discusses missing financial resources, and it details comprehensively ways in which this can be accounted for or worked around so that the vision is still achieved.

### 3.4.3 Vision and Benefits

*What is the purpose?*

3.1 Does it provide a clear vision as to what success would look like (a desired future condition)?

3.2 Does it identify who the beneficiaries are and how they will benefit?

3.3 Does it describe how success will be measured and over what time frame?

#### **Sub-element 3.1. Does it provide a clear vision as to what success would look like (a desired future condition)? [8 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS illustrates what its successful end output/s will look like. To achieve clear illustration of its vision, the GDS must give readers a detailed understanding of the outputs which will result from its implementation. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS's vision is not clearly stated or is absent altogether.

**2 points:** The GDS states its vision in limited detail, with no explanation of desired end outputs.

**4 points:** The GDS states its vision in limited detail, with some explanation of end outputs desired.

**6 points:** The GDS discusses a detailed image of what it is aiming to achieve, but without examples.

**8 points:** The GDS provides a detailed description of its vision, with examples of desired end outputs and their connection to the strategic goals of the GDS.

#### **Sub-element 3.2. Does it identify who the beneficiaries are and how they will benefit? [4 points]**

This question examines how well the GDS analyses who will benefit from its implementation and how they will benefit. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not articulate who will benefit from the GDS.

**2 points:** The GDS articulates who will benefit from the GDS, but discussion of how they will benefit is poor and lacks detail.

**4 points:** The GDS articulates who will benefit from the GDS in detail, and it discusses the specific nature of this benefit.

#### **Sub-element 3.3. Does it describe how success will be measured and over what time frame? [4 points]**

This question examines the quality of the GDS's description of its implementation time frame and its description of indicators of its success. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no reference to dates or time frames by which its goals should be implemented. There is no discussion of how its success will be indicated.

**2 points:** The GDS refers to the time frame in which the GDS's goals will be implemented, but these time frames are not specific. There is limited and undetailed mention of how success will be measured.

**4 points:** The GDS refers to the time frame in which the GDS's goals will be implemented in detail, with specific dates included at points. There is discussion of how each goal is linked to the overarching timeframe, and the measures of success are highly detailed.

### 3.4.4 Approach and Focus

*What choices and trade-offs have been made?*

4.1 Does it break down the vision into a number of strategic goals/objectives that are tangible, specific and different from each other?

4.2 Does it identify a range of strategic approaches to solve the problem?

4.3 Does it clearly describe the chosen approach, outlining what it will and will not do? See 'the approach' in part II.

4.4 Does it highlight the risks, costs and benefits of the chosen pathway/approach (e.g. possible unintended consequences)?

#### **Sub-element 4.1. Does it break down the vision into a number of strategic goals/objectives that are tangible, specific and different from each other? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS in question deconstructs its vision into measurable, separate goals. It focuses on whether the GDS identifies and isolates the various stages necessary for achieving the GDS's vision. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS's vision is not broken down, and there is no discussion of specific, separate goals.

**2 points:** The GDS states its goals but does not explain how these relate to the end output, and it does not provide any detail as to how they differ from one another.

**4 points:** The GDS states its goals and goes into specific detail as to how each of these contribute to the end output. There is supporting and differentiated detail accompanying each goal, with useful information such as time frames attached.

#### **Sub-element 4.2. Does it identify a range of strategic approaches to solve the problem? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS has taken into account alternative strategic options which could address the problem it focuses on. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no reference to other possible strategic options to address the problem.

**2 points:** The GDS makes reference to alternative strategic options in minimal detail and with no supporting evidence or examples.

**4 points:** The GDS makes detailed reference to alternative strategic options, with a comprehensive discussion of the opportunities and threats of implementing these other various options.

**Sub-element 4.3. Does it clearly describe the chosen approach, outlining what it will and will not do? See 'the approach' in part II. [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS has clearly described its approach. It asks whether it has described the reasons why it chose one approach over others and if there is subsequent reference to what the GDS will not do. The word 'approach' was chosen for this question over the less clear but corresponding phrase 'strategic approach'. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not discuss why some strategic options were chosen over others.

**2 points:** The GDS discusses why its strategic options were chosen, but it does not discuss why other options would not be as effective. It clearly describes its approach.

