

# A guide to using the Common Measurements Tool

**This guide contains material from the Common Measurements Tool, used under licence and reproduced with the permission of the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service.**

**Published by the State Services Commission  
ISBN: 978-0-478-36100-1  
March 2010**

### **Copyright / terms of use**

All information published in this publication is Crown copyright. The information is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence. The terms of use under this licence are detailed below.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 New Zealand licence. [In essence, you are free to copy and distribute the work (including in other media and formats) for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown, do not adapt the work and abide by the other licence terms.] To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/nz/>. Attribution to the Crown should be in written form and not by reproduction of any such emblem, logo or Coat of Arms.

*Note: This document may be updated from time to time. Please check the website [www.ssc.govt.nz/common-measurements-tool](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/common-measurements-tool) to ensure you have the current version.*

---

## How to use this guide

---

This guide is written for project managers who are responsible for undertaking client satisfaction surveys using the Common Measurements Tool (CMT). The guide focuses on specific issues related to using the CMT; it does not explain how to build and design surveys. Previous knowledge and experience with survey research methodology is assumed.

Section 1 provides you with some background on the CMT in the New Zealand context and refers to the Drivers of Satisfaction with Service Quality.

Section 2 is designed to help you get started, describing the core questions that must be used and the other types of questions offered and how to begin selecting questions for your survey.

Sections 3 provides sample surveys with the CMT questions included.

A final section outlines where additional information may be available.

Please note:

The CMT is provided to New Zealand under license from Canada. New Zealand State Services agencies can take up the CMT, free of charge, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Services Commission (SSC). Local authorities and charitable entities can use the CMT, for a fee, by signing a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the SSC. Agencies and organisations must abide by the terms of the respective MoU or LoA, in particular:

- use the New Zealand core questions
- use the wording of the CMT questions as they are written, and
- provide a copy of their data for benchmarking purposes.

For further information, please contact [CommonMeasurementsTool@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:CommonMeasurementsTool@ssc.govt.nz)

# Contents

---

- Section One ..... 1**
- Introduction ..... 1
  - Understanding the Drivers of Satisfaction ..... 2
- Section Two ..... 4**
- Components of the CMT ..... 4
  - The Core Questions ..... 4
  - Telephone Service Delivery specific questions ..... 5
  - Paired Response Scales ..... 5
  - Benchmarking internationally ..... 6
  - Selecting other CMT Questions ..... 6
  - Customising the CMT ..... 7
  - Demographic questions ..... 7
  - Text and spoken versions ..... 7
  - Benchmarking nationally ..... 8
- Section Three ..... 9**
- Example A: A Written Survey ..... 9
- Example B: A Spoken Survey ..... 12
- Section Four ..... 14**
- Help available from the SSC ..... 14

## Section One

# Introduction

The New Zealanders' Experience research programme explores what New Zealanders think of their State Services.<sup>1</sup> To improve New Zealanders' experience of State Services requires State servants to look at the services they are providing from the viewpoint of the service user – the 'outside-in' perspective. Asking New Zealanders for their views about the quality of government services they receive is one of the best ways of building an understanding of this. The research programme provides evidence for making improvements to services that will have the greatest impact on satisfaction.

The research programme draws on international best practice in public service satisfaction surveys. Canada has been identified as a world leader in citizen-centred public sector service delivery. Part of its success is due to the use of two tools:

- Citizens First, a national survey of Canadians that measures satisfaction with service delivery and identifies opportunities for improvements, and
- The Common Measurements Tool (CMT). The CMT is a set of survey questions and scales that allows individual agencies to survey their own clients' satisfaction and identify service delivery improvements for service users.

In 2007, the State Services Commission (SSC) purchased the licences for both Citizens First and the CMT and adapted them for use across the New Zealand State Services. Citizens First was adapted for the *Kiwis Count* public survey.

The key part of the CMT is the eight core questions. These questions are based on the Drivers Survey which investigated what drives New Zealanders' satisfaction with the quality of service they receive from public service organisations<sup>2</sup>. There are seven extra questions that match the Canadian core questions.

