



11 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 28 March 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I am interested in Behavioural Event Interviewing (BEI) which is the type of interviewing in which candidates are asked to cite previous experience of a work situation, their role and then the outcome. This had led to the STAR acronym to define this type of interviewing. Recognising the size of your organisation please consider the question as applied to leadership/management roles within the middle to senior management levels of your organisation.

- 1. Would a candidate applying for a leadership/management type position in your organisation be required to do a task before the interview? (i.e. a phone screen, pre-test, etc) Or would the candidate have to complete a task after the interview such as - an aptitude test, numeracy/literacy or psychological profiling? Or are the interview and reference checking essentially the total recruitment process?*
- 2. How are applicants chosen to be interviewed? (See the options below from a to c):*
 - a. (a) A representative from Human Resources goes through the candidate pool of CVs received?*
 - b. (b) A representative from HR and the hiring manager go through the candidates?*
 - c. (c) The hiring manager acting alone selects who is to be interviewed?*
- 3. Does your organisation use BEI type interviews for middle/senior leadership/management interviews?*

4. *If the answer to the above is no, how would you describe the type of interviews that are carried out?*
5. *Is a representative from HR on the interview panel? (Never/Always/Some times?)*
6. *For BEI style interviews does each panel member score the candidate and then these scores are combined to tally up to a grand total score?*
7. *Could a candidate who scores lower than the top scorer (e.g. came in second) still be considered the preferred candidate?*
8. *What are some of the factors or conditions that might give rise to the above in question #8 above? (I.e. team fit, personality, how panel felt about them?) Other factors?*
9. *Are those in your organisation who do the interviewing trained in the BEI interview method?*
10. *Once a candidate has been selected and employed by your organisation do you keep a record of how long he/she stays with the organisation? (length of tenure)*
11. *Or do you keep records of how that candidate is tracking regards their role? (good performance appraisals, improvements plans? Unsatisfactory performance?)*
12. *Have you ever surveyed applicants who have been interviewed as to how they feel about the BEI interview process? If so, please share these results.*
13. *Does your organisation ever use recruitment firms to source candidates? (I.e. this approach is sometimes use for specialist positions or senior management type roles)*
14. *The candidate pool since Covid March, 2020. In your view has the pool of candidates changed or got smaller since March, 2020. Has it taken longer to recruit for roles or have some roles remained vacant? Have there been other flow on effects since Covid impacted in March 2020?*

On 28 April 2022, the Ministry advised you that an extension was required as the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request were such that a proper response to the request could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

For clarity, I will address each point of your request in turn.

1. *Would a candidate applying for a leadership/management type position in your organisation be required to do a task before the interview? (i.e. a phone screen, pre-test, etc) Or would the candidate have to complete a task after the interview such as - an aptitude test, numeracy/literacy*

or psychological profiling? Or are the interview and reference checking essentially the total recruitment process?

The Ministry's interview process varies depending on the role and the level of the position. Presentation tasks are sometimes used during an interview to assess the candidate's presentation and communication skills and/or their views on issues or topics related to the role. For some roles (e.g. senior roles such as Group General Manager or Deputy Chief Executive) additional assessments may be completed. This may include behavioural based interviews, personality questionnaires, literacy, numeracy and abstract reasoning assessments, as well as simulated briefings to replicate work-based responsibilities. I refer to the attached *Recruitment Guidelines* under the subheading *Additional selection tools* provided as **Appendix One**.

2. *How are applicants chosen to be interviewed? (See the options below from a to c):*
 - *(a) A representative from Human Resources goes through the candidate pool of CVs received?*
 - *(b) A representative from HR and the hiring manager go through the candidates?*
 - *(c) The hiring manager acting alone selects who is to be interviewed?*

The Ministry has a leader-led process, where people leaders conduct their own recruitment with support and guidance from the Ministry's Recruitment team. The level of support required varies depending on the needs of the manager. Candidates are short listed for an interview based on criteria selected by the interview panel and the candidate's ability to demonstrate a match to that criteria. The panel chairperson is responsible for selecting an appropriate panel, with the approval of the appropriate manager, based on the contribution they can make. I refer you to the following documents released to you under the Act:

- **Appendix Two** – Recruitment Policy
- **Appendix Three** – Role of the Chairperson guidance
- **Appendix Four** - Selecting a diverse panel
- **Appendix Five** – Writing your Selection Criteria.

