



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Project Manager, Funding Reviews and AI Enablement

About us

Our agency's purpose is to shift the system using data and evidence, so that the system invests earlier and more effectively to improve the lives of New Zealanders.

Our values – how we do things around here



Tāngata

We're about people

It's about people. They will do better, sooner and for longer, when we partner with others to develop and deliver services.



Manawa Māui

We are a catalyst for change

We challenge the status quo constructively and seek better ways of doing things.



Taunakitanga

We influence through evidence

We use evidence to influence positive change for New Zealanders.



Puaretanga

We're transparent by nature

We will share what we're doing, how we're doing it, and what we learn

About working in the Public Service

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āiane, ā, hei ngā rā ki tua hoki. He kawenga tino whaitake tā mātou hei tautoko i te Karauna i runga i āna hononga ki a ngāi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ka tautoko mātou i te kāwanatanga manapori. Ka whakakotahingia mātou e te wairua whakarato ki ō mātou hapori, ā, e arahina ana mātou e ngā mātāpono me ngā tikanga matua o te ratonga tūmatanui i roto i ā mātou mahi.

In the public service we work collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders now and in the future. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. We support democratic government. We are unified by a spirit of service to our communities and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

About the position

The purpose of this position

The Project Manager works closely with the Director, System Investment and Performance and relevant delivery leads to support the successful delivery of SIA's Funding Reviews work programme, with an immediate focus on the discovery phase using a current funding review as a live test case for AI-enabled contract analysis and investment insight.

The role will drive delivery of the programme by:

- Developing and maintaining a clear, proportionate delivery plan that confirms scope, milestones, governance, resourcing, privacy and security controls, success measures and decision points.
- Producing clear, decision-ready papers, updates and advice that help senior leaders make timely choices about scope, trade-offs, risks, investment requirements and next steps.
- Engaging early with internal teams, other agencies and technical, analytical, privacy, security and assurance stakeholders to keep delivery moving and build shared ownership.

This position will help SIA test where funding review methods, contract information, wider data and evidence, and AI-enabled approaches can add value to investment advice. The role requires sound judgement, pragmatic delivery discipline, and the ability to keep things moving when the path is not fully defined.

The broader strategic intent is to use the discovery phase to test how SIA can develop a repeatable, evidence-informed and AI-enabled approach to funding reviews that strengthens investment advice, supports better commissioning and value-for-money decisions, and informs future decisions about capability and scale. The role also provides an opportunity to help create and embed project and programme management as a practical discipline within SIA, supporting consistent delivery while keeping governance and process proportionate to the work.

Team and location	Wellington – System Investment and Performance
Reporting to	Director, System Investment and Performance
Salary band	TBC

What you will do to contribute

Funding Reviews delivery and AI-enabled discovery

- As a first step, develop a short programme plan for the Funding Reviews discovery phase, a current funding review as the primary live test case. The plan will set out the scope, delivery approach, governance arrangements, resourcing, investment requirements, success measures and key decision points.
 - Confirm and support recruitment of additional capacity to the project team.
 - Lead the detailed delivery planning for the discovery phase, including confirming the internal, technical, analytical and external support required to deliver the work well, and maintaining a practical plan that tracks milestones, risks, dependencies, resourcing and key decisions.
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- Support the testing of AI-enabled contract analysis and related digital tools, ensuring the work is bounded, safe, useful and connected to real investment advice questions.
- Work with policy, data and evidence, digital or technology, communications, procurement, privacy, security and assurance teams to ensure the discovery phase is coordinated and delivery risks are actively managed.
- Produce clear, decision-ready papers, briefings, status updates and advice for senior leaders, governance groups and Ministers where required.
- Keep the work moving in a context of ambiguity by clarifying decisions, resolving blockers, escalating issues early and adapting the delivery approach as learning emerges.

Capability building and ways of working

- Support SIA to build practical analytical, digital and AI capability through the work, using real delivery experience to identify what can be repeated, scaled or improved.
- Promote proportionate, pragmatic project disciplines that support delivery without creating unnecessary process or governance burden.

Stakeholder management and engagement

- Engage early and constructively with internal teams, agencies and external providers to clarify requirements, build trust and support shared ownership of the work.
- Translate technical, analytical and policy issues into clear choices, trade-offs and actions for non-technical audiences.
- Maintain strong relationships across policy, investment, data, technology, procurement, assurance, communications and partner agency teams.
- Convene targeted meetings and workshops to resolve delivery questions, test assumptions, surface risks and maintain momentum.
- Actively manage expectations by being clear about scope, sequencing, roles, dependencies and what can realistically be delivered within the discovery phase.

Planning

- Define and, where appropriate, implement key project management standards, guidelines, processes, roles and responsibilities (e.g. risk management, planning, estimating, progress tracking, documentation controls etc.) in conjunction with the appropriate teams and forums; e.g. Risk and Assurance, Finance etc.
- Define and maintain project scope.
- Co-ordinate regular internal and external project reporting.
- Provide central co-ordination for the processes and repository for all project documentation/ manuals etc through the Ministry systems.
- Contribute to the development, management and publication of all project documentation and any other plans as required (including schedules, financials and benefits).
- Ensure schedules are kept up to date and any inter-dependencies documented and escalated as appropriate.

Supply & Demand

- Ensure supply and demand requirements are well documented including resources/people.