**5 points:** The GDS discusses comprehensively why it is the most effective approach. There is full consideration of other strategic options and the reasons for their rejection. It clearly describes its approach.

**Sub-element 4.4. Does it highlight the risks, costs and benefits of the chosen pathway/approach (e.g. possible unintended consequences)? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS has taken into account the negative or unintended impacts which may arise in its focus area due to its implementation. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not discuss unintended impacts which may arise due to its implementation.

**2 points:** The GDS includes a brief and shallow discussion of some negative and unintended impacts which may arise due to its implementation.

**4 points:** The GDS includes a full discussion of the negative and unintended impacts which may arise due to the implementation of the GDS, and this is supported by specific details or scenarios.

### 3.4.5 Implementation and Accountability

*Who is responsible for what?*

5.1 Does it identify who is responsible for implementing the GDS?

5.2 Does it identify who will report on its progress?

5.3 Does it explain how progress will be reported (e.g. reports and statistics) and over what time frames?

5.4 Does it discuss whether the GDS will undergo a final review once it is completed, updated or expired?

#### **Sub-element 5.1. Does it identify who is responsible for implementing the GDS? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS clearly identifies who is responsible for the GDS and therefore who is accountable for its results. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not state the name of any person as being responsible for its results.

**2 points:** The GDS states the name of the person/people responsible for its results but is not signed.

**4 points:** The GDS provides the name and the signature of the person/people responsible for the GDS, and it is clear that this person/group is accountable for its results.

#### **Sub-element 5.2. Does it identify who will report on its progress? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS outlines who will report on the progress of the GDS (whether it be an individual, department, organisation, etc.). This is important in order for a reader to understand whom they may contact regarding the progress of the GDS. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** There is no mention in the GDS of who will report on its progress.

**2 points:** The GDS states who will report on its progress, but provides no further details about them or their role in relation to the GDS.

**4 points:** The GDS clearly outlines who will report on the GDS, providing their details and their specific role in relation to the GDS.

#### **Sub-element 5.3. Does it explain how progress will be reported (e.g. reports and statistics) and over what time frames? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS discusses reporting of its progress. This is important as successful implementation of a GDS requires comprehensive progress reporting to ensure results are as intended, and if not, that there is adaptation. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not discuss how its progress will be reported.

**2 points:** The GDS discusses methods or timeframes for reporting its progress but in limited detail.

**4 points:** The GDS refers comprehensively to methods and timeframes for the reporting of its progress. Further, there is discussion of possible responses to a need for adaptation of the GDS.

#### **Sub-element 5.4. Does it discuss whether the GDS will undergo a final review once it is completed, updated or expired? [4 points]**

This question examines whether the GDS has stated when and how it will be reviewed once its implementation is complete. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS does not refer to any arrangements for future review.

**2 points:** The GDS states that it will need to be reviewed, but there is no further detail as to how this will occur.

**4 points:** The GDS outlines in specific detail the arrangements for future review.

### 3.4.6 Alignment and Authority

*How does it align with the machinery of government?*

6.1 Does it discuss predecessors to the strategy and identify any lessons learnt from these?

6.2 Does it align with its department's statement of intent?

6.3 Does it align with its department's four-year plan?

6.4 Does it align with its department's annual report?

#### Sub-element 6.1. Does it discuss predecessors to the strategy and identify any lessons learnt from these? [4 points]

This question examines whether the GDS refers to any predecessors to the strategy. It focuses also on the GDS's discussion of lessons learnt from the success or failure of these strategic predecessors and whether it considers these lessons in the context of its goals. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS makes no reference to its predecessors or the strategic context in which it is situated.

**2 points:** The GDS refers to its predecessors (or to the wider strategic context if it has no predecessors); however, there is no discussion of the lessons learnt from these.

**4 points:** The GDS refers in comprehensive detail to its predecessors (or to the wider strategic context if it has no predecessors). It discusses the lessons learnt from these predecessors (or the wider strategic context) in relation to its goals.

