Procurement Capability Community of Practice

Operating Guidelines and Registration Form August 2025.

Contents

About these operating guidelines

These operating guidelines set out key information about the purpose, membership and operation of the New Zealand Government Procurement's (NZGP) Procurement Capability Community of Practice.

These guidelines, and other materials relating to the administration of the community, will be ratified by, and can be amended by the community through discussion and majority agreement.

About the Procurement Capability Community

The Procurement Capability Community (the community) is a community of practice for people interested in improving the people capability of the New Zealand government procurement workforce.

It holds a vision of a skilled, knowledgeable, collaborative, and innovative workforce of government procurement practitioners – competent and capable to meet the challenges presented by procurement work, now and into the future.

While its focus is primarily on supporting people who carry out procurement proactive work to develop the skills, knowledge and attributes that support them to do so effectively, the community is also interested in the wider aspects of people capability and performance, including the leadership, cultural and organisational /agency factor that enable procurement practitioners to perform to high standards in the workplace.

The Procurement Capability Community is supported by the New Zealand Government Procurement Branch within BRM at Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

Community of Practice

A community of practice is an organised group of people who share a common interest in a specific technical domain. They collaborate regularly to improve their skills, and actively work on advancing the general knowledge of the domain through creating, sharing, harvesting, and leveraging knowledge.
The purpose of the NZ Government Procurement Capability Community of Practice is to develop the capability of the government procurement workforce, raising the skills, knowledge and connections of people who carry procurement work.

Membership

Membership is open to all parties with an interest in procurement capability development from across the public service.

The community's core membership is drawn from learning practitioners and procurement practitioners from local and central government organisations that carry out procurement practice.

In order to ensure inclusion, each local and central government organisation is invited to appoint a learning practitioner and a procurement practitioner to take part in the community.

Organisations may nominate as many additional members as they wish, and individuals within a regulatory organisation may also join of their own accord.

All members of the community agree to act in accordance with these operating guidelines and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes.

Belonging to the Procurement Capability Community
What is expected of you as a member?

As a member of the community, you will:

- Commit positively to building and participating in the community, and act accordingly.
- Support the community and its members. This may include but is not limited to:
    - Sharing your knowledge and experience
    - Exchanging ideas
    - Supporting others to learn, and learning yourself through this and other means
    - Identifying and exploring issues
    - Problem solving
    - Researching
    - Sharing resources
    - Working with others in the community to achieve commonly agreed goals
    - Creating, sourcing, curating and/or publishing resources and papers that progress people practice, particularly in the area of people capability development for procurement practitioners
    - Facilitating and/or taking part in events or other initiatives
    - Supporting the evaluation of people capability in the sector
    - Supporting the creation and use of competency frameworks and other tools
    - Supporting the exploration of the future people capability needs of the procurement sector
    - Coaching, mentoring or providing advice and assistance to others
    - Telling others about the community and its activities
- Do what you can, as you can – and let others know if you need help to fulfil on any specific commitments you make.
- Act in accordance with these operating guidelines and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes.

Why belong?
As a member of the Procurement Capability Community, you will:
- Develop strong working relationships with others doing similar work in the procurement sector. This network can help you with your work and your career.
- Have access to others' resources, ideas, and experience – which may speed up delivery and improve the quality of your own mahi.
- Expand your knowledge and skills, especially by accessing others' ideas and experiences, and working on joint projects.
- Have people to reach out to for help, peer review, ideas, feedback, and other support.
- Shape the way forward for people capability development for New Zealand procurement practitioners. You will be part of an initiative that is making a real difference for people carrying out procurement work in New Zealand. Your contribution will add to the legacy.
- Help apply modern and innovative learning practice in government workplaces – turning theory into practice and learning what works and how to handle challenges.
- Find ways to make a unique contribution, just right for you, that benefits both you and others.
- Share your wisdom and experience with others and help them in their work – and watch how this creates good for all.

How is this good for your agency and team?

