NZRIS Stewardship and Oversight Group (NSOG)

Terms of Reference

Revised on 19 November 2019

# Definition of terms

In this Terms of Reference, the following terms have the following meanings:

|  |  |
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| Access protocols | Procedures for Authorised users to submit, view data and generate information from that data |
| Authorised user | A user who has authorised access into a part of NZRIS, either an approved representative of a data provider organisation, or an administrator of the NZRIS system |
| Data transfer model | A flexible and generic approach to the transfer of data from data holders to NZRIS hub. The model helps organisations plan for the future by setting out the high level entities that will be involved in data transfer as well as key concepts (unit records and unique identifiers) behind the data transfer approach. The data transfer model is the organising structure within which data standards sit. |
| NZRIS hub | The NZRIS hub is the technology system that enables provision and use of data. This includes the transfer mechanisms to the data repository, the data repository holding the data, and the interfaces into that data (both public and authorised). |
| NZRIS / NZRIS Programme | The New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS) including the governance, management, communication and operations of the system as a whole. |
| NZRIS Data Specification | The document that sets out the specifications for the data to be provided to NZRIS along with the guidance to data providers to assist with responding to the individual data requirements. |
| Data stewardship | The careful and responsible collection, management, and use of data in NZRIS. |
| Stewardship and oversight | The coordination and implementation activities carried out by NSOG that:   * Ensure work on NZRIS and the data that it holds is performed according to the established policies and procedures and is appropriate, ethical and beneficial. * Allows for a level of independent advice and direct liaison between data providers and MBIE (as the host organisation). |

# Background

The New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS) is a Government initiative driven out of the [Research, Science and Innovation Domain Plan](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/d13d525322/research-science-and-innovation-domain-plan.pdf) released in 2016.[[1]](#footnote-2)

NZRIS is an online hub where people can find information about research, science and innovation (RS&I) in New Zealand. While NZRIS will not hold the actual results of research, it will contain information about research funding in its initial stages and then start to include information on the research activity associated with that funding.

NZRIS addresses the absence of a central and easily accessible source to find out what is happening in the RS&I sector. Over time as the system matures, NZRIS is expected to provide wider benefits for the sector. These include reducing reporting burdens and minimising duplication of activities among data providers through the inter-operability and integration of NZRIS with other similar systems.

NZRIS requires strong engagement between the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the rest of the research, science and innovation (RS&I) sector. NZRIS has been and continues to be co-created with the research, science and innovation sector, and sector-led governance is a key part of this.[[2]](#footnote-3)

MBIE is responsible for the development of NZRIS in consultation with the sector, and ensuring alignment with Government’s information and data management principles and the Government’s commitment to the Open Data Charter.[[3]](#footnote-4)

# Purpose of the group

The NZRIS Stewardship and Oversight Group (NSOG) is a cross-sector, skills-based stewardship and oversight group for NZRIS. In the *National Research Information System: Overview,* first released in October 2017, MBIE signalled that as NZRIS becomes operational:

*“…an NRIS stewardship and oversight structure will be established. Oversight will be a shared endeavour between MBIE and the rest of the research, science and innovation sector, with a strong emphasis on strengthening partnerships with the Māori research community.” [[4]](#footnote-5)*

In conjunction with the wider Government data management principles, NSOG has a role in ensuring that the system is underpinned by the principles drawn from the 2016 Research, Science and Innovation Domain Plan. These principles are:

1. Provide a **system-wide view** of research, science and innovation information

2. Ensure **open** data which is easily **accessible** and widely used

3. **Protect** personal and commercially sensitive data

4. Enable the **reuse** of data

5. Reduce **collection and reporting burden**

6. Ensure data is **trusted**, **authoritative** and **well-managed**

7. Enable **easy and automatic** movement of data between systems.

NSOG will operate a shared stewardship and oversight model for NZRIS that will support the appropriate and beneficial use of the data. This model will:

* be resilient and adaptable to reflect the iterative nature of NZRIS
* support the opportunity for standard ways of working that reflect best practice and can be applied to all data included within NZRIS
* allow NSOG to act as a sounding board for ongoing development work on NZRIS
* ensure NSOG is accountable to those sharing data and the wider community of users through regular reporting
* will ensure NSOG support NZRIS to reflect the following goals in data governance, which are:
  + Stewardship
  + Integrity
  + Transparency
  + Auditability
  + Accountability
  + Efficiency and cost effectiveness
  + Robust checks and balances
  + Social and cultural licence
  + Indigenous data sovereignty
  + Ethical integrity

# Functions

The group will provide stewardship and oversight of the following areas of NZRIS operations:

* Revisions to the NZRIS Data Specifications
* Changes to the data transfer model and data transfer protocols
* Access protocols and user management (including creation of Authorised Users)
* Data security and privacy standards
* Standard processes (e.g. business rules and standard rules of operation)

NSOG will monitor and review the operation of NZRIS in relation to these functions as needed.

In the event of any dispute or complaint concerning these matters, NSOG will consult with MBIE as NZRIS sponsor and host to address the dispute. NSOG may also, where parties agree, provide advice and mediate where a dispute is between MBIE and another NZRIS participant.

NSOG will seek to build consensus in relation to matters within its ambit. NSOG will have autonomy to make decisions over matters concerning shared stewardship and oversight of data. It will take on these functions incrementally so as to ensure the group maintains the trust and confidence of NZRIS participants.

Since MBIE is the principal funder of NZRIS and the sole funder of the NZRIS hub, NSOG proposals and changes with financial implications will require approval from MBIE. As MBIE hosts NZRIS, proposals will need to comply with MBIE’s own data governance and security protocols, and the relevant “whole of government” protocols[[5]](#footnote-6). Proposals will also need to comply with relevant overarching legislation such as the Privacy Act 1993, the Official Information Act 1982 and the Crown Entities Act 2004.

# Principles

The group will apply the following principles in its work:

**Working together and shared value:** Members of NSOG will engage with each other and MBIE in a spirit of partnership and co-operation in undertaking the group’s function, and will work together to deliver value to all parties involved with NZRIS.

**Guardianship:** An ethic of care and stewardship is applied to both data within NZRIS and the creation of a data commons for research information.

**Transparency and openness:** NSOG and its members will perform their functions transparently and share information to support collaboration, cooperation and collective decision-making.

**Active Engagement:** All members of the group are active members, undertaking tasks and functions as required to fulfil the terms of reference and engaging stakeholders through appropriate means with regard to issues of relevance.

# Composition

Membership of the group will reflect the different roles within the system, and the skills needed for effective stewardship and oversight.

The group will have an Independent Chairperson and comprise 9-11 people who can bring the following perspectives to the group functions:

* Research organisations
* Research funders
* NZRIS users
* Researchers, including Māori
* Data and information management
* IT system management
* Tikanga Māori perspectives on data and information

The group as a whole will need to achieve a representative balance between these perspectives. The aim is for the group to enjoy the trust and confidence of the sector rather than be a directly representative group.

The group as a whole will need expertise in a range of areas including:

* Research and New Zealand research sector
* Data governance in an open data environment
* Sharing data and information efficiently and cost-effectively between organisations with disparate systems
* Management of security and access in an open data environment
* Data and information management implications of legislation
* Kaupapa Māori research and data governance
* Research metadata and analysis

Members can, and most likely will, represent more than one area of expertise from this list. Members will participate in their own right rather than as delegates of particular organisations.

The group may from time to time co-opt members to assist the group in an advisory capacity. These members will not contribute to a quorum at meetings and will not have decision-making rights within the group.

## Appointment

In the instance of a vacancy, the following process will be observed:

1. As Secretariat of NSOG, MBIE will release a call for nominations. As in case for initial appointment, nominations can be made by any individual with authority to endorse the skills and experience of the nominee.
2. MBIE, with input from the current NSOG members, will seek feedback on nominees, including from organisations sharing data to NZRIS. MBIE and the NSOG Chairperson will consider that feedback and make a final decision in filling the NSOG vacancy.

