



Cook Islands National Infrastructure Committee

Terms of Reference

Chairperson Role Description and Appointment Process

Role Requirements, Selection and Performance Expectations

1. Purpose

The Infrastructure Committee (IC) is a Cabinet-appointed committee that brings together government, private sector and community expertise to help shape infrastructure priorities and oversee public capital investments that support the long-term development of the Cook Islands. The Chairperson leads the Cook Islands National Infrastructure Committee and ensures that meetings are fair, orderly and focused on clear decisions. The role is to help the Committee consider infrastructure priorities, project progress, risks and the effective use of public resources.

2. Main Responsibilities

The Chairperson will:

- Approve meeting agendas and ensure members receive relevant papers in sufficient time
- Chair meetings fairly, keep discussion focused on the matters requiring consideration
- Encourage active participation and allow all members to contribute
- Guide the Committee towards consensus and apply voting procedures when required
- Ensure decisions, actions responsibilities and timeframes are clearly recorded
- Activity follow up outstanding actions and escalate significant issues where necessary
- Request further information or technical advice when proposals are not ready for a decision.
- Ensure conflicts of interest are declared, recorded and appropriately managed.
- Maintain the integrity, confidentiality and credibility of the Committee.
- Support effective coordination between government, private-sector and community representatives; and
- Provide concise reports on key decisions, risks and matters requiring attention to the responsible Minister or agency when required.
- Protect confidential information and uphold the integrity and credibility of the Committee

3. Important Attributes

Attribute	What is required
Independence and integrity	Acts objectively in the national interest and openly manages conflicts.
Board or committee experience	Has served on a board or committee and can demonstrate experience in governance, reviewing papers, making collective decisions and managing conflicts of interest.
Chairing ability	Guides discussion, manages disagreement and brings the group to a clear decision.
Demonstrated infrastructure planning and delivery experience	Has a proven record of contributing to the planning and successful delivery of infrastructure projects, including understanding project scope, budgets, costs, risks, sequencing, procurement and implementation challenges. A technical qualification would be useful but is not essential where equivalent practical experience can be demonstrated.
Sound judgement	Recognizes when a proposal is ready for decision and when more information is needed.
Communication	Listens well, explains issues clearly and works constructively with different interests.

Cook Islands knowledge and availability	Understands the local and Pa Enua context and has sufficient time to prepare and attend.
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4. Appointment and Term

- Cabinet appoints the Chairperson in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference.
- The Chairperson is appointed for a term of three years and may be reappointed, subject to satisfactory performance, the performance review outlined in Section 5, and Cabinet review and approval, for a maximum of four consecutive terms (12 years), consistent with the Committee Terms of Reference.
- The appointment process will include shortlisting and interview assessments undertaken by a selection panel. Applicants will be assessed against the weighted attributes outlined in Section 3, and the interview panel's evaluation will form part of the overall candidate assessment and recommendation.
- The appointment may be ended due to serious misconduct, a material conflict of interest, persistent non-performance, or loss of confidence. Cabinet will make any such decision on the advice of the Minister, after the Chairperson has been informed of the concerns and given a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- The Chairperson may resign by written notice to the Minister. If the Chairperson is absent or the position is vacant, the Deputy Chairperson or another member chosen by the Committee will act as Chairperson.

5. Performance Measures

The Chairperson's performance will be assessed in a simple and practical manner after the first 12 months of appointment and annually thereafter. The assessment will be undertaken by the Minister, with input from Committee members, and will inform any decision on the renewal of the Chairperson's appointment. The measures should focus on whether the Committee is being chaired effectively, whether decisions are being made clearly, and whether infrastructure issues are being progressed.

