



MUKA TANGATA
People, Food and Fibre
Workforce Development Council

JULY - DECEMBER 2025

TRANSITION OPERATIONAL PLAN

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OVERVIEW

Overview and priorities to December 2025

Our operations to the end of the year remain aligned to our vision for a food and fibre workforce, and education and training system, that enables industry and partners to flourish in a manner that honours te Tiriti o Waitangi. Since our establishment in October 2021, we have built trusted relationships across food and fibre industries, developed innovative and responsive qualifications, standards, and micro-credentials that better meet industry needs, delivered quality workforce analysis and advice to TEC, and worked with providers to develop and deliver quality programmes.

Priority population groups remain a focus. Māori are big players in the food and fibre sector as owners, workers, and innovators. In 2023, the Māori contribution to GDP for agriculture, forestry and fishing was \$3.6b¹. We will continue to support Māori agribusiness through our qualification development projects and [Te Haumako](#) actions. We will also continue to advance workforce development for Pacific peoples to improve skill recognition for Recognised Seasonal Employer workers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As we prepare for disestablishment, and to be replaced by Industry Training Boards (ISBs), we have pivoted our work programme over the next six months so that activities are tailored to those of a future food and fibre-focused ISB. We will continue to develop qualifications, standards, and micro-credentials to make sure people in our sector have the skills for work. We remain responsible for quality assurance activities with providers, including programme endorsement and external moderation. We will continue to provide high quality data and insights on the food and fibre sector and workforce needs.

The following workplan covers our operations from July to December 2025 and replaces our key deliverables and outcomes on pages 10-22 of our [Operational Plan 2024-2026](#).

1) mukatangata.workforceskills.nz/highlights/te-ohanga-maori-2023

DELIVERY OF LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS AND PRIORITIES

Workplan: July - December 2025

Delivery Focus	What are we doing?	What will be delivered?
1. Develop industry qualifications, standards, and micro-credentials that underpin vocational programmes		
Development and review	Continue to develop a set of qualifications, standards and micro-credentials that meet shared and diverse needs and aspirations.	Engage in qualification, standard and micro-credential review and development for Agriculture, Seafood, Entry Level, Irrigation, Wool, Field Hydrology, Horticulture, Pork, Poultry.
Revision and rollover	Maintain existing qualifications and standards.	Revision and rollover for Land Based Sustainability Practices, Fencing, Seed Dressing, Equine, Equine Health, Equine Husbandry, Equine Industry, Equine Training, Saddlery, Arboriculture, Fruit Production, Plant, Pest, Weed and Disease Control, Production Horticulture, Vegetable Production, Pest Control, Pest Monitoring, Sports Turf Construction and Drainage, Sports Turf Management, Sports Turf Weeds and Pests.
Explore pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revise standards for schools.Continue Occupation and Skills Mapping (OSM) project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update standard information for Vocational Pathway Award.Update OSM through industry engagement.
2. Quality assure how qualifications and standards are used		
National moderation and quality assurance	Implement the Muka Tangata National Quality Assurance and Moderation Plan (NQAMP) and moderation calendar 2025	Activities as per our Muka Tangata NQAMP and Moderation Calendar 2025 .
	Review and support Consent to Assess applications for providers.	Provide letter of support to providers.
	Support and advocate for innovative and appropriate approaches of meeting industry skill needs through delivery and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Professional development seminars for schools and providers.Active participation in Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Education projects.Provide guidance to providers around delivery of standards and programme development.
3. Endorse the vocational programmes that providers develop		
Programme endorsement	Endorse programmes that meet the needs of ākonga and employers.	80-100% of programmes are endorsed within 20 working days (any RFI and the time is reset).

Delivery Focus	What are we doing?	What will be delivered?
4. Strategic workforce analysis and planning		
Food and Fibre Capability Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a Food and Fibre Capability Strategy that sets out current capability challenges and opportunities for change to the vocational education and training (VET) system.Start a programme of work with industries on their workforce skill and capability goals.	Initial Food and Fibre Capability Strategy.
Skills forecasting	Work with industry to model priority scenarios in our Skills Forecasting tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initial Skills Forecasting tool published.Development of priority scenarios for industry and sector stakeholders.Skills Forecasting modelling used to inform Food and Fibre Capability Strategy development.
Industry workforce analysis and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain, publish and support industry and sector use of core industry, workforce and learner datasets.Undertake priority analysis, as required, of key workforce and VET issues to support industry capability and skills planning and to inform qualification development projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Updated industry-specific data and analysis on industry trends, workforces and training.Priority analysis, as required, of key workforce and VET issues to support the Food and Fibre Capability Strategy and individual industry skill and capability planning.
Shared Data Platform	Provide the core data infrastructure and datasets to support analysis by the WDCs and the VET system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintenance of secure data infrastructure.Improvements to data structure, accessibility and documentation in preparation for transition.Deliver refreshed core datasets.