#### Sub-element 6.2. Does it align with its department's statement of intent? [4 points]

This question examines the extent to which the GDS aligns with its department's statement of intent. The scoring for this question is based on Figure 24 of *Working Paper 2014/02*, which illustrates if the GDS has been referred to in its department's statement of intent explicitly, implicitly or not at all. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS is not referenced in its department's statement of intent.

**2 points:** The GDS is implicitly referenced in its department's statement of intent.

**4 points:** The GDS is explicitly referenced in its department's statement of intent.

If a GDS's department lacks a 2014 statement of intent, the GDS receives the average of the scores for questions 6.1–6.4 (excluding the score for 6.2).

### Sub-element 6.3. Does it align with its department's four-year plan? [4 points]

This question examines the extent to which the GDS aligns with its department's four-year plan. The scoring for this question is based on Figure 26 of *Working Paper 2014/02*, which illustrates if the GDS has been referred to in its department's four-year plan explicitly, implicitly or not at all. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS is not referenced in its department's four-year plan.

**2 points:** The GDS is implicitly referenced in its department's four-year plan.

**4 points:** The GDS is explicitly referenced in its department's four-year plan.

If a GDS's department lacks a 2014 four-year plan, the GDS receives the average of the scores for questions 6.1–6.4 (excluding the score for 6.3).

### Sub-element 6.4. Does it align with its department's annual report? [4 points]

This question examines the extent to which the GDS aligns with its department's annual report. The scoring for this question is based on Figure 26 of *Working Paper 2014/02*, which illustrates if the GDS has been referred to in its department's annual report explicitly, implicitly or not at all. Points are awarded in the following way:

**0 points:** The GDS is not referenced in its department's annual report.

**2 points:** The GDS is implicitly referenced in its department's annual report.

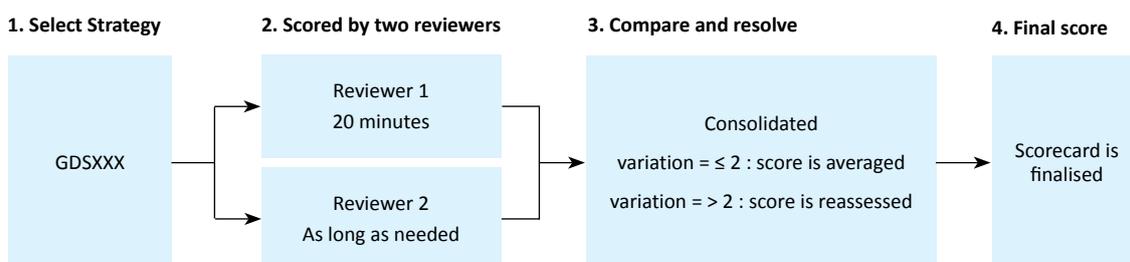
**4 points:** The GDS is explicitly referenced in its department's annual report.

If a GDS's department lacks a 2014 annual report, the GDS receives the average of the scores for questions 6.1–6.3.

## 3.5 Applying the scorecard to each GDS

To analyse each of the 136 GDSs in operation, two reviewers independently analysed each GDSs against the variables set out in the Institute’s scorecard. This included the three qualitative questions featured at the bottom of the scorecard.

**Figure 7: Method reviewers used to finalise scores**



The analysis of each of the 136 GDSs was carried out by two reviewers – see Figure 3 for an illustration of the process that was undertaken. In order to ensure that the judgement of each GDS was balanced and did not reflect the view of just one reviewer, each GDS was read by the first reviewer for 20 minutes and then analysed in greater depth by the second reviewer. Points were then compared and variations settled according to a process which is described in further detail below. Each reviewer was familiar with the elements of the scorecard and the indicators used to judge a GDS’s progress in each sub-element. The two reviewers did not discuss their judgements of any of the GDSs, and their reviews took place completely independently.

The reviewers read the physical copies of each GDS and noted their points for each sub-element on a physical copy of the scorecard, as well as collecting notes which would form the answers to the qualitative part III of the GDS profile page. When awarding points for each sub-element, the reviewers noted down the page numbers which provided evidence supporting their judgement. The note column was also used by reviewers to justify and explain why points were awarded, in case of extreme variation between reviewers’ marks.