The CMT question bank also includes over 100 additional questions that can be used to survey different service delivery channels and types of service. The CMT is designed to be flexible enough to be used alone or in components to support your existing client satisfaction methodologies and measures.

By using the questions set out in the CMT, agencies can compare their performance with other New Zealand State Services agencies as well as benchmark internationally with Canada and other jurisdictions that adopt it.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.ssc.govt.nz/nzers-experience](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/nzers-experience)

<sup>2</sup> The term 'public service' was used in the survey as previous research indicated this is the term most commonly used by New Zealanders when describing State Services. For a copy of the research see the 2007 Drivers Survey, [www.ssc.govt.nz/drivers-report](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/drivers-report)

The real value of the CMT lies in agencies taking action on the results to improve services. The CMT is a tool to help you achieve something; it is not an end in itself. Understanding what your clients' particular drivers are, which driver performed best, which was worst, and which priority for improvement is most important from your clients' perspective, are all issues that you will want to consider.

Particular attention should be paid to the drivers of satisfaction when setting improvement priorities. Comprehensive information based on these provides a solid foundation on which to base decision making, such as the areas to focus improvement efforts and resource allocation. It is also likely to secure for your agency the biggest gains in client satisfaction.

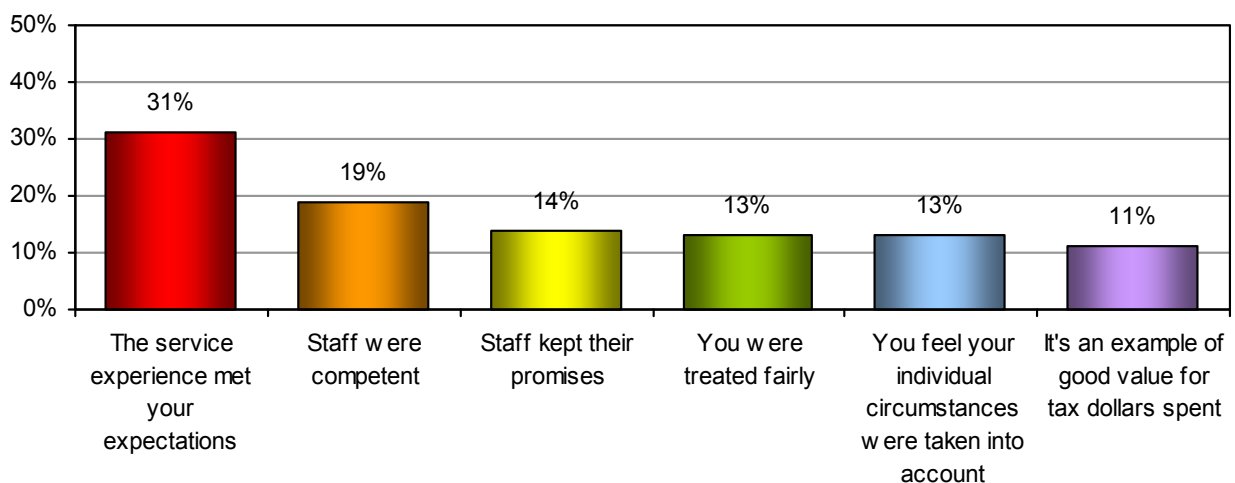
### Understanding the Drivers of Satisfaction

The CMT is made up of eight core questions that measure the key drivers of client satisfaction. The Drivers Survey identified a set of six drivers that have the greatest impact on New Zealanders' overall satisfaction with the quality of service delivery. These are:

- The service experience met your expectations
- Staff were competent
- Staff kept their promises – that is, they did what they said they would do
- You were treated fairly
- You feel your individual circumstances were taken into account
- It's an example of good value for tax dollars spent.

This set of six drivers accounts for just over two-thirds (69%) of New Zealanders' satisfaction with service quality. The survey found that New Zealanders assigned different levels of importance to the different drivers, with 'the service met your expectations' being the most important, as shown in the following chart.

