MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Strategy & Assurance
Terms of Reference:

Objective

The objective of this review is to:

Assess and strengthen MBIE's major investment project systems and processes, addressing the underlying causes identified in the BCU review and ensuring they are fit for purpose, aligned to best practice, Treasury and CID expectations, and independently assured.

Background

The BCU review identified a number of failings with the project, including:

- Poor governance discipline
- Insufficiently robust business case and requirements definition
- Poor visibility and escalation of risks
- Weaknesses in financial transparency and whole-of-life cost understanding
- Misalignment between assurance findings, governance decision-making, and reporting to Ministers

In response, MBIE has committed to:

- Strengthen major investment project systems and processes
- Seek independent assurance that the system is fit for purpose

This review forms the Strategy & Assurance response to deliver those commitments.

Scope

To strengthen MBIE's major investment project systems and processes to ensure they are robust, consistently applied, and aligned with best practice across the full project lifecycle and strengthen compliance and alignment with cabinet requirements for the IMS system including assurance and reporting.

This will include a targeted assessment of MBIE's investment planning and governance arrangements, including whether governance structures, decision rights, and committee roles (e.g. SLT, FIC, DGB) are clear, appropriately empowered, and supported by the right capability. The review will assess the role of the committee and escalation pathways, use of assurance, and ability to intervene where required.

It will also examine the role of the PMO in supporting governance, including information and advice, oversight of project performance, and its position within the system.

The review will further assess whether escalation triggers, monitoring of delivery against approved baselines, and the information provided to governance committees are sufficient to enable timely, well-informed decision-making.

These arrangements will be assessed against recognised best practice to identify gaps and required enhancements.

Following this work, MBIE will seek independent assurance of the strengthened system by working with GDDA and an external assurance provider to confirm that the revised systems, processes, and governance arrangements are fit for purpose, robust, and aligned with best practice.

The review will focus on MBIE's investment portfolio governance and project management.

Approach

Working concurrently with the Internal Assurance-led stocktake of all live technology projects, we will undertake an enterprise-level review of MBIE's governance, project governance and investment systems and processes. The review will focus on the assurance required to govern monitor and escalate finding across the project management lifecycle.

The review will focus on identifying and addressing, governance settings, escalation triggers, assurance integration, financial transparency, and reporting practices.

The review will be subject to subsequent external quality assurance to provide independent confidence in the approach, findings, and conclusions to confirm that strengthened systems and processes are fit for purpose, robust, and aligned with recognised best practice.

Deliverables

The review will deliver and make recommendations on:

- Strengthened governance, escalation, speaking up channel awareness, assurance, and reporting settings including appropriate minute taking to strengthen how projects are governed, monitored, and escalated across the lifecycle
- Clarified expectations for assurance and oversight, including how assurance should support governance decision-making and escalation of issues
- Improved financial transparency, ensuring appropriate financial system controls are in place, best practice reporting approaches, providing more consistent visibility of project performance and timely reporting of updates, issues and changes to senior leadership and Ministers
- Practical, actionable improvements implemented or agreed, strengthening consistency and application of governance, assurance, and escalation, including speaking up across MBIE
- Independent assurance initiated, to confirm that strengthened systems and processes are fit for purpose, robust, and aligned with recognised best practice

Findings and actions will be reported to the CE and appropriate Ministers.

Timing

The review will commence on 19 June 2026 and completed by 15 July 2026. Independent assurance of the proposed strengthened governance and project management framework will be completed by 15 August 2026.

Sponsor

The Sponsor for this review is Mel Porter, Deputy Secretary, Strategy & Assurance.