After the individual analysis was completed, the point totals and comments of each reviewer were typed up into a single scorecard for each of the 136 GDSs. These scorecards included all raw data and raw answers to the three questions set out in part II of the GDS profiles. The scorecards were then reviewed by a third party, and the variation between the first and second reviewers’ marks were calculated.

Any sub-element score variation of more than two was highlighted and referred back to the second reviewer. The second reviewer then consulted the hand-written physical scorecards of each reviewer and reassessed the appropriate point total to be awarded for the sub-element in question. This was done with an acknowledgement that the second reviewer had undertaken a much more comprehensive analysis

of the GDSs and thus was more familiar with their characteristics and content. However, the second reviewer remained open to the comments and justifications left by the first reviewer and awarded the final point total in a manner which reflected this.

Marks from the first and second reviewers which did not vary by more than two points were averaged, and the result of this calculation was the final point total for that sub-element.

The two reviewers' qualitative questions were processed by a third party, who extracted the common content from each reviewers' answer and combined them to form one response. Where the responses were in conflict, the external reviewer consulted the second reviewer. The second reviewer then consulted the hand-written scorecards and the GDS in question to confirm the appropriate (subjective) response.

However, if the third party read the two answers as significantly different, the two evaluators reassessed their answers together. They then devised a combined answer which best reflected their individual subjective analysis of the GDS. This combined answer was used as the final answer. Analysing the question on strategic approach (in part II of the scorecard) was particularly difficult, and so the response to this question was often reworked multiple times by the third-party reviewer and the second reviewer and added last to the GDS profile.

For each of the 136 GDSs currently in operation, there is a page which outlines the analysis conducted on it, including its rank in comparison to the other 136 GDSs currently in operation.

## 3.6 Limitations

The GDS analysis we conducted acknowledges two general limitations:

1. Importantly, the scorecard is designed to examine the content of the strategy document. Therefore, no judgement is made in regard to the quality of the problem definition (i.e. whether the strategy is appropriate given the current policy landscape), the cleverness of the strategic approach or the proficiency as to how the strategy is envisaged to be implemented.
2. The scorecard does not review whether the strategy has been implemented and what outcomes actually resulted from its implementation. Although an important exercise, this question is beyond the scope of the analysis, as the resources required to carry this out would be beyond those of the Institute.

Other specific limitations of the analysis include:

- The scorecard did not analyse the drafting history of the GDS and whether this included consultation and engagement from the public. It does not look at the extent to which the public collaborated in its vision or outcomes. In retrospect, this would have been a valuable element to analyse in the GDSs.
- A level of judgement was necessary when carrying out the analysis of GDSs against the scorecard. Similarly, setting the elements themselves and the values attributed to each sub-element was a wholly subjective exercise based on the Institute's position of what makes a strategy 'good'. Therefore, those who undertake a similar analysis may reach different results, due to the use of a different metric or differences in the values awarded to each scorecard.
- The reviewers' judgements as to the accessibility of the GDS to public servants and the public (featured in the three qualitative questions at the bottom of each scorecard) may not be agreed upon by all. These judgements reflect the opinion of the Institute's evaluators, and as such they are subjective. The reviewers strived, however, to take a moderate and representative approach in their answers.
- Where departments did not have publicly available strategic instruments (the statement of intent, annual report or four-year plan), the analysis under element 6 (*Alignment and Authority*) was limited, as the reviewers could not assess the integration of the GDS with the missing strategic document. In this case, so as not to unfairly punish the GDS with a low mark, we calculated the average score for the surrounding sub-elements of element 6 and gave this score to the missing sub-element. More detail on this calculation can be found in section 3.4.6.
- Further, analysis and ranking of departments and sectors were restricted to departments that had published documents which met the definition of GDSs and were published between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014 (for more detail on this definition, see Terminology in section 3.2). This does not include GDSs which are not publicly available. Therefore, ranking results for departments and sectors do not reflect the possible scores which may have been obtained by departments not included in our analysis. The seven departments which fell into this category are as follows: Crown Law Office; Education Review Office; Government Communications Security Bureau; Inland Revenue Department; Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry of Māori Development; Ministry of Women's Affairs; and the Serious Fraud Office.

As our intention is to provide a comprehensive analysis of GDSs published over the last 20 years, we welcome feedback on this working paper and the overall project.