Through your participation in the Procurement Capability Community, your agency/team:

- Supports your professional development and that of others (through your coaching and support of other members).
- Has voice and visibility in:
  - the shared outputs of the community
  - meeting the future procurement capability development needs of its people
- Has access to a wider range of resources than it otherwise might have.

How much time will this take?

This is up to you, but an estimate would be 2 – 4 hours per month.

If you wish to support a particular piece of project work or be on a working party, this is likely to require additional time. This would be scoped and agreed with you on a case-by-case basis.

How do I join?

Complete the attached registration form and send this to ProcurementCapability@mbie.govt.nz

Operating principles

1. The community seeks to act in ways that benefit the government procurement sector and contribute to NZ Government Procurement outcomes, particularly in developing people capability.
2. The community is a place to honour and progress the Crown-Māori relationship.
3. The community seeks to be inclusive, diverse, and representative.
4. The community seeks to be a safe place to share, where all questions and viewpoints are welcome.
5. The community sets its own agenda. It provides high-level reports on its activities and areas of focus to the NZGP leadership team and/or their representatives for their information.
6. Membership of the community is voluntary.
7. Members are committed to supporting the community and each other.
8. Members are encouraged to engage with each other frequently and informally, as they wish.
9. The community thrives through everyone doing what they can, as they can. If someone's circumstances change and they are unable to fulfil a commitment, others step in to support their mahi or the community absorbs the change in other ways.
10. Sub-groups may form within the community, and these sub-groups may hold meetings or run initiatives specifically for the sub-group members only.
11. In general, the community is not a place to sell or promote vendor products and services. However, the community may agree to activities or places where vendors are invited to do so.
12. Members of the community may be invited to join specific Procurement Capability working groups and/or support specific procurement capability initiatives lead by the community or its members.

Specific roles and responsibilities

All members are encouraged to actively engage with the community, initiating activities as they see fit. In addition, the community has the following formal roles to support its stability and growth.

Te Tira Hāpal/ Advocacy/ Group

Te Tira Hāpai are the advocates, guardians, and stewards of the community. They support and elevate its work and work together to ensure that the formal and structured aspects of the community are maintained and evolved, and that the community thrives. This includes such things as, (with community input):

- Designing and establishing the more formal and structured aspects of the community
- Planning, arranging and/or facilitating the formal meetings and events run by the community
- Designing and facilitating ways to promote the community and attract new members
- Monitoring and considering the overall state of the community, and how this can be continually improved
- Co-crafting high-level reports on the community's activities and areas of focus to NZGPs governing leadership team and/or their representatives for their information
- Being a point of contact and/or spokesperson for the community

Te Tira Hāpai role blended with ordinary membership duties is expected to take 4 – 6 hours per month.

There can be as many members in the Te Tira Hāpai as the community decides is appropriate.

Te Tira Hāpai will include a NZGP Workforce and Capability team member, and their selection is ratified by the community through majority consensus.

The current group of Te Tira Hāpai may invite members to become Te Tira Hāpai or call for nominations from the community.

It is preferable for the Te Tira Hāpai to be representative of the community with:

- A mixture of people practitioners and procurement practitioners
- Attention to gender balance and diversity

Te Tira Hāpai should maintain sufficient membership to manage their collective workload.

Procurement Capability and Workforce Planning staff

Procurement Capability and Workforce Planning staff are members of the community.
They will do the following on behalf of the community.

- Provide a co-convenor
- Register membership
- Maintain any official records relating to the activities of the community
- Provide the technology and facilitation support for online meetings and webinars
- Establish and maintain a place for members to share and store information
- Support (at its discretion) in-person events
- Be a clearinghouse for queries regarding the community

Privacy

All prospective members are required to fill out the Procurement Capability Community Registration Form. A full name and email address is required. By completing the Registration Form, members consent to adhering to and being bound by these Operating Guidelines.

