

Sarah Hillsdene
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27 September

Dear Sarah,

OIA 24-25-11: Project Propel and IGF

Thank you for your email on 15 August 2024 to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), making a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You requested the following information:

It is my understanding that the organisation undertook a project to digitise the various IGF processes etc, known as Project Propel. It is widely known that this project is either in trouble or has failed.

Please supply the approved business case, and associated RFP evaluation & decision information in respect to the project (vendor and staff names should be redacted). Please supply all anonymous commentary from your recent employee engagement survey in relation to this project and its impact.

In a time of restraint, what was the return on investment (ROI) for this project? If this is including within the business case, then great.

Answers to your questions are as follows.

Propel is the name of NZTE's International Growth Fund (IGF) platform. Project Propel refers to the project that created and launched the platform.

The Propel platform is the outcome of a project to deliver a technology solution to improve and support the IGF.

Propel has gone live, however implementation is not yet complete. This is important when considering the targets of Propel in the Benefits section of the Business Case. Feedback from NZTE's Engagement Survey (referred to in point 2 below) noted some challenges about the go-live of the system. It is not unusual for there to be teething issues when a new technology platform is released as people get familiar with using it. NZTE expects that continued resources and system enhancements will improve this sentiment over time. The system is meeting its cost benefit target and has exceeded its claims payment targets, with 98% of claims being processed with 10 working days (target of 90% within 20). Please note the dates of the targets were also pushed out, due to a delay in the go-live date from March to April.

1. The approved business case is attached as Appendix One. Please note that the ROI for this project is included in the business case.

Associated RPF evaluation and decision making documents in relation to Project Propel are refused under:

- 9(2)(ba)(ii): vendor pricing structures, internal processes and strategies are commercially sensitive.
- 9(2)(g)(i): free and frank opinions were expressed in evaluating the successful vendor. The opinions are sensitive because they are finance related and material that, if disclosed, would inhibit the future generation of free and frank opinions necessary for the effective conduct of public affairs.
- s9(2)(j): Disclosure of this information would breach obligations of confidentiality to the successful vendor and provide information on NZTE's negotiation processes that could prejudice future such negotiations. The greater public interest is ensuring that government agencies can continue to negotiate without prejudice.

A summary of NZTE's process to choose its vendor for Project Propel is outlined below:

- NZTE follows an industry standard process whenever we undertake any RFP, and the process for Propel was no different.
- The RFP was made available to the public via the Government Electronic Tender Service (GETS).
- Deadlines were provided for questions from suppliers and receipt of proposals. Following this, three suppliers were shortlisted by a panel evaluating the proposals against the criteria advised in the RFP i.e., proposed solution's fit for purpose (50%), capability and capacity of supplier to deliver (30%) and price including broader outcomes (20%).
- These shortlisted suppliers were invited to present a demonstration to NZTE.
- Scores were assigned by demonstration attendees, using weightings advised to the shortlisted providers of configuration (25%), creating an application (25%), creating a claim (20%), usability (10%), answers to questions (5%), and competency/ credibility/ alignment to NZTE (10%).
- These scores were consolidated, and a final due diligence process was undertaken to identify a preferred supplier. Following this, a contract was negotiated and agreed upon with NZTE's chosen vendor, Tactiv. This process was undertaken from October 2022 through to June 2023.

2. NZTE's Engagement Survey is a confidential survey that runs annually for all NZTE people. Specific commentary from NZTE's Engagement Survey in relation to Project Propel is withheld under the following sections of the Official Information Act, however a summary of this commentary is provided below:

- s9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons where personal comments may be identifiable.
- s9(2)(ba) to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence where the making available of the information
 - i. (i) would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

Summary of the NZTE Engagement survey commentary associated with Propel:

- 2% of all comments from the NZTE Engagement survey mention 'Propel'.
 - 1% of these comments were against the question "Most of the systems and processes here support us getting our work done effectively." This question received an overall favourable score of 68% with 30% of all comments related to Propel.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz or freephone: 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Trochon', written in a cursive style.

Melissa Trochon
Director – Board & Ministerial