

New Zealand: Data governance profile

1. Vision and policy intent

[Stats NZ](#) is New Zealand's lead agency for government-held data. Its goal is to provide quality, trustworthy data and statistics with which New Zealanders can make evidence-based decisions. At the heart of this work is transparency, trust, and integrity around the use of data the government holds.

The nation's highly decentralized government model grants agencies autonomy separate from the Executive Branch.

Stats NZ sees success as a data system that is both inclusive and integrated. A system where anyone who wants to base their decisions on credible information can do so with ease. A system that generates the deepest insights and the best services, at the least effort to the people and organisations behind the data.

2. Data Management: policies, rules & institutions

New Zealand's most important official statistics, classified as 'Tier 1,' are produced by Stats NZ and 15 other government bodies. They adhere to a framework of [principles and protocols](#) based on the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The framework was written in 2007 and is currently under review.

In 2017, the [Government Chief Data Steward](#) (GCDS) role was established, held by Stats NZ's Chief Executive, to drive data's value realization across government. The GCDS leads efforts, as highlighted by the 2021 [Government Data Strategy and Roadmap](#). This includes:

- A Data Investment Plan;
- An Open Data Charter Plan to ensure data is open, inclusive, accessible, and findable
- A Data System Maturity Assessment; and
- An updated approach to mandating and managing standards.

A new [Data and Statistics Act 2022](#) strengthened the role of the GCDS to make the best use of data collected and held by gov't while ensuring private and confidential information is held securely and used appropriately.

3. Data custodians and data stewardship

Data stewardship: is defined In a 2018 [policy document](#), as follows:

- a) to create a safe, high-trust data environment supported by public confidence;
- b) to improve availability and accessibility of gov't data;
- c) to establish sustainable data capability across gov't; and
- d) to establish partnerships to innovate with data and solve complex problems.

Two key governance bodies support the role of the GCDS:

- The [Information Group](#), the key advisory body for the GCDS;
- The [Digital Government Leadership Group](#) which supports the GCDS and the [Government Chief Digital Officer](#) to develop and improve digital and data systems and ensure they are aligned with the [Government Data Strategy and Roadmap](#) and the [Strategy for a Digital Public Service](#).

The GCDS has developed a [data stewardship framework and toolkit](#) to help gov'ts to better manage and safely access data and to ensure that data is managed as a valuable asset and used ethically. Agencies will often appoint a data custodian.

4. Data sharing, accessibility and integration

Sharing across government occurs through Information Sharing Agreements ([Privacy Act 2020](#)) and other specific arrangements. The [Government Chief Privacy Officer](#) is establishing an information sharing centre of excellence. Sharing is regulated by the [Privacy Commission](#).

Stats NZ provides two large collections of integrated administrative and survey data:

- The [Integrated Data Infrastructure](#) (IDI) holds integrated microdata about people and households. Researchers use the IDI to conduct cross-sectoral research on complex social and economic issues; and
- The [Longitudinal Business Database](#) (LBD) holds de-identified microdata about businesses. Data comes from a range of Stats NZ surveys and government agencies. Researchers use the LBD to evaluate policies and analyse business performance.

5. Data sharing risks & mitigation

Stats NZ uses a '[five safes framework](#)' and Ngā Tikanaga Paihere to protect privacy and guide ethical use of data. Before data is made available to approved researchers, all personal identifiers are removed or encrypted to ensure the data records are not associated with named individuals.

The Ngā Tikanaga Paihere framework uses Māori concepts to guide the ethical and culturally appropriate use of data.

Access is only provided if all the 'five safes' conditions are met: safe people, safe projects, safe settings, safe data, and safe output.

The GCDS supports a Data Ethics Advisory Group available to all government agencies