Figure 1 Drivers of Satisfaction with Service Quality



### **Drivers of satisfaction with telephone service delivery**

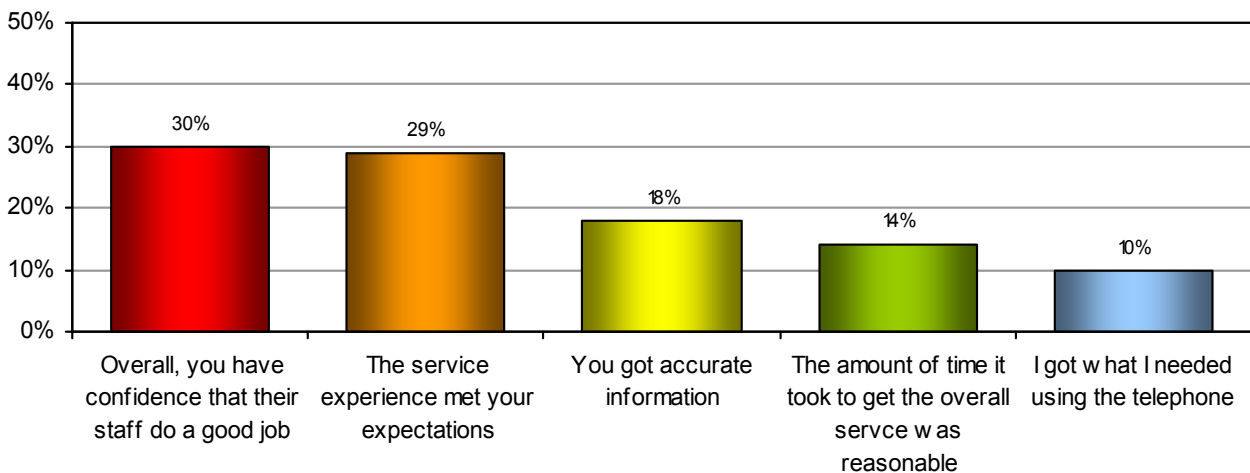
The drivers of satisfaction with service quality do vary depending on the channel through which those services are delivered.

Kiwis Count 2007 asked New Zealanders how they had contacted the public service they had used most recently and their level of satisfaction with the method of contact they had used. Calling on the phone was the second most common method but had the lowest satisfaction rating. Given its widespread use and comparably lower levels of satisfaction, further analysis was carried out to identify the drivers of satisfaction with telephone service delivery. This identified that there were five drivers that have the greatest impact on satisfaction. Together these five drivers account for 79% of satisfaction amongst those who used the telephone on their most recent experience. They are:

- Overall, you have confidence that their staff do a good job
- The service experience met your expectations
- You got accurate information
- The amount of time it took to get the overall service was reasonable
- I got what I needed using the telephone

The following chart represents their relative importance.

Figure 2



To help you to understand what the drivers mean to New Zealanders, the SSC has published a report that looks at what each of the specific drivers mean and what can be done to improve satisfaction for that driver. The report is available on the SSC website at [www.ssc.govt.nz/understanding-drivers-report](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/understanding-drivers-report).

Understanding how your agency's services are performing against the drivers of satisfaction will assist you in identifying your clients' priorities for improvement in those services.

The next section contains the core questions to be used in your survey.

## Section Two

# Components of the CMT

### The Core Questions

The eight core questions aim to measure the key drivers of service quality satisfaction. Each driver of satisfaction is reflected in at least one of the core questions. The core questions create consistency and enable direct and comparative measurement of client satisfaction across agencies.

Since the core questions are directly related to the drivers of satisfaction, the entire question set must be used in your survey. The questions and rating scales cannot be modified as they must be consistent for benchmarking with other agencies. That is, the actual wording and scale must be identical.

However, it is not necessary to use the questions in the same order, or with the same headings.