## 4.0 Outputs and Next Steps

**Figure 8: Outputs of the GDS in-depth analysis**

	Tables by A-Z	Tables by rank	Tables by Date Published
<b>By Strategy</b>	Table 1: GDS Index NZ: List of GDSs by strategy (a-z)	Table 4: GDS Index NZ: 136 GDSs by rank	Table 7: GDS Index NZ: 136 GDSs by date published
<b>By Department</b>	Table 2: GDS Index NZ: List of GDSs by department (a-z)	Table 5: GDS Index NZ: 29 Departments by rank	
<b>By Sector</b>	Table 3: GDS Index NZ: List of GDSs by sector (a-z)	Table 6: GDS Index NZ: 10 Sectors by rank	

By analysing all 136 operational GDSs, the Institute endeavours to produce material which is of practical use to those drafting and implementing GDSs across all agencies. The observations found in the Institute’s most recent *StrategyNZ* series of working papers, and this *Index* series, will be brought together in a summary report in mid-2015. Further, a website has been created which presents all of the *Index* data and GDS profiles, at [www.gdsindexnz.org](http://www.gdsindexnz.org). The report will digest the results seen in the previous working papers and aims to provide recommendations which are cost-effective and of real value. It will provide insight into how we can ensure GDSs are not merely blunt tools but critical instruments which bring about real change.

# 7

## GDS Index NZ Tables

# Appendix 1: How to read the seven GDSs Index NZ Tables

## Tables

Table 1: List of GDSs by title (a–z)

Table 2: List of GDSs by department (a–z)

Table 3: List of GDSs by sector (a–z)

Table 4: 136 GDSs by rank

Table 5: 29 departments by rank

Table 6: 10 sectors by rank

Table 7: 136 GDSs by date published

For the purposes of this index, the list of the 136 government department strategies (GDSs) is a list of all GDSs in operation as at 30 June 2014.

The methodology of how this list was collected is contained in *Working Paper 2014/02: Analysis of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014—An overview*.

For more information about each element and sub-element of the GDS scorecard, please refer to *Working Paper 2015/04: Methodology for the Government Department Strategies Index New Zealand*. A glossary of key terms is provided at the back of the *Methodology*.

The first three tables act as a table of contents for readers who may wish to look at the data by strategy, by department or by sector. Each row refers to one of the 136 strategies. Every table lists all 136 strategies.

Throughout the analysis our interest was not in the score per se but in how the strategy compares with (i) the other 136 strategies, (ii) the strategies within its department and (iii) the strategies within its sector. Hence, we have re-sorted this data to take into account these three different perspectives (see Tables 4 to 6).

The last column of each table shows the rank of each GDS out of 136 and also the order in which the profiles appear in *Working Paper 2015/06: Profiles of Government Department Strategies in Operation as at 30 June 2014*.

# 136

GDS Index NZ  
Profiles

# Appendix 2: How to read a GDS profile

I

IV

## I Rank

**[GDS title]**

---

**This Government Department Strategy [GDS001]** **86**  
out of 136

<b>Department</b> [Department title]	<b>3</b> out of [6] in this department
<b>Sector</b> [Sector title]	<b>2</b> out of [12] in this sector

## II About the strategy

Date published	[yyyy mm]
Signed by a minister	[Yes/no]
Duration	[x months]
Number of pages	[xx]

**The approach: How does the department plan to use the broader environment in which it exists (element 1) to leverage its strengths and embrace its weaknesses (element 2) so that it can provide benefits in accordance with its vision (element 3)?**

[Natis eum num quatur, in pe vendi dolorerum quiassendi offic te sum que di blaccat atecaboratio moloreh endae. Ibusapid quae nobitin ciassitium dendae nim faceatur. Tor nuscium verem simpor molorporest offic tem simaios parum hicti dolup serfere te sum que di blaccat atecaboratio moloreh endae stiantitia ciassitium dendae nim faceatur sunt doluptatis nis molor solo parum minciumqui ciassitium dendae nim faceatur.]