The outcome of the assessment will inform any decision on renewal:

Measure	What good performance looks like	Simple evidence
Meetings are well run	Meetings are orderly, inclusive, focused and completed within a reasonable time. Members are able to contribute and the Chair manages disagreement constructively.	Meeting minutes; member feedback; attendance record.
Papers and agendas are provided on time	Agendas are approved and relevant papers are circulated early enough for members to prepare.	Agenda records and date papers were circulated.
Decisions and actions are clearly recorded	Each meeting records clear decisions, action owners and timeframes. Matters not ready for decision are sent back for further information.	Meeting Minutes and action register.
Agreed actions and project risks are actively followed up	Outstanding actions, project risks and key decisions are followed up at each meeting and escalated where necessary.	Action register updates and status reports
Infrastructure focus is maintained	The Committee regularly considers project scope, costs, risks, sequencing, procurement and delivery issues, rather than only general discussion.	Agenda items, project pipeline reports and risk reports

Independence and Conflicts of Interest	Conflicts of interest are declared, recorded and managed before discussion or decision-making. While the Infrastructure Committee operates within a small-island environment where professional, business and community relationships are common, the existence of a conflict of interest does not automatically prevent appointment. However, members must be able to demonstrate independence of judgement and a commitment to acting in the national interest. Applicants will be required to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest as part of the appointment process. Any conflicts will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and managed in accordance with the Committee's governance arrangements. Individuals with significant interests that could materially influence, or be influenced by, the Committee's decisions may not be eligible for appointment.	Conflict register; includes as part of the agenda and minutes.
Reporting is timely and useful	A short summary of key decisions, risks and matters requiring attention is provided to the responsible Minister or agency after meetings where required.	Chairperson reports or meeting summaries.

6. Recruitment and Selection Process

1. CIIC will manage the recruitment and appointment process on behalf of the Minister, unless otherwise directed.
2. Confirm the vacancy and appointment requirements - Confirm the vacancy, eligibility requirements and appointment authority under the Committee's TOR. Approve the Chairperson role description and agree on the recruitment timetable.
3. Obtain approval to commence recruitment from the Minister, Albert Nicholas.
4. Brief the Minister and CIIC Board on the proposed process, role description and timetable before advertising the position.
5. Invite public expressions of interest - Advertise the position openly to the general public for a reasonable period. The notice should make clear that applicants must demonstrate relevant experience in infrastructure planning and delivery, expected commitment, appointment process and application deadline. Public advertising widens the pool of talent and attracts people who are genuinely interested and willing to undertake the role.
6. Encourage suitable candidates to apply - In addition to public advertising, suitable individuals may be encouraged to submit an expression of interest. All applicants, including those approached directly, must follow the same application and assessment process.
7. Appoint a small, balanced selection panel with appropriate government, independent, private-sector or community representation. The selection panel will be chaired by a member nominated by the Minister. Panel members must declare and appropriately manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
8. Shortlist and interview - Applicants should provide a brief statement and curriculum vitae outlining their relevant experience, suitability and availability, including examples of infrastructure projects they have helped plan or deliver and their specific contribution. The panel should shortlist and interview the strongest candidates using the same criteria (weighted attributes in section 3) and questions.
9. Complete due-diligence checks - Confirm the preferred candidates' availability, obtain at least two references and review any business interests, potential conflicts of interest, or governance roles.
10. Recommend to Cabinet and appoint – The Minister provides Cabinet with a brief report naming the preferred candidate and explaining the main reasons for the recommendation. The report should confirm the results of the due diligence checks and any conflicts of interest declared.
11. Complete the formal appointment – Submit the recommendation for Cabinet consideration and appointment in accordance with the Committee's TOR.
12. Induct the appointee - Provide the new Chairperson with an IC-specific induction covering the Terms of Reference, current infrastructure portfolio, governance responsibilities, project pipeline, meeting procedures, conflict-of-interest requirements, reporting arrangements and performance expectations.

13. Close the process – Notify unsuccessful candidates, announce the appointment and keep a record of the process. Applications and panel deliberations will be treated as confidential. If no suitable candidates are identified, the panel will advise the Minister on re-advertising or interim arrangements.

7. Guiding Principles

The appointment process should remain clear, fair and practical. The preferred Chairperson should have board or Committee experience and demonstrate strong infrastructure planning and delivery experience, independence, sound judgement and effective leadership skills. Public expressions of interest should be used to broaden the talent pool and identify people who are willing to serve. Following appointment, the Chairperson's performance should be reviewed annually by the Minister, with input from Committee members, against clear measures covering meeting effectiveness, decision-making, action follow-up and the management of conflicts of interest. The outcome of the assessment will inform any decision regarding the renewal of the Chairpersons' appointment.