



# A guide to using the Common Measurements Tool

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***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

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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 some of 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

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- Section One ..... 1**
- Introduction ..... 1
  - Understanding the Drivers of Satisfaction ..... 2
- Section Two..... 5**
- Components of the CMT ..... 5
  - The Core Questions ..... 5
  - Telephone Service Delivery specific questions ..... 6
  - On-line Service Delivery specific questions ..... 6
  - Paired Response Scale..... 7
  - Benchmarking nationally ..... 7
  - Benchmarking internationally ..... 8
  - Selecting other CMT Questions ..... 9
  - Customising the CMT ..... 9
  - Demographic questions ..... 9
  - Text and spoken versions ..... 9
- Section Three ..... 10**
- Example A: A Written Survey ..... 10
- Example B: A Spoken Survey..... 13
- Section Four ..... 15**
- Help available from the SSC..... 15



## 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.

A key part of the CMT is the core questions based on the Drivers of Service Quality Satisfaction. These are the key factors that drive New Zealanders' satisfaction with the quality of services they receive from public service organisations. The original set of questions looked at overall satisfaction with public services<sup>2</sup>. Subsequent research shows the degree to which New Zealanders use a variety of channels to access government services<sup>3</sup>. This guide provides a set of questions for three different service delivery channels – in-person, telephone and Internet – for inclusion in your surveys.

The CMT question bank from Canada also includes over 100 additional questions that you can use in your surveys. 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> See the 2007 Drivers Survey, *Satisfaction and Trust in the State Services*, [www.ssc.govt.nz/drivers-report](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/drivers-report)

<sup>3</sup> [www.ssc.govt.nz/how-nzers-access-public-services](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/how-nzers-access-public-services)

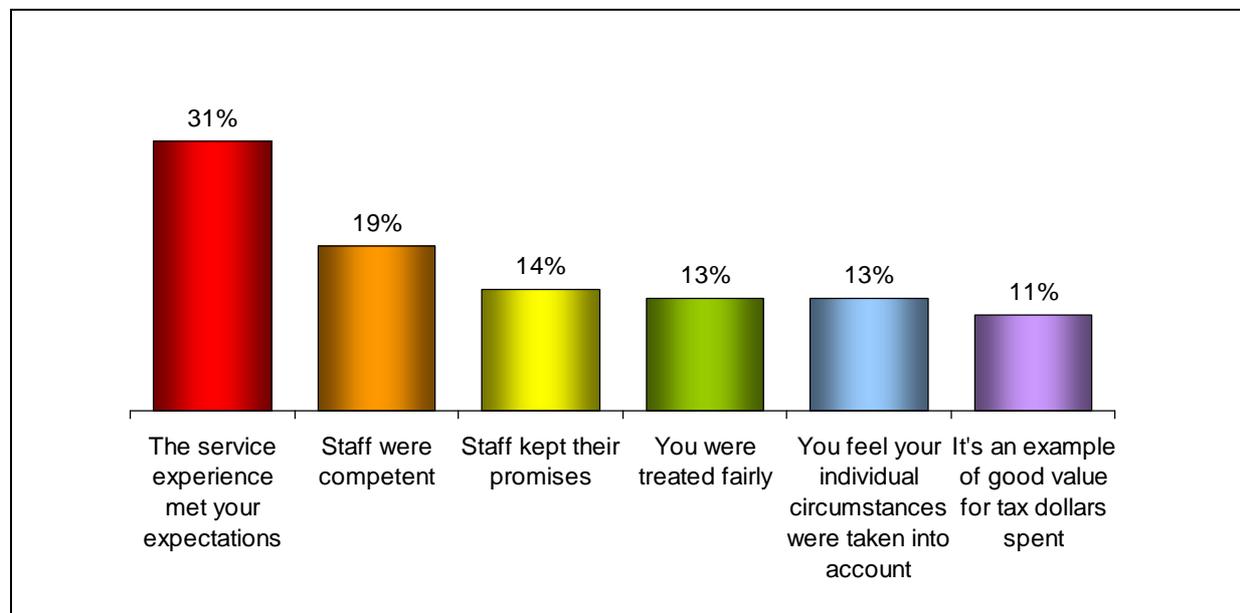
The real value of the CMT lies in agencies taking action on the results to improve services. The CMT is a tool to help you achieve something; it is not an end in itself. Understanding what your clients' particular drivers are, which driver performed best, which was worst, and which priority for improvement 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 key element of the CMT is the 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:

**Figure 1 Drivers of satisfaction with public services**



This set of six drivers account for just over 75% 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 chart above.