Read more about the GDS's vision on page [xx]  
Is the strategy illustrated? [no/yes, see page xx]

## III Assessing stakeholder usefulness

**If a public servant new to the policy area had an hour to read this GDS, would they be able to understand the approach (element 4) and the implementation and review processes (element 5)?**

[Ost, officur millaccab illent, vendam, soluptaecto et rerioritur ab imi, sim discian iendam rae quuntota venisquiatur aut volore voluptatiam doloreperit volupta si occum sequis nis quae odiorer itatusdant eos si idunt as explaccum descia ea por rempor rectem laboratia nuscium verem simpor molorporest offic tem simaios parum hicti doluptat acere occattem is et esto volorectores ciassitium dendae nim faceatur.]

**If an uninformed member of the public had 30 minutes to read this GDS, would they be able to understand the purpose (element 3), the approach (element 4), the implementation and review processes (element 5) and how this approach fits with the broader goals of government (element 6)?**

[Tem natist, sequiae prepelit dolorit ellorhen ihitestrum aut eceterro vidunt magnim quo mos cumquatene velesen imusdae pressinciati ditiust omnihic ienima post, alicia volorpo rehent experro imod quidem sinum et et alibus debis magnimolum qui dolore adis sit as con paribus. Velesen imusdae pressinciati ditiust omnihic ienima post, alicia volorpo rehent des etur as vellere sequamusa pore pedi odiorio et liquiam, tinimus.]

## IV The radar chart

[GDS001]

— This GDS's score   
 - - - - Average sector score   
 — Average GDS score

## V The scorecard

Elements 1–6	Score	Rank/136
<b>1 Opportunities and Threats</b> What is the external environment?	<b>6.5</b>	<b>22</b>
1.1 Does it identify opportunities going forward?	2.5/4	14
1.2 Does it identify threats going forward?	0/4	120
1.3 Does it contain a clear statement describing the problem that this strategy is trying to solve?	4/8	20
<b>2 Capabilities and Resources</b> What are the internal strengths and weaknesses?	<b>5.5</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 Does it identify current and future capabilities (e.g. skills, partnerships/relationships)?	3/4	20
2.2 Does it identify what capabilities it does not have and needs to acquire or work around?	2.5/4	30
2.3 Does it identify current and future resources (e.g. financial)?	0/4	134
2.4 Does it identify what resources it does not have and needs to acquire or work around?	0/4	128
<b>3 Vision and Benefits</b> What is the purpose?	<b>10.5</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Does it provide a clear vision as to what success would look like (a desired future condition)?	7/8	100
3.2 Does it identify who the beneficiaries are and how they will benefit?	3/4	10
3.3 Does it describe how success will be measured and over what time frame?	0.5/4	58
<b>4 Approach and Focus</b> What choices and trade-offs have been made?	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Does it break down the vision into a number of strategic goals/objectives that are tangible, specific and different from each other?	4/4	3
4.2 Does it identify a range of strategic approaches to solve the problem?	3/4	15
4.3 Does it clearly describe the chosen approach, outlining what it will and will not do? See 'the approach' in part II.	3/4	1
4.4 Does it highlight the risks, costs and benefits of the chosen pathway/approach (e.g. possible unintended consequences)?	0/4	128
<b>5 Implementation and Accountability</b> Who is responsible for what?	<b>4</b>	<b>134</b>
5.1 Does it identify who is responsible for implementing the GDS?	3/4	19
5.2 Does it identify who will report on its progress?	1/4	8
5.3 Does it explain how progress will be reported (e.g. reports and statistics) and over what time frames?	0/4	122
5.4 Does it discuss whether the GDS will undergo a final review once it is completed, updated or expired?	0/4	125
<b>6 Alignment and Authority</b> How does it align with the machinery of government?	<b>8.5</b>	<b>70</b>
6.1 Does it discuss predecessors to the strategy and identify any lessons learnt from these?	0.5/4	27
6.2 Does it align with its department's SOI?	2/4	102
6.3 Does it align with its department's 4YP?	3/4	12
6.4 Does it align with its department's annual report?	3/4	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>45/96</b>	<b>86</b>

THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES NEW ZEALAND INDEX 2015: PROFILES  
MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE

II

III

V

The GDS profile provides a detailed picture of each GDS and how it performs against the six elements of the scorecard.

