

21 January 2026

Crown Law Office
Wellington

To whom it may concern,

OIA 2026/01: 2025 Government Department Strategies Index (2025 GDS Index)

The McGuinness Institute is beginning initial preparations for its *2025 GDS Index*. So we can complete this work, we would appreciate you completing the attached spreadsheet (see key tasks listed in Stage 1 and 2 below).

Background

The GDS Index includes a handbook and a selection of working papers (including a methodology and an analysis of climate change mentioned in GDSs). Learn more about the GDS Index on our website [here](#).

The Institute is producing an annual GDS Index until such an Index or online registry is produced by the Public Service Commission or other governing body (see excerpt in Appendix 1).

We simplified our process last year to reduce the workload for departments and to enable the Institute to publish the GDS Index early in the new year (ideally in April). This year's process is the same as last year's.

Stage 1: Collection

Please could you review the two worksheets in the attached spreadsheet as follows:

Sheet 1: Review of GDSs in the 2024 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. 'transferred from MOH to Health NZ in March 2024').

Sheet 2: Potential new GDSs

Has the department published a new strategy document in the 2025 calendar year that may meet the definition of a GDS? (See ‘GDS definition’ in Appendix 1.) If so, please add it to this sheet, with each document on a separate row. In the rare case you know of another strategy that should have been included in the *2024 GDS Index* but was not, please add it to this sheet. We are happy to retrospectively add GDSs, even ones that have been archived to ensure the GDS Index is a comprehensive and accurate record.

1. Add the strategy’s title to column A.
2. Add a link to the PDF of the strategy to column B.
3. 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’.
4. 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.

Stage 2: Verification

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

A record of all correspondence with all 34 departments can be found [here](#). For convenience, we regularly update a PDF of all correspondence by department in order of date, to enable a department to follow how a shared strategy is being treated by another department.

We hope to publish the *2025 GDS Index* by April 2026.

Thank you for your assistance.



Wendy McGuinness
Chief Executive

Appendix 1: Key information

A: Key recommendations

The Institute continues to recommend that:

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

B: 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 (see definition below*).

*A corporate document is a regular public-sector entity report such as a report on strategic intentions or an annual report, as required under ss 38 and 43 of the Public Finance Act 1989 respectively. Corporate documents also include performance improvement framework reviews (PIFs) and briefings to the incoming Minister (BIMs).