Figure 3

The Core Questions						
Drivers	Questions/Statements	Satisfaction				
		Very dissatisfied				Very satisfied
<b>SATISFACTION</b>						
1 Overall Satisfaction*	How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>EXPECTATIONS</b>						
2 Expectations	Before going to [agency] for this service, what quality of service did you expect?	Very poor service				Very good service
		1	2	3	4	5
3 Met Expectations	Looking back, how did the service you got from [agency] compare to what you expected?	Much worse than I expected				Much better than I expected
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>						
Driver	Questions/Statements	Agreement				
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
4 Competence*	Staff were competent	1	2	3	4	5 NA
5 Promises	Staff did what they said they would do	1	2	3	4	5 NA
6 Fairness*	I was treated fairly	1	2	3	4	5 NA
7 Individual Circumstances	I feel my individual circumstances were taken into account	1	2	3	4	5 NA
8 Good value	It's an example of good value for tax dollars spent	1	2	3	4	5 NA

\* These questions are also related to the Canadian core questions.

### Telephone Service Delivery specific questions

The following statements can be used to measure your clients’ satisfaction specifically with your telephone service delivery. These statements, based on the drivers of satisfaction, have been derived from the CMT Question Bank or from questions previously used. As yet, these statements have not been subjected to the rigorous, multi-testing process in New Zealand that the core questions went through. We suggest you pre-test them and invite you to share your results with us.

Figure 4

Drivers	Questions/Statements	Agreement				
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
Confidence	Overall, you have confidence that staff do a good job	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Information	I received accurate information	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Waiting time	The amount of time it took to get the overall service was acceptable	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Outcome	I got what I needed using the telephone	1	2	3	4	5 NA

### Paired Response Scales

Figure 5 presents some drivers with a two paired response scale, one measuring how well the service was delivered (performance) and the other measuring how important that aspect of the service is to your client. This allows you to identify the elements of your service delivery process that will lead to the greatest improvements in client satisfaction. Focusing on the key things in service delivery that are important to your clients will produce the biggest return in terms of client satisfaction.

Figure 5

Driver	Questions/Statements	Agreement					Importance				
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	Not at all important				Very important
Competence	Staff were competent	1	2	3	4	5 NA	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Promises	Staff did what they said they would do	1	2	3	4	5 NA	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Fairness	I was treated fairly	1	2	3	4	5 NA	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Individual Circumstances	I feel my individual circumstances were taken into account	1	2	3	4	5 NA	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Good value	It’s an example of good value for tax dollars spent	1	2	3	4	5 NA	1	2	3	4	5 NA

Using the paired scales allows you to assess the relationship between importance and performance and decide where you may wish to direct your improvement efforts.

## Benchmarking internationally

The Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS) in Canada provides a benchmarking service for all those signed up to use the CMT. If you wish to benchmark internationally, the SSC can forward your results on to the ICCS, who will provide you (for a fee) with a customised benchmarking report so you can compare your results with comparable overseas organisations. The process is confidential – each participating organisation is identified to others only by the type of service that it provides such as taxation, law enforcement, etc. Visit the ICCS website, [www.iccs-isac.org](http://www.iccs-isac.org) for current information, including costs.

If your agency is interested in benchmarking internationally, you will need to include some or all of the following seven questions that make up the rest of the Canadian core questions<sup>3</sup>, **in addition** to the eight New Zealand core questions.

Figure 6

The Canadian Core Questions						
Canadian Drivers	Questions/Statements	Satisfaction				
		Very dissatisfied				Very satisfied
<b>SATISFACTION</b>						
1 Timeliness	Overall, how satisfied were you with the amount of time it took to get the service?	1	2	3	4	5
2 Accessibility	Overall, how satisfied were you with the accessibility of the service/product?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>						
Driver	Questions/Statements	Agreement				
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
3 Information	I was informed of everything I had to do to get the service/product	1	2	3	4	5 NA
4 Extra mile	Staff went the extra mile to make sure I got what I needed	1	2	3	4	5 NA
5 Access	I was able to get through to a staff member without difficulty	1	2	3	4	5 NA
6 Waiting time	I waited an acceptable amount of time at the service location	1	2	3	4	5 NA
<b>OUTCOME</b>						
Drivers	Questions/Statements	Satisfaction				
7 Outcome	In the end did you get what you needed?	Yes	No	I got part of what I needed		

## Selecting other CMT Questions

Measurement and surveying are not limited to the eight New Zealand core questions, or the seven Canadian questions above. Agencies can also use any of the additional CMT questions.