Each profile is ranked in order of highest to lowest, with the strategy awarded the highest score being ranked number one. The 136 strategies are in the same order as the list in Table 4.

For the purposes of this index, the list of the 136 government department strategies (GDSs) is a list of all GDSs in operation as at 30 June 2014.

The methodology of how this list was collected is contained in *Working Paper 2014/02: Analysis of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014—An overview*.

For more information about each element and sub-element of the GDS scorecard, please refer to *Working Paper 2015/04: Methodology for the Government Department Strategies Index New Zealand*. A glossary of key terms is provided at the back of the *Methodology*.

There are five parts to each GDS profile:

## I Rank

Part I shows where each GDS's scorecard (see part V) sits in comparison with (i) the list of 136 GDSs, (ii) all GDSs within its department and (iii) all GDSs in its sector group.

The term 'government departments' refers to the 29 'departments of the public service' currently listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988.<sup>1</sup>

The term 'sector' refers to the 10 groupings of departments based on the summary tables of the appropriation estimates in the Treasury's Budget 2014.<sup>2</sup>

## II About this strategy

Part II outlines the basic features of the GDS. This information was obtained through the analysis of the GDS in *Working Paper 2014/01: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014* and includes essential information such as the date published, whether it was signed by a minister, the duration of the GDS and number of pages.

Where the profile asks if the GDS was signed by a minister, 'no' indicates that it was not, while 'not signed' indicates that nobody signed it.

'Not known' (NK) means that the duration of the strategy is not contained in the strategy document and could not be ascertained by researching the publication or contacting the department responsible. When the planned duration was not stated, the publication date was taken as the starting date. Durations were recorded in whole years (i.e. multiples of 12 months). Therefore, if a strategy ran from 2010–2014 and was published in June, it was assumed that its end date was in June, and it was recorded as having a duration of 48 months.

For more details on how the information in this part of the profile was obtained, see *Working Paper 2014/01: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014*.<sup>3</sup>

Part II also features a description of the strategy's approach. It aims to briefly outline 'how' the strategy will deliver benefits. This is subjective and is based on a close reading of the GDS. This part of the profile also points to the page on which the vision of the GDS can be found within the specific strategy document. If the GDS features an illustration or diagram of its strategy or approach, the page number where this is located is noted here.

1 State Sector Act 1988. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1988/0020/latest/DLM129110.html>

2 The Treasury, 2014. *Summary Tables for the Estimates of Appropriations 2014/15*. Retrieved from: <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2014/summarytables/estimates/b14-sumtab-estimates.pdf>

3 McGuinness Institute, 2014. *Working Paper 2014/01: List of Government Department Strategies Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2014*. Retrieved from: [http://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/Site/Publications/Working\\_Papers.aspx](http://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/Site/Publications/Working_Papers.aspx)

### III Assessing stakeholder usefulness

Part III outlines the utility of the GDS for both a public servant and a member of the public. The information in this part is a result of a subjective qualitative analysis of each GDS. The method is explained in the methodology in Section 3 of *Working Paper 2015/04: Methodology for the Government Department Strategies Index New Zealand*.

### IV The radar chart

The radar chart in part IV illustrates the score of a GDS compared with the average score of (i) GDSs in its sector and (ii) all 136 GDSs. A 'department's average score' was not illustrated in the radar chart as the chart became too complex, and we decided the sector data may be more useful.

— This GDS's score

The score of the GDS against each of the six elements is represented by a blue line.

----- Average sector score

The average score of all GDSs in the respective GDS's sector is represented by a broken black line.

— Average GDS score

The average score of all 136 GDSs is represented by a solid black line.