Any additional personal information provided to NZGP, either via the Registration Form or at a later date, is voluntary and can be shared with other community members, such as via a community Te Tira Hāpai group channel, shared in line with the Privacy Act 2020, or as otherwise required or permitted by law.

All personal information provided on the Registration Form will be securely held in a membership register, under the control of NZGP.

This Community of Practice is intended to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experience, and ideas. Caution is advised when sharing information not to disclose any personal information where consent has not been given or where an exception in the Privacy Act applies. It is the responsibility of the individual member to obtain approval to share information or modify or redact as appropriate information in any documents shared within the community.

Community of Practice sessions and webinars may be recorded and shared to the community channel for participants to view at a later time.

Any requests for access to, or correction of, any personal information held by NZGP should be sent to the following email address: ProcurementCapability@mbie.govt.nz

Any breach or suspected breach of the Privacy Act 2020 must be communicated to NZGP via email as soon as possible. The organisation responsible for the privacy event should then follow their own internal processes for managing privacy events, including any further escalation or notification to relevant third parties such as the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Community activities

The community may engage in a wide range of activities. These may range from informal or semi-formal activities initiated and managed by members themselves through to more formal activities, initiated by or agreed with the community and facilitated by the Te Tira Hāpai Group or others.

Appendix A: About communities of practice

What is a community of practice?

A community of practice is an organized group of people who share a common interest in a specific technical domain. They collaborate regularly to improve their skills, and actively work on advancing the general knowledge of the domain through creating, sharing, harvesting, and leveraging knowledge.
There are three key elements:

1. **Domain:** Or 'what we care about' is the shared area of interest. Membership implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.
2. **Community**: Or 'who cares about it' are the relationships which are built through discussion, activities and learning. In pursuing their interest or domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other. A website in itself is not a community of practice.
3. **Practice**: Or 'what we do, how we go about it' is the shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.

The purpose of a community of practice

The purpose of a community of practice is to:

1. Develop people capability by building and sharing knowledge and best practice, developing talent and building confidence.
2. Build organisational capability through consistent standards of practice, a common language, shared ways of operating, and transferable skills and qualifications.
3. Build capability across the system through thought leadership, research, stewardship and supporting cultural change.

The benefits of a community of practice

A community of practice provides opportunities for stewarding knowledge, crossing organisational boundaries, supporting cultural change, and building practitioner confidence to respond to changing demands. It provides isolated practitioners with access to colleagues, peer to peer professional development activities, connect learning with experience for new graduates and provides opportunities for life-long learning and reflection on practice.

The experience people have to share is clearly important. But communities of practice also facilitate innovation and problem solving. They help to invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop a collective and strategic voice.

Examples of community of practice activities

Communities develop their practice through activities such as:

- **Problem solving**: "Can we work on this problem and brainstorm ideas; I'm stuck".
- **Requests for information**: "Where can I find some good resources?".
- **Seeking experience**: "Has anyone had experience of developing a tool to help procurement practitioners assess their current skill levels? I need some guidance".
- **Reusing assets**: "Our organisation has created a set of learning materials. We are happy to share these".
- **Coordination and strategy**: "Can we co-ordinate our learning programmes so that we can run campaigns on particular topics during the year and run multi-agency events based on these?"

- **Documenting projects**: "Let's report to the NZGP leadership team on this matter, sharing our observations and recommendations".
- **Visits**: "Can I come and meet with you and your team? I'd like to find out more about the way you work."
- **Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps**: "How can we map the current capability of the procurement sector? Would it be useful to develop a shared competency framework?"

The difference between a professional organisation and a community of practice

Professional organisations and communities of practice share the same purpose of advancing a profession, supporting the interests of people working in that profession and serving the public good. Both facilitate innovation, communication, and connection.

However, there is a difference. Professional organisations tend to have paid membership, offer high-value learning activities and more traditional course offerings and publications. Continuous professional learning is not always grounded in what practitioners do and therefore, the learning needs to be transferred back to the workplace. An example of this is a professional organisation which offers online webinars delivered by consultants whose aim is to inform and promote their services.