3. *Does your organisation use BEI type interviews for middle/senior leadership/management interviews?*
4. *If the answer to the above is no, how would you describe the type of interviews that are carried out?*

The Ministry uses Competency Based Interviewing. Relevant questions are asked to discover examples of when a candidate has previously demonstrated the behaviour and skills that the interview panel have selected as essential for

the role. I refer you to Appendix Two and Appendix Five for more information on the interview process and the criteria selected as essential for the role.

5. Is a representative from HR on the interview panel? (Never/Always/Some times?)

A representative from HR is sometimes on the interview panel if requested by the manager for support - for example, if the manager is new to their role or a particular skillset is being sought.

6. For BEI style interviews does each panel member score the candidate and then these scores are combined to tally up to a grand total score?

Interview scoring is included in the Ministry's Interview Guide template, attached as **Appendix Six**. Each panel representative may score individually initially as they take notes. The panel will then discuss and agree a panel rating together at the end of interviews.

7. Could a candidate who scores lower than the top scorer (e.g. came in second) still be considered the preferred candidate?

8. What are some of the factors or conditions that might give rise to the above in question #8 above? (I.e. team fit, personality, how panel felt about them?) Other factors?

Appointment is based on merit. Other factors are taken into account in the selection criteria and explored at interview, however they need to be measurable to be able to help the interview panel make a decision. There are a number of factors that could influence the final decision, such as reference checks, salary expectations and vetting results.

9. Are those in your organisation who do the interviewing trained in the BEI interview method?

The Ministry's Recruitment team provides support and training in these areas.

10. Once a candidate has been selected and employed by your organisation do you keep a record of how long he/she stays with the organisation? (length of tenure)

11. Or do you keep records of how that candidate is tracking regards their role? (good performance appraisals, improvements plans? Unsatisfactory performance?)

The Ministry's HR System (myHR) records employee information including tenure length.

The Ministry's people leaders are supported by their manager through our performance and development system (On Track) that is used for all National Office employees and all Service Delivery Managers. On Track is based around regular conversations between people and their managers. These

conversations focus on how people are going to deliver on agreed objectives and how their manager can support them to achieve this. The main elements of the process are regular catch-ups throughout the year, development planning and an end of year summary. On Track records are held by the employee and their manager and are not centrally recorded by the Ministry.

Where poor performance requires a formal approach, managers will seek support from the Ministry's HR Consultancy team. Those cases will be recorded and/or tracked in our Salesforce / CRM Case Management system.

12. Have you ever surveyed applicants who have been interviewed as to how they feel about the BEI interview process? If so, please share these results.

The Ministry has post recruitment surveys for both new employees and managers, however the interview process is not measured in the survey.

13. Does your organisation ever use recruitment firms to source candidates? (I.e. this approach is sometimes use for specialist positions or senior management type roles)

The Ministry uses recruitment firms at times for particular roles. This is usually for specialist or technical roles and senior leadership roles, or where our own recruitment process has not identified a suitable candidate.

14. The candidate pool since Covid March, 2020. In your view has the pool of candidates changed or got smaller since March, 2020. Has it taken longer to recruit for roles or have some roles remained vacant? Have there been other flow on effects since Covid impacted in March 2020?

The competition for talent in the Wellington labour market has increased since COVID-19 impacted New Zealand. There are a number of reasons for this, including increased job opportunities, particularly in skilled areas such as project management, IT, Policy, HR, increased salary expectations, shortage of certain skills in New Zealand, people making lifestyle choices, and the border closures which have prevented overseas candidates from moving to New Zealand.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

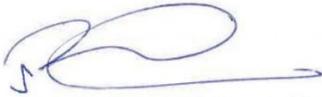
This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any

attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Ministry's interviewing processes, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Penny Rounthwaite', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Penny Rounthwaite
Group General Manager
People