### V The scorecard

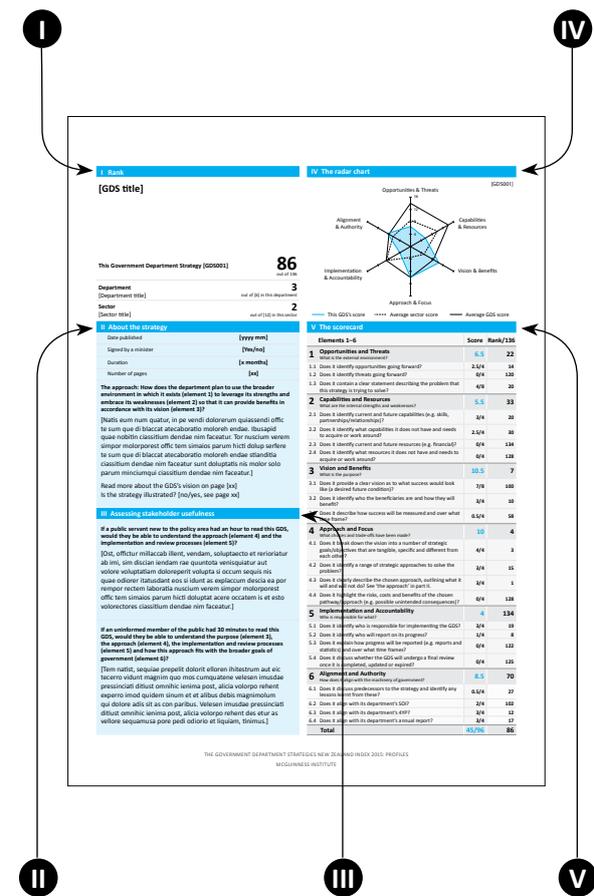
Part V lays out the GDS's scores against each of the six elements and 22 sub-elements of the scorecard.

Each element is identified by a bold single-digit notation (e.g. 1. *Opportunities and Threats*), and the sub-elements nested beneath this are identified by a two-digit notation (e.g. 1.1. *Does it identify opportunities going forward?*).

The GDS's score and rank for each of the six elements and 22 sub-elements are located on the two right-hand columns.

The GDS's score for each element is shown in the near-right column in bolded blue. Each element is scored out of 16 and each sub-element is scored out of either 4 or 8.

The GDS's rank for each element and sub-element is shown in the far-right column; the rank for each element is in bolded black. GDSs are ranked out of 136 for each element and sub-element.



# 12

## GDS Index NZ Glossary

### **Element**

An element is a characteristic that is considered of primary importance in the publication of a GDS. In the *Index*, there are six high-level elements that make up the scorecard.

### **Good strategy**

Determining what makes a good strategy is a matter of judgement. In the *Index*, six high-level characteristics are considered essential for good strategies - these are called elements. Under each element there are three or four sub-elements that describe components of the element in more detail.

### **Government department**

The term ‘government department’ refers to the 29 ‘departments of the public service’ currently listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988.

### **Government department strategy**

To be a ‘government department strategy’ the following criteria must be met. The document must:

1. be a publicly available statement or report;
2. be generated by government departments with a national rather than a local focus;
3. contain long-term thinking, in such a way that the strategy links to a long-term vision or aim, and ideally provide clarity over the factors that may impinge on the attainment of that vision or aim; and
4. guide the department’s thinking and operations over the long term (i.e. contain a work programme to achieve change over two years or more).

### **Points**

Points are allocated to each sub-element. In the *Index* there are 22 sub-elements. Twenty of these were given four points each for a reviewer to score. The remaining two (sub-elements 1.3 and 3.3) were each allotted eight points. This additional weighting was allocated to recognise the importance of these sub-elements.

### **Rank**

The rank indicates where a GDS, department, or sector is located in relation to its peers. In the *Index* the rank depicts where the specific GDS, department or sector sits when its scorecard totals are compared to the scores of all other GDSs, departments or sectors.

### **Reviewer**

A person who read the GDS and then scored the GDS against the scorecard to prepare the profile.

### **Score**

The number of points a GDS has accumulated as a result of the scoring process. In the *Index* the highest possible total was 96 points.

### **Scorecard**

The scorecard is the lens through which each GDS has been assessed. The scorecard is made up of six elements and 22 sub-elements.

### **Sector**

The term ‘sector’ refers to the 10 groupings of departments based on the summary tables of the appropriation estimates in the Treasury’s Budget 2014.

### **Sub-element**

In the *Index* there are 22 sub-elements, which reflect the different components of the six high-level elements.

### **GDS profile**

A GDS profile refers to a one-page summary of essential information about a specific GDS. It records all the information the reviewers collected on the GDS, including the strategic approach, stakeholder usefulness, the scorecard results, the radar chart and how it ranks with other GDSs.

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