Communities of practice are based on social learning theory. They address challenges and concerns that are faced in practice using peer-to-peer learning activities. In a world with increasingly complex learning challenges, the tools of social learning theory have the potential to speed up the human capability to respond. Supporting people to come together means letting go of control and specified outcomes.

Principles of an effective community of practice

Because communities of practice are voluntary, what makes them successful over time is their ability to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage members. Even though communities are voluntary and organic, good community design can invite, even evoke, engagement.

There are seven principles for effective communities of practice:

1. **Design for evolution**: communities of practice continually evolve and develop over time. The key to designing for evolution is to combine design elements in a way that catalyses community development. Physical structures such as roads and parks can precipitate the development of a town. Similarly, social and organisational structures, such as a community coordinator or problem-solving meetings, can precipitate the evolution of a community.

2. **Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives**: good community design requires an understanding of the community's potential to develop and steward knowledge, but it often takes an outside perspective to help members see the possibilities. It might mean bringing an 'outsider' into a dialogue with the community leader and core members as they design the community.

3. **Invite different levels of participation**: good community architecture invites many different levels of participation, just like the activities in a neighbourhood on any given day: solitary shoppers, people walking briskly to work, friends out for a stroll, couples chatting at a cafe, a crowd watching a street performer, others are on the periphery, watching the action from the windows above the street. A community of practice is very similar. People participate in communities for different reasons; some because the community directly provides value, some for the personal connection, and others for the opportunity to improve their skills.

   The key to good community participation and a healthy degree of movement between levels is to design community activities that allow participants at all levels to feel like full members. Rather than force participation, successful communities 'build benches' for those on the side-lines.

4. **Develop both public and private community spaces:** Most communities have public events where community members gather, either face-to-face or electronically, to exchange tips, solve problems, or explore new ideas, tools, and techniques. However, the heart of a community is the web of relationships among community members, and much of the day-to-day occurs in one-on-one exchanges. Thus, a common mistake in community design is to focus too much on public events.

   The public and private dimensions of a community are interrelated. When the individual relationships among community members are strong, the events are much richer.

5. **Focus on value**: Communities thrive because they deliver value to the organisation on which community members serve, and to the community members themselves. But the full value of a community is often not apparent when it is first formed.

   Frequently, early value mostly comes from focusing on the current problems and needs of community members. As the community grows, developing a systematic body of knowledge that can be easily accessed becomes more important.

   Rather than attempting to determine their expected value in advance, communities need to create events,   activities, and relationships that help their potential value emerge and enable them to discover new ways to harvest it. Many of the most valuable community activities are the small, everyday interactions; informal discussions to solve a problem, or one-on-one exchanges of information about a tool, supplier, approach, or database.

6. **Combine familiarity and excitement:** As communities mature, they often settle into a pattern of regular meetings, teleconferences, projects, website use, and other ongoing activities. The familiarity of these events creates a comfort level that invites candid discussions. Like a neighbourhood café, a community becomes a 'place' where people have the freedom to ask for candid advice, share their opinions, and test ideas.

   Conferences, and workshops bring the community together in a special way and thus facilitate a different kind of spontaneous contact between people. They can provide novelty and excitement that complements the familiarity of everyday activities.

   Lively communities combine both familiar and exciting events so community members can develop the relationships they need to be well connected as well as generate the excitement they need to be fully engaged. Routine activities provide the stability for relationship-building connections; exciting events provide a sense of common adventure.

7. **Create a rhythm for the community:** Vibrant communities of practice also have a rhythm. At the heart of a community is a web of enduring relationships among members, but the tempo of their interactions is greatly influenced by the rhythm of community events. Regular meetings, teleconferences, website activity, and informal lunches ebb and flow within the heartbeat of the community. When that beat is strong and rhythmic, the community has a sense of movement and liveliness. If the beat is too fast, the community feels breathless; people stop participating because they are overwhelmed. When the beat is too slow, the community feels sluggish.