However, only those organisations who have signed either a MoU or LoA with the SSC can access the CMT Question Bank. Before including additional CMT questions in your survey, we encourage you to discuss this with the SSC as the questions are being progressively tested for the New Zealand context. We also advise you to always pre-test them with your staff and/or clients.

<sup>3</sup> The questions differ slightly across service delivery channels so you would use only those questions appropriate to the relevant service delivery channel.

## **Customising the CMT**

The CMT is designed to be flexible, so you can create a new survey using the CMT questions or add them to an existing survey. This also allows you to measure satisfaction with those aspects of services specific to your organisation.

## **Demographic questions**

We suggest that if you are including age, ethnicity and gender demographics that you use the same categories as in the examples provided in section three. This allows for another level of benchmarking.

## **Text and spoken versions**

The CMT question bank contains two parallel versions of the CMT, one for administration via Internet or paper, and an oral version for telephone and in-person administration. Instructions and introductions require slightly different phrasing in the different formats; however the questions themselves are identical or nearly so.

Section three of this guide provides examples for both versions, using the core questions.

## **Benchmarking nationally**

In order to facilitate the sharing of CMT data across New Zealand agencies, the SSC has established a CMT benchmarking service. Benchmarking data is collected and shared in a way that ensures the anonymity of participating agencies' results while still allowing comparison with peer organisations. Agencies are required to supply a copy of their raw data file.

For enquires, please contact [CMTBenchmarking@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:CMTBenchmarking@ssc.govt.nz)

The objective of benchmarking is to enable agencies to compare their results against other organisations and then encourage them to share their results. The SSC supports Communities of Practices, bringing agencies together to promote the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

As part of this, the SSC encourages research managers to work closely with their colleagues responsible for service delivery design and improvement, to act on the results of this 'outside-in' research.

## Section Three

# Example A: A Written Survey

## An Internet or Paper Survey

The following example shows how the CMT questions might be incorporated into your survey. Any actual survey will be different, as it will reflect the objectives and context of a particular organisation. It may also include non-CMT questions that address your organisation's specific services and information needs, or which replicate questions that were used in previous surveys. Your questionnaire will also include the name of your organisation and services where appropriate.

**After a brief introductory page stating the purpose of the survey and stressing confidentiality, the questions begin. The shaded boxes illustrate how the survey might be divided into six or more browser pages.**

1 Tick each of the services/products that you received from [agency] **in the past year.**

- 1. *Name of service*
- 2. *Name of service*
- 3. *Name of service*
- 4. *Name of service*
- 5. *Name of service*

2 Which service/product did you receive **most recently?** Type its number here:

Service number \_\_\_\_\_

***Please answer the remaining questions in the survey with regard to this service – the most recent service you received from [agency].***

3 When did you last use this service?

- Within the past week
- Within the past month
- Within the past 3 months
- Within the past year

- 4 Circle a number to show:
- how much you agree with the statement, and then,
  - how important this aspect of service was.

**If you dealt with more than one staff member, please give a rating overall.**

STATEMENT	AGREEMENT						IMPORTANCE					
	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			Not at all important			Very important		
a. Staff were competent	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b. Staff did what they said they would do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c. I was treated fairly	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d. I feel my individual circumstances were taken into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e. It's an example of good value for tax dollars spent	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA

5 Before going to [agency] for this service, what quality of service did you expect?

Very poor service Very good service

1      2      3      4      5

6 Looking back, how did the service you got from [agency] compare to what you expected?

Much worse than I expected Much better than I expected

1      2      3      4      5

7 How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery?

Very dissatisfied Very satisfied

1      2      3      4      5

What are the top three things [agency] can do to improve its service delivery?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ABOUT YOU

8 Gender

Female

Male

9 Age

under 20 years

20-24 years

25-29 years

30-34 years

35-39 years

40-44 years

45-49 years

50-54 years

55-59 years

60-64 years

65+

10 Which ethnic group do you belong to? **Mark the space or spaces which apply to you**

New Zealand European

Māori

Samoan

Cook Island Māori

Tongan

Niuean

Chinese

Indian

other, please state \_\_\_\_\_

11 Add any other demographic questions you may wish to collect

**Your feedback helps us to improve our service.**

**Thank you for participating!**

## Example B: A Spoken Survey

### A Telephone Survey

After a brief introduction stating the purpose of the survey and stressing confidentiality, the questions begin.