These processes will apply, with appropriate modifications, to appointments made once NSOG is established.

The initial appointment process and the details of NSOG membership can be found in Appendix 1.

### Remuneration for members

NSOG members who are neither public employees nor employed elsewhere will be remunerated for their services rendered. Remuneration will be based on the Cabinet Fees Framework CO (12) 6, dated 19 December 2012.

### Term of office

Members will initially be appointed for terms of between one (1) and three (3) years to enable a staggered turnover of membership. The Chair will be appointed for an initial period of three (3) years.

Once established, members of the NSOG will be appointed for a period of three (3) years, with the possibility of a reappointment for a further three-year term. Once a member has served two (2) consecutive terms, they will not be eligible for re-appointment within the following three (3) years.

# Operations

## Meetings

NSOG will meet at least once every quarter. These meetings can be face to face or via video conferencing.

The business of NSOG meetings will be public unless grounds exist to deal with a particular agenda item as “in-confidence”.

### Quorum

A quorum for meetings will be half plus one of appointed members.

### Presiding officer

The Chairperson of the group will preside over the meetings. In the event the Chairperson cannot attend a meeting, the Chairperson will nominate another member to act as presiding officer of the meeting. If the Chairperson was unable to nominate a member to act as the presiding for the meeting, the meeting may appoint a presiding officer from amongst those attending appointed members.

### Secretariat

MBIE will provide secretariat support for NSOG. Secretariat tasks include coordinating the conduct of NSOG meetings, managing and maintaining NSOG records (such as reports and minutes of meeting) and performing other relevant tasks assigned by NSOG.

NSOG will work with MBIE to coordinate engagement around NSOG’s functions and other NZRIS engagement activities.

### Decisions

NSOG will use its best endeavours to make decisions by consensus of those attending a meeting. In the event consensus cannot be reached a decision may be made by a 75% majority of those attending the meeting and participating in the decision.

### Minutes

The Secretariat will prepare the minutes of meeting. NSOG will circulate and publish its minutes once they are confirmed by the participating members.

### Interests register

NSOG members will identify and record any interests which could be perceived as affecting the functioning of the group.

## Reporting

NSOG will report on its activities to data providers and other stakeholders following each meeting. [[6]](#footnote-7)

## Engagement

NSOG will maintain regular and effective communication with nominated contacts in organisations contributing to NZRIS. This is to ensure that changes are well communicated, organisations are able to relay any feedback effectively, and minimise differences of interpretations.[[7]](#footnote-8)

NSOG will also engage regularly with ‘whole of government’ processes relating to data and information management to ensure its operations reflect these ‘whole of government’ approaches. As part of this, NSOG will need to align with guidance and direction issued or endorsed by the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS).

Key entities and individuals with which NSOG will engage include the following:

* nominated contacts from each organisation sharing data with NZRIS
* MBIE as sponsor and host of NZRIS
* Organisations providing funding and other resources to support research
* Research organisations
* Māori research organisations
* Te Mana Raraunga
* Interest groups
* NZRIS user groups
* Māori community and Iwi

Further details on the NSOGs engagement partners, engagement areas and standard processes for engagement in relation to its functions can be found in Appendix 2.

# Approval and review of the Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference cover the first two phases of NZRIS. During these phases, research funders will be on-boarded as data providers to NZRIS. They do not cover the third phase which is where research organisations would have the opportunity to be on-boarded as data providers to NZRIS.

NSOG will review and update these Terms of Reference towards the end of Phase 2 and at least every three years subsequently. It will seek feedback from the NZRIS data community and consider the need for amendments.

The decision to make amendments to the Terms of Reference will normally require consultation with all organisations sharing data before they take effect. Where consensus cannot be reached through such consultation, a decision may be made by a 75% majority of those attending a NSOG meeting and participating in the decision. If neither a consensus nor majority is reached, then the Chairperson and MBIE may make a determination as to what amendments will be made to the Terms of Reference.