Delivery Focus	What are we doing?	What will be delivered?
5. Investment Advice		
TEC investment advice	Drawing from industry engagement, qualification development projects and other work, we will prepare advice to TEC on investment in vocational education and training for the food and fibre sector.	Investment advice to TEC.
6. Orders in Council		
Honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi	Completing or continuing 19 ongoing actions outlined in Te Haumako Māori Workforce Development Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Iwitanga micro-credential is approved by NZQA.Tautoko Toolkit is published, and Māori leadership framework is promoted to enable ongoing use.Ahuwhenua toolkit is established and an ongoing ‘home’ found.Tiaki Tangata case studies are completed and promoted.
Micro-credential support	Provide support for micro-credentials developed by providers.	Supporting documentation for NZQA approval.
Pacific peoples Workforce Development Plan – Soko Ni Drua	Implement Soko Ni Drua actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support providers to develop programmes to meet the Pacific learning and language considerations.Consider the specific needs of Pacific peoples and convey these to TEC through investment advice.Design qualifications that blend traditional knowledge (like sustainable fishing, agriculture, and harvesting) with modern skills.

DEVELOPING AND SETTING STANDARDS, CAPSTONE ASSESSMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS, ENDORSING PROGRAMMES AND MODERATING ASSESSMENTS

Reprioritised work

Name of project / programme of work	Reason for not continuing
D1.1: WDPs for 14 industries; Build engagement and feedback capture system and tools into WDPs; Review and refresh approach to industry WDPs. D3.2: Roadmap actions achieved and reported.	We will continue to update WDP data at an industry level and the Skills Forecasting tool for industries will be published. However, workforce planning, strategic analysis and actions will be brought together as part of the Food and Fibre Capability Strategy, rather than broken out into specific WDPs, prioritising industries' push for a common strategy.
D1.3: Other research	Research and analysis will be prioritised and only undertaken in the context of directly supporting other priority work (e.g. qualifications development projects, Food and Fibre Capability Strategy, TEC advice).
D2.3: Explore other forms of recognition	We have continually engaged with industry about this issue though there have been no specific requests for this to be mapped against or included in the existing qualifications. While this remains an issue, our priorities are to develop and maintain qualifications, standards and micro-credentials within the formal system. We will provide our analysis of this area of work to the food and fibre ISB during handover.

As part of our disestablishment considerations, we have prioritised the mahi that we believe is essential to complete. Our staffing (as shown in the Organisational Chart, page 12) has been reorientated to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to complete our priority work.

We are in the process of developing material for a food and fibre-focused ISB that clearly shows the status of our work at time of closure. In most cases we are planning to wind-up our projects by late November 2025 to allow sufficient time to complete closeout documents.

We are currently working with Hāpaitia Shared Services and the other Workforce Development Councils to develop a comprehensive list of the requirements to disestablish the organisation.

DEVELOPING AND SETTING STANDARDS, CAPSTONE ASSESSMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS, ENDORSING PROGRAMMES AND MODERATING ASSESSMENTS

Qualification, micro-credential and standards activity

At the beginning of 2025, we refocused our activity to:

- Complete all projects, but with re-prioritised product development to ensure currency of our existing qualifications, micro-credentials, and standards, and continuity of delivery.
- Rollover and revise unit standards rather than wholesale development of replacement skill standards.
- Extend review date on qualifications not being actively reviewed.
- Maintain and report on status of all products within our coverage.
- Handover, including rationale information, to the ISB for smooth transition.

The Horticulture qualifications development project will need to pause over as responsibilities transition to the relevant ISB. Our assumption is that this project will include the development of new products, however this will need to be confirmed with industry.

The Agriculture and Entry Level projects will have completed new / revised qualifications development by December 2025 but may not have fully completed new standard development. We plan to progress as much new development as possible prior to that date but any outstanding mahi will need to be paused and handed over to the ISB.

The remainder of our projects are expected to be completed by December.

The staffing we have allocated to the business unit reflects this focus. We have extended the fixed-term contracts of the Project Manager and the Technical Co-ordinator to ensure delivery and close-off of the numerous projects by year end, and to create supporting materials and comprehensive notes for handover. The Technical Co-ordinator will also be tasked with ensuring all qualifications, micro-credentials, and standards files are ready for transfer.