To help you to understand what these 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).

The drivers of satisfaction with service quality do vary depending on the channel through which those services are delivered. Below are the set of drivers for services that are delivered over the telephone or on-line.

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

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. The following chart represents their relative importance:

**Figure 2**



### **Drivers of satisfaction with services delivered on-line**

SSC commissioned further research to identify the key drivers of satisfaction with public services delivered online, whether it was for obtaining information or carrying out a transaction<sup>4</sup>.

The drivers of satisfaction for obtaining information from public service websites are shown in Figure 3 below. Together, these drivers account for 82% of overall satisfaction rating with public service websites visited for obtaining information.

Figure 4 shows the drivers of satisfaction for carrying out transactions on public service websites. The five drivers in that chart also account for 82% of overall satisfaction rating with public service websites visited for transaction purposes on their most recent experience.

The most important driver for both obtaining information and transacting is 'the service experience met your expectations'. This is consistent with the overall drivers and the telephone drivers.

<sup>4</sup> [www.ssc.govt.nz/online-drivers-of-satisfaction](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/online-drivers-of-satisfaction)

Figure 3

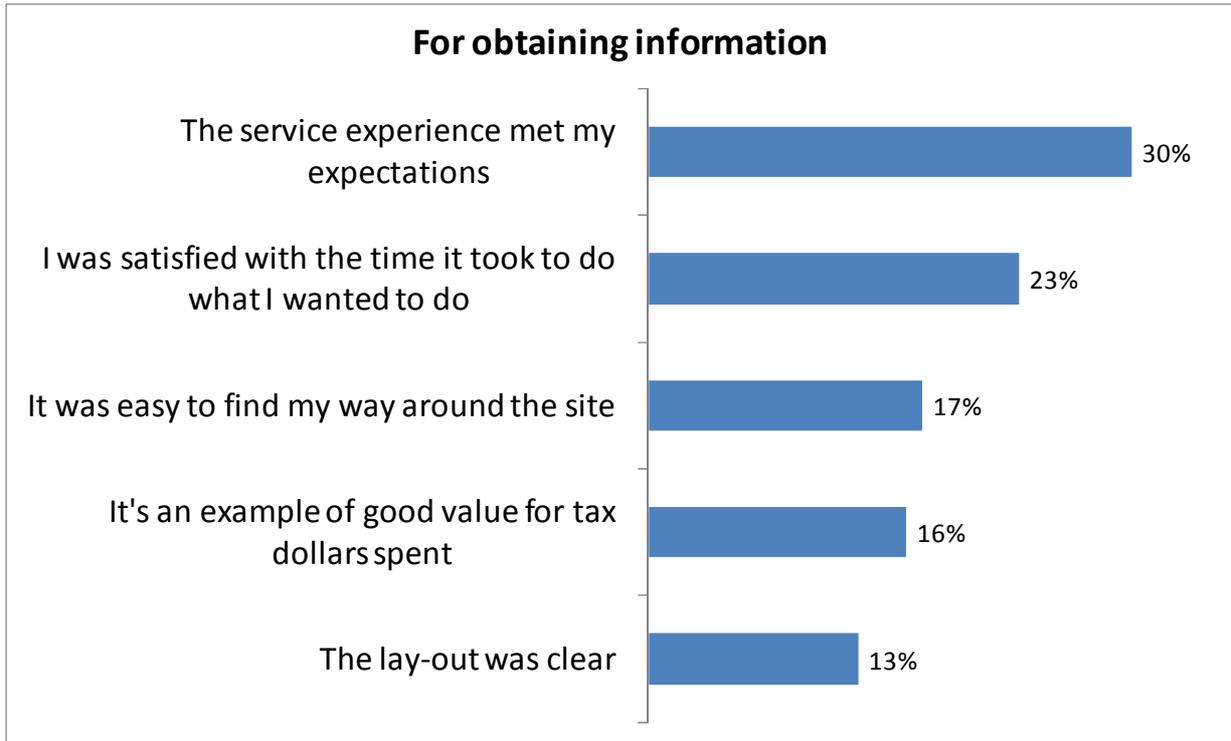
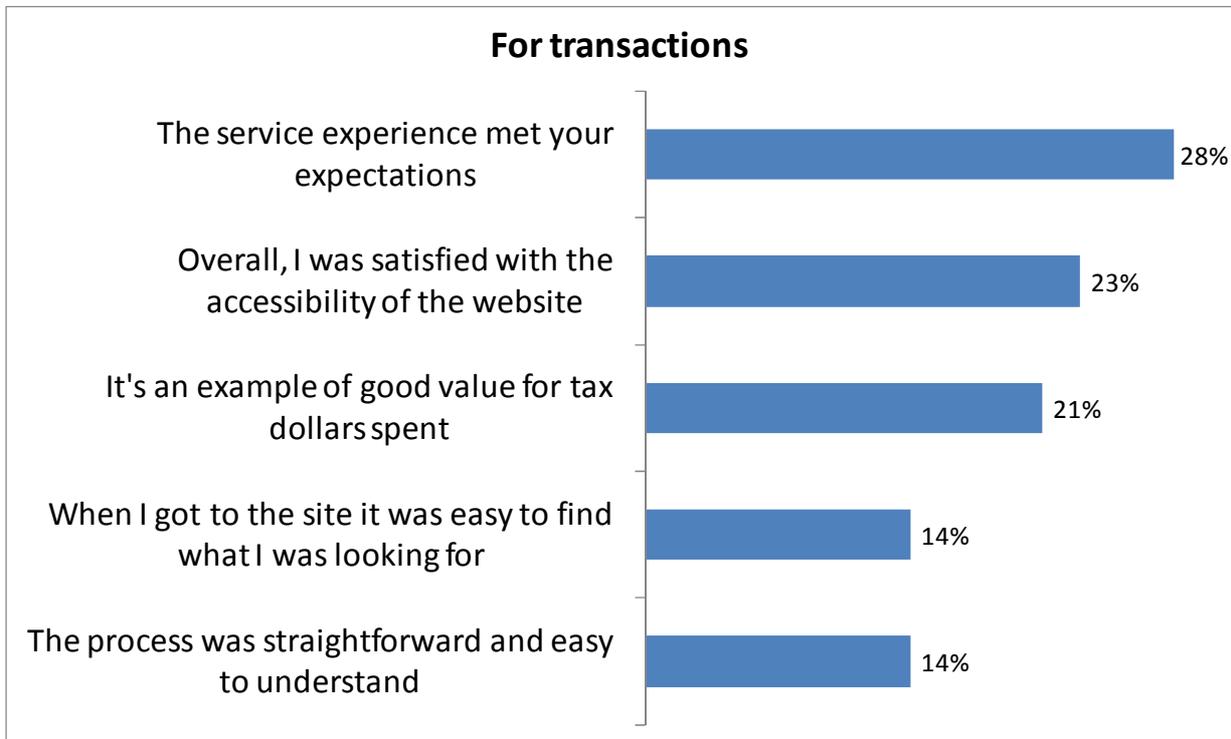


Figure 4



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 and explains how they should be used in your survey.

## Section Two

# Components of the CMT

### The Core Questions

This section contains four different sets of core questions. The core questions 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.

Each set of questions measures a specific service channel. Since the core questions are directly related to the drivers of satisfaction, you must use at least one set in your survey. The set you choose will be the one most appropriate to the service channel you are measuring. 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. You can also use more than one set of the core questions.