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- Provide requirements as and when required, monthly reporting and quarterly basis, adjusting for confidence when required.

Governance, reporting and accountability

- Apply sound judgement about when formal governance is required and when lighter-touch arrangements are more appropriate to the scale, risk and maturity of the work.
- Prepare concise governance reports, project updates, agendas, minutes, decision papers and presentations that are fit for senior decision-makers.
- Monitor and report on progress, risks, issues, dependencies, assumptions, decisions, benefits and learning throughout the discovery phase.
- Ensure the Director, System Investment and Performance and relevant governance groups are well informed about current status, delivery risks and opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure all documentation is accurate, audience-appropriate, decision-focused and consistent with SIA standards.
- Document learning from the discovery phase to inform later ELT decisions about repeatable capability, future investment and any move to scale.
- Maintain action, decision, risk and issue logs that support accountability without becoming an end in themselves.

Finance

- Manage the approved project budget in accordance with the Public Finance Act and the Ministry financial management policies and systems and the Finance team.

Risk & Issue Management

- Actively identify and manage risks, issues, assumptions, dependencies and decisions.
- Keep the TO informed of any critical risks/issues and the strategies in place to mitigate them, and escalate as appropriate.
- Provide effective and efficient service for identification, screening, prioritisation and resolution of risks & issues.

Best Practice/Centre of Excellence

- Promote and apply best practice as defined by the Project Management Institute and any other related professional body.
- Adhere to SIA standards for project management.
- Participate and/or lead in establishing in project practices, templates, policies, tools and partnerships to expand and mature capabilities.
- Development of any integrated change programme work for your assigned project(s) and/or common stakeholders.
- Coach, mentor, motivate and supervise others in team as appropriate.

Risk management

- Actively identify and manage role or practice level risks, including escalation of risks and issues when necessary.
 - Ensure that analysis, data and information supplied is accurate and verified.
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Health and safety

- Take responsibility for meeting SIA's obligations for workplace health and safety.
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About you – what you will bring specifically

Qualifications

- Relevant tertiary qualification and/or technical qualification.

Experience and knowledge

- 5+ years' experience in a Project Manager role, preferably delivering complex policy, investment, data, technology or transformation projects in a public sector environment.
- Experience contributing substantively to projects, including producing clear decision-ready papers, delivery plans, briefings and governance material.
- Experience working in ambiguous or evolving delivery environments where scope, governance, sequencing and resourcing need to be shaped as the work progresses.
- Sound understanding of proportionate project disciplines, including planning, risk and issue management, dependency management, governance, reporting and benefits tracking.
- Demonstrated ability to engage early with stakeholders, build trust, clarify expectations and keep work moving across multiple teams or agencies.
- Demonstrated ability to see the "big picture" and understand how delivery activity connects to SIA's strategic role in funding reviews, investment advice and social investment system architecture.
- Some technical understanding of data, digital or AI-enabled delivery is helpful, including the ability to work effectively with technical specialists; deep technical expertise is not required.
- Experience supporting safe, well-governed use of digital or AI-enabled tools, including consideration of privacy, security, access controls, assurance and responsible use.
- Understanding of how funding reviews, contract information, data, evidence and agency context can support investment advice, commissioning choices and value-for-money decisions.
- Government experience, including familiarity with Cabinet, Ministerial, ELT or senior governance decision-making processes, is desirable.
- Ability to work with financial, performance and analytical information and support recommendations with clear evidence and judgement.
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to produce succinct, accurate and decision-ready material under time pressure.

Characteristics

- Engaging others – connects early with stakeholders, listens well, reads people and situations, and communicates tactfully.

- Delivery focused – keeps work moving, maintains momentum and follows through on commitments.
- Curious and analytical – asks good questions, tests assumptions and uses evidence, judgement and context to shape practical next steps.
- Pragmatic and proportionate – applies the right level of governance, process and documentation for the scale and risk of the work.
- Resilient – displays resilience, demonstrates composure.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and “grey areas”, with the ability to navigate complexity, adapt to change and bring structure without over-engineering.
- Self-aware and agile – encourages feedback on own performance, can self-assess, adapts approach, shows commitment to development.
- Knowledge and understanding of Mātauranga Māori and tikanga.

Capabilities

- Implements strategy – aligns their work with strategic objectives and SIA’s vision.
- Communicates clearly – produces succinct, decision-ready written material and tailors messages for senior leaders, technical specialists and partner agencies.
- Supports organisational performance – identifies opportunities to improve delivery methods, build repeatable capability and strengthen the use of data, evidence and AI-enabled approaches.
- Builds relationships – works collaboratively across SIA and with partner agencies, taking an organisation-wide and system-focused view.
- Inclusive – welcomes and values diversity and contributes to an inclusive working environment where differences are acknowledged and respected.
- Shows political awareness – displays an understanding of the essentials of how the government and the public sector work, and ensures that written documentation and verbal presentations reflect relevant political sensitivities.
- Manages and delivers on work priorities – plans, sequences and organises work to deliver high-quality outputs to agreed timeframes, while actively managing risks and dependencies.
- Develops others – shares own experiences and learning and demonstrates and teaches specific technical skills.

Other requirements

- Willing to take on responsibilities within the role’s scope to contribute to delivery, including drafting, analysis coordination, stakeholder engagement and practical problem-solving where required.