Quality Assurance and Moderation activity

Our National External Moderation plan for post-assessment moderation will continue as planned with no reduction in volume or quality. Programme endorsement will not be affected by the changes in capacity through the recent restructure.

To ensure timely processing of pre-assessment moderation, consent to assess, micro-credential support and programme endorsement applications, we are encouraging providers to submit all relevant assessment materials and applications by 3 October 2025. We will continue to process applications after this date, but we cannot guarantee they will be completed before we finishes operations on 19 December 2025. Any in-progress submissions will be handed over to the newly established Industry Skills Board for completion.

We are actively encouraging providers to get their submissions to us as early as possible, and engage with us about their proposed submissions. We are expecting a greater volume of submissions over the latter half of the year, but don’t envisage any significant changes to service level agreements to process them.

Determining industry needs

We have been making changes to our structure over the last year with more roles focused on delivery that requires less leadership and administration. A number of roles that were required in our start-up environment have now been merged into other roles as we have matured as an organisation.

The core functions of the reduced Engagements and Partnerships team will provide a more targeted and strategic approach with the 40 peak bodies and six pan-sector bodies across the 14 industry groups we serve. The team will adopt an ‘account management’ and ‘intelligence gathering’ approach to foster deeper, more responsive relationships and enriched insights to support other teams including the Senior Leadership Team and the Chief Executive in their engagement activities. Consequently, changes in capacity within Muka Tangata will not affect our ability to determine industry needs.

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Overview and priorities to December 2025

Since our establishment, our council has reflected the industries that we serve. Our members have brought the voice of various industries across the food and fibre sector, as well as for Māori, Pacific and other workforce groups.

Erin Simpson will remain our Chair, with a Deputy Chair over this period.

As we move closer toward disestablishment, and as the ISB Establishment Advisory Group is stood up and taking effect, we will make changes to the composition of our Council with a view to ensure the scope and needs of disestablishment, handover and establishment are met, the breadth of the food and fibre sector is represented and our legal obligations are met.

The Council has (in accordance with best practice) established committees. Meeting quarterly, they provide direction and guidance on matters pertaining to their areas.

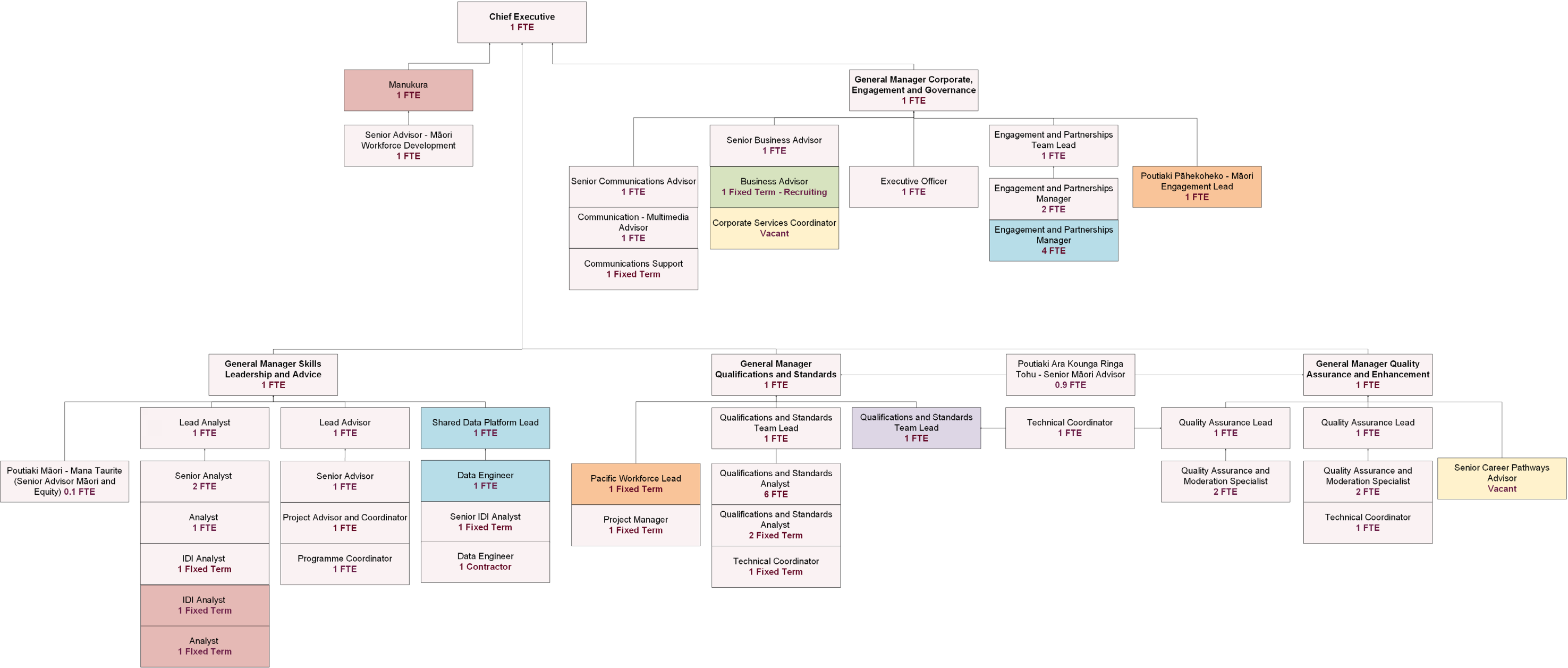
These committees are:

- Financial, Risk and Audit
- Te Rōpū Hei Tiaki Tangata (People, Culture and Wellbeing)
- Te Rōpū Māori

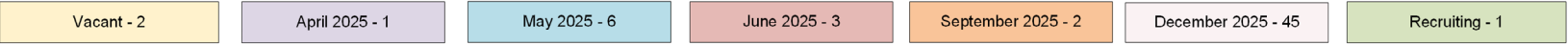
The Council and committees approve our work plan as required. Reporting is provided to the Council and committees with detailed information on performance against the work programme.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

As we prepare for disestablishment, we are scrutinising our organisational structure and roles. Throughout this time, we are dedicated to qualification, standards and micro-credential design and moderation through good data and insights, and our structure reflects this. All roles for this period are required to continue our core functions and to support the Chief Executive to disestablish the organisation.



Key



AMENDED OPERATIONAL PLAN: GUIDE TO CHANGES

Shared Data Platform

As the custodians of the Shared Data Platform (SDP), we have an obligation to ensure its viability during this period and for the foreseeable future. As previously advised, we have provisioned \$600k in our 2024/2025 budget to ensure the longer-term viability of the SDP.

We have apportioned this \$600k into our 2025/2026 budget with the intent of engaging in further investigation as to how to ensure the longevity of the platform.

In the 2025/2026 financial year, we have a funding commitment from some WDCs of \$185k (including our contribution, as at 16 April). The WDCs have also confirmed an intent to fund an additional \$115k dependent on the level of operational funding received from TEC in the 25/26 year, taking the total amount of possible funding to \$300k.

Organisational changes

We have been making changes over the last year with more roles focused on delivery to better align our structure to a more mature team that requires less leadership and administration. We have removed the following roles from our structure:

- **Manukura** – duties to be distributed between Māori-specific roles
- **General Manager Engagement and Partnerships** - merged with the GM Corporate Services role (now GM Corporate, Governance and Engagement)
- **Team Lead, Shared Data Platform** - merged with Lead Analyst, Skills Leadership and Advice
- **Team Lead, Qualifications and Standards** - reduced from two roles to one
- **Kairukuruku Māori** - duties distributed across organisation
- **Administration Coordinator, Corporate Services** - duties distributed across organisation
- **Administration Coordinator, Engagement and Partnerships** - duties distributed across organisation
- **Senior Advisor Māori, Skills Leadership and Advice** - merged with Poutiaki Ara Kounga Tohu (Senior Advisor Māori Quality and Qualifications)
- **Four Engagement and Partnership Manager roles** – responsibilities absorbed by the remaining two Managers
- **Senior Career Pathways Advisor** – end of fixed-term role.

To ensure that we can complete as much mahi as possible in the remaining period as well as the new work to disestablish the organisation, we have retained the services of certain kaimahi and will be seeking the support of a new role:

- Business Advisor (recruiting fixed-term role) - support the disestablishment of the organisation.
- Retain on fixed-term contracts:
 - Communications Advisor - keep kaimahi, industry and other key partners engaged on the fast-moving changes.
 - Qualifications and Standards Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Analyst - to ensure completion of the significant amount of work now compacted into a shorter delivery time.
 - IDI Analyst - to support the development of the Skills Forecasting tool for industry.

The reprioritised staffing salaries will enable us to retain critical roles for the continued delivery of our services to industry as well as increase our capacity and meet the new demands of disestablishing the organisation.