## Appendix 1: Initial appointment of NSOG members

In the initial establishment of NSOG, the appointment of members occurred as follows:

1. As the principal funder of the NZRIS, MBIE called for nominations on membership to NSOG. Nominations could be made by any individual with authority to endorse the skills and experience of the nominee.
2. MBIE consulted on an Independent Chairperson from the appropriate representative from organisations providing data to NZRIS in Phases 1 and 2 (which run until 31 May 2020 and will on-board RSI funders).
3. Once the Chairperson was appointed, they and MBIE agreed on a proposed list of members for NSOG and sought feedback from organisations sharing data in Phases 1 and 2. MBIE and the Chairperson considered that feedback and made a final decision concerning the membership of NSOG.

The appointment of the initial membership of NSOG was announced in June 2019.

The members of NSOG as at 1 August 2019 are:

* Professor Richard Blaikie (NSOG Chair), University of Otago
* Esther Viljoen, Health Research Council
* Dr Jason Gush, Royal Society Te Apārangi
* Dr Paul Hoskin, GNS Science
* Pamela Moss, University of Auckland
* Dr Alex James, University of Canterbury/ Te Pūnaha Matatini, University of Auckland
* Dr Donna Cormack, University of Otago/Te Kupenga Hauora Māori, University of Auckland
* Russell Cooke, Department of Internal Affairs
* Reece Moors, Science for Technological Innovation – National Science Challenge
* Joanne Looyen, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

## Appendix 2: Engagement

The table below outlines the areas and processes related to NZRIS that the NSOG expects to engage with stakeholders on. It also outlines the key stakeholder, noting that this list may not be exhaustive. It also sets out the likely types of engagement processes related to these areas. The MBIE Secretariat and the NZRIS team will provide support to NSOG as required regarding the engagement channels.

| **Areas and/or processes of focus for engagement** | **Engagement partner** | **Engagement processes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Revision of Data specifications  Data transfer protocols  Data security standards  Data transfer model | * MBIE – as sponsor and host of NZRIS * Te Mana Raraunga as Māori Data Sovereignty Network * Iwi Chairs Forum – Data Group * Public Good Funders – as providers of data to and users of NZRIS (including MBIE as funder) * Other funding organisations - as providers of data to and users of NZRIS * Research Providers * Māori Research Organisations * The Government Chief Data Steward, the Digital Government Information Group, and other public sector organisations with data governance and oversight functions (e.g. Stats NZ, Archives NZ) * Interest groups and NZRIS User groups (e.g. researchers, private sector, data collection holders) * General public | For significant changes to these areas, the processes may include:   * Public consultation * Face-to-face meetings * Direct communications to relevant organisations.   For minor changes to these areas, the processes may include:   * Email notifications * Updates in the NZRIS GitHub site, the MBIE website, and newsletters. |
| Changes to the process for creation of Authorised Users and reporting against these  Changes to the Access Protocols and reporting against these  NSOG tasks with funding implications (requiring funding) | * MBIE | * Reports between NSOG and MBIE |
| Enable the purpose of organisations with a focus on Māori data sovereignty with regard to Māori research data being contributed to, and accessed from, NZRIS  Establishment of protocols for on-going engagement with Māori  Enabling NZRIS data specifications to take into account advice from key Māori stakeholders | * Te Mana Raraunga * Iwi Chairs Forum – Data Group | * Face-to-face meetings * Direct communications to relevant organisations. |

1. NZRIS is formerly known as NRIS. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Development covers technology development (e.g. building IT systems and data transfer systems), and also includes associated agreements and growing broader social and cultural licence for data sharing in the RS&I sector. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/data-2/data-management/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/8db986841c/nz-research-information-system-overview.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. For example, the information and management principles and open data charter identified earlier and the guidance provided from time to time by the Government Chief Data Steward. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The exact nature and frequency of NSOG reporting will be determined as part of NSOG establishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Organisations contributing to NZRIS will be responsible for nominating contacts for NSOG. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)