   There is no right beat for all communities but finding the right rhythm at each stage is key to a community's development.

Appendix B: Te Tira Hāpai role

Te Tira Hāpai are the guardians of the community. They work together to ensure that the formal and structured aspects of the community are maintained and evolved, and that the community thrives. Te Tira Hāpai (with input from the community):

- Design and establish the more formal and structured aspects of the community.
- Plan, arrange and/or facilitate the formal meetings and events run by the community.
- Design and facilitate ways to promote the community and attract new members.
- Monitor and consider the overall state of the community, and how this can be continually improved.
- Co-craft high-level reports on the community's activities and areas of focus to the NZGP leadership team and/or their representatives for their information.
- Act as a point of contact and/or spokesperson for the community.

What is expected of you as Te Tira Hāpai?
As Te Tira Hāpai, you will:

- Commit positively to building and participating in the community, and act accordingly.
- Work collaboratively with the other Te Tira Hāpai to get things done.
- Carry out your part in the tasks detailed above, as agreed with the other Te Tira Hāpai.
- Attend a Te Tira Hāpai meeting every month, and a business meeting every two months, in order to progress the work of the community.
- Do what you can, as you can – and let the other Te Tira Hāpai know if you need help to fulfil on any specific commitments you make.
- Act in accordance with the Operating Guidelines and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes.

Benefits of being Te Tira Hāpai
As a co-convenor of the Procurement Capability Community, you will:
- Access all the benefits that apply to members.
- Exercise leadership and guardianship in a visible government community of practice – which may support your career, practice or service aspirations.
- Be part of shaping the future direction of capability development for people carrying out procurement work in New Zealand.
- Develop strong working relationships with Te Tira Hāpai colleagues and public service procurement professionals and their agencies.
- Build your profile in the government procurement sector and your CV in procurement practice.

How much time will this take?
The Te Tira Hāpai role blended with ordinary membership duties is expected to take 4 – 6 hours per month.
If you volunteer to support a particular piece of project work or be on a working party, this is likely to require additional time. This would be scoped and agreed with you on a case-by-case basis. All project work is voluntary.

How are Te Tira Hāpai appointed?
Te Tira Hāpai are selected by the community through majority consensus. The current group of Te Tira Hāpai may invite members to become Te Tira Hāpai or call for nominations from the community.

If you would like to express your interest in being Te Tira Hāpai, email ProcurementCapability@mbie.govt.nz

Appendix C: Procurement Capability Community of Practice – Registration Form

Please use this form to register as a member of the New Zealand Government Procurement Capability Community of Practice.

We're collecting this information to ensure that you are empowered and supported to participate in community activities. The information you provide in this form will be added to a community channel/platform, viewable by other members. Your name and email address are mandatory; however we advise caution when providing any further personal information as it will be visible to others.

Your information will be stored in a secure location within the Procurement Capability Community Secretariat team, accessible only by members of the team as necessary and viewable by all members in the community channel. Should you wish to access, edit, or delete your information at any time please email ProcurementCapability@mbie.govt.nz.

Member information
(* fields are required)

*Name	
Job Title	
Organisation	
*Email	
Phone	

What would you like to get out of belonging? Is there anything you are particularly keen on getting from or giving to the community?

By submitting this completed form to us, you agree to become a member of this Community of Practice. As a member, you agree to:

- Commit positively to building and participating in the community, and act accordingly
- Support the community and its members
- Do what you can, as you can – and let others know if you need help to fulfil on any specific commitments you make
- Act in accordance with the community's Operating Guidelines, the Privacy Act 2020, the Official Information Act, and any other guidance material or protocols that the community agrees and publishes
- The management of your personal information as outlined in the Operating Guidelines

Please send your completed form to: ProcurementCapability@mbie.govt.nz.