1 Which of the following services/products have you received from [agency] **in the past year?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Name of service
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Name of service
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Name of service
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Name of service
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Name of service

2 Which service/product did you receive **most recently?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Name of service

3 When did you last use this service?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the past week
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the past month
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the past 3 months
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within the past year

Thinking about the most recent service you received from [agency], I would like to read some statements about the delivery of this service/product.

- Please tell me the extent to which you agree with each statement, where 1 means “Strongly disagree” and 5 means “Strongly agree”, if you dealt with more than one staff member, please give a rating overall.

STATEMENT	AGREEMENT						IMPORTANCE					
	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	NA	Not at all important				Very important	NA
A Staff were competent	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
B Staff did what they said they would do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
C I was treated fairly	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
D I feel my individual circumstances were taken into account	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
E It's an example of good value for tax dollars spent	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA

- Now, tell me how important these aspects of service delivery were to you at the time, where 1 means “Not at all important” and 5 means “Very important”.

- 4 Before going to [agency] for this service, what quality of service did you expect? Use a scale where 1 means "Very poor service" and 5 means "Very good service".

Very poor service			Very good service	
1	2	3	4	5

- 5 Looking back, how did the service you got from [agency] compare to what you expected? Use a scale where 1 means "Much worse than I expected" and 5 means "Much better than I expected".

Much worse than I expected			Much better than I expected	
1	2	3	4	5

- 6 How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery? Use a scale where 1 means "Very dissatisfied" and 5 means "Very satisfied".

Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied	
1	2	3	4	5

- 7 Would you like to make any additional comments or suggestions about this service?

*Relevant demographic questions (gender, age, ethnicity, etc) to complete the survey.*

*End by thanking respondent for participating.*

## Section Four

# Help available from the SSC

The SSC plays a central role in supporting the CMT and making it available to State Services organisations. It is able to provide assistance on how to incorporate the CMT into your current surveys.

Please note, you will be required to send your questionnaires to the SSC before using them so that SSC can ensure consistency in the use of the CMT questions, for benchmarking purposes.

The SSC is also interested in knowing how the CMT is working for users in the New Zealand context, so please stay in touch with the CMT project team in order to share your learnings. Contact, [CommonMeasurementsTool@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:CommonMeasurementsTool@ssc.govt.nz).

For further information, the ICCS has made several complementary publications available through its website, [www.iccs-isac.org](http://www.iccs-isac.org). These include:

*How-to Guide to Service Improvement Initiatives.* Any client survey should be part of a larger service improvement strategy. A client survey should be developed based on the objectives of that strategy and the service improvement goals the organization is trying to achieve. Originally published by the Canadian Federal Government, this how-to guide takes a step-by-step approach to planning, implementing, and assessing a service improvement initiative, and includes specific reference to the Common Measurements Tool.

*How to Conduct Customer Surveys.* The survey questionnaire is only one small part of the survey research process. Published in co-operation with the Government of Ontario and the Government of Quebec, this how-to guide details the survey research process from defining objectives to determining sample sizes to interpreting data. It also includes specific reference to the Common Measurements Tool.

*CMT User Manual.* This manual is focused specifically on challenges associated with using the Common Measurements Tool.

In addition, Statistics New Zealand has produced a guide aimed at those who undertake or commission surveys, called *A Guide to Good Survey Design*<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods\\_and\\_services/guide-and-tutorials/user-guides/guide-to-good-survey-design-2nd-edition.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods_and_services/guide-and-tutorials/user-guides/guide-to-good-survey-design-2nd-edition.aspx)



**State Services Commission**

100 Molesworth Street

PO Box 329

Wellington

New Zealand

Phone: +64 4 495 6600

Fax: +64 4 495 6686

[www.ssc.govt.nz](http://www.ssc.govt.nz)

March 2010