**Table 1**

Set one						
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 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. Not all of the statements in this table have been subjected to the rigorous, multi-testing process in New Zealand that the original core questions went through. We suggest you pre-test them and invite you to share your results with us.

**Table 2**

Set two						
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
Expectations	The service experience met my expectations	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
Overall Satisfaction*	How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery?	Satisfaction				
		Very dissatisfied				Very satisfied
		1	2	3	4	5

## On-line Service Delivery specific questions

The next two set of questions measure your clients' satisfaction with services delivered on-line. These questions were tested, at the time they were identified, to ensure the language and terminology is unambiguous and not open to misinterpretation.

Table 3 shows the questions that measure satisfaction with public services delivered online when your client was just looking for information. Table 4 contains the questions that measure satisfaction when the client was carrying out a transaction on-line.

**Table 3 Obtaining Information**

Set Three						
Drivers	Questions/Statements	Agreement				
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
Expectations	The service experience met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Speed	I was satisfied with the time it took to do what I wanted to do	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Navigation	It was easy to find my way around the site	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
Well-designed	The lay-out was clear	1	2	3	4	5 NA
Overall Satisfaction*	How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery?	Satisfaction				
		Very dissatisfied				Very satisfied
		1	2	3	4	5

**Table 4 Transacting**

Set Four							
Drivers	Questions/Statements	Agreement					
		Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		
Expectations	The service experience met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Accessibility	Overall, I was satisfied with the accessibility of the website	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
Navigation*	When I got to the site it was easy to find what I was looking for	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Ease of use	The process was straightforward and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Overall Satisfaction*	How satisfied were you with the overall quality of service delivery?	Satisfaction					
		Very dissatisfied			Very satisfied		
		1	2	3	4	5	

### Paired Response Scale

Table 5 shows an example of some statements with a two paired response scale. This scale can be used to measure how well the service was delivered (performance) and how important that aspect of the service is to your client. Using the paired scales allows you to assess the relationship between importance and performance and identify the elements that will lead to the greatest improvements in client satisfaction. It may assist you to decide where you wish to direct your improvement efforts. Focusing on the key things in service delivery that are important to your clients will produce the biggest return in terms of client satisfaction.

**Table 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

### 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. The MoU requires agencies to supply SSC with a copy of their raw CMT data. In return, agencies can receive up to three reports and summary datasets:

- 1 Comparison with all the results in the database
- 2 Comparison with similar services, for example, all Contact Centres

3 Comparison to other services within their service group, for example, Justice & Border.

The summary datasets enables agencies to undertake their own analysis on the results if they wish.

Benchmarking enables agencies to identify where they are performing well and where they can improve. The SSC encourages agencies to share their results with each other. For this purpose, we support Communities of Practices, bringing agencies together to promote the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

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

As part of the benchmarking service, 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.

### 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>5</sup>, **in addition** to the eight New Zealand core questions.

**Table 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

<sup>5</sup> The questions differ slightly across service delivery channels so you would use only those questions appropriate to the relevant service delivery channel.

OUTCOME				
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 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.

### **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**

Section three of this guide provides examples of two CMT surveys. The first measures on-line services via an Internet or paper based survey. The second example is an oral version for telephone or in-person administration, measuring face-to-face services.

## Section Three

# Example A: A Written Survey

## An Internet Survey measuring on-line services

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

STATEMENT	AGREEMENT						IMPORTANCE					
	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			Not at all important			Very important		
a. The service experience met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b. Overall, I was satisfied with the accessibility of the website	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c. It's an example of good value for tax dollars spent	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d. When I got to the site it was easy to find what I was looking for	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e. The process was straightforward and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA

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

Very dissatisfied

Very satisfied

1      2      3      4      5

6 What suggestions do you have that will help us to improve our service delivery?

ABOUT YOU

7 Gender

Female

Male

8 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+

9 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 \_\_\_\_\_

10 [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”.

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

- 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>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</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)