Chief Science Strategy Officer

Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer	**Position Status:**	Permanent
Unit:	Science Strategy	**Location:**	To be agreed
Direct Reports:	[x]	**Budget & Delegated Authority:**	[x]
Band:	Executive	**Date:**	September 2025

OUR ORGANISATION

Earth Sciences NZ was established on 1 July 2025, through the merger of GNS and NIWA, with the upcoming acquisition of MetService further strengthening its capabilities. As part of the most significant reforms to New Zealand's science and innovation system in 30 years, Earth Sciences NZ is positioned as a leading-edge science organisation that excels in earth, environmental and natural resources science.

With six core science missions – Geological Hazards, Weather and Climate Hazards, Energy, Land and Freshwater, Atmosphere and Climate, and Oceans – Earth Sciences NZ is set to become a globally recognised science leader. By integrating multidisciplinary expertise and advanced technologies, the organisation will tackle complex environmental challenges and unlock opportunities for sustainable growth and development.

Following the MetService acquisition, Earth Sciences NZ will comprise approximately 1,500 staff across 22 sites, managing $400 million in assets and generating $370 million in annual revenue. Serving both the public and private sectors, the organisation plays a vital role in enhancing national resilience to natural hazards, supporting economic growth, and delivering innovative science for a sustainable future.

ROLE PURPOSE

The Chief Science Strategy Officer provides strategic leadership and direction for Earth Sciences NZ's scientific programmes, ensuring their integration, alignment, and impact. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Chief Science Strategy Officer is responsible for shaping and delivering a bold, future-focused science vision, leading the development and implementation of integrated science strategies, and ensuring the organisation's research, innovation, and commercialisation efforts deliver long-term value for Aotearoa New Zealand

The Chief Science Strategy Officer also leads the organisation's research bidding strategy and process, ensuring Earth Sciences NZ remains competitive and impactful in a dynamic funding environment.

This position will drive the integration of a unified science strategy across all mission areas - Geological Hazards, Weather and Climate Hazards, Energy, Land and Freshwater, Atmosphere and Climate, and Oceans, ensuring, alignment with government priorities and organisational objectives.

POSITION PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Leadership Accountabilities

- Champion Earth Sciences NZ's purpose, values, and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, modelling ethical leadership and integrity in all actions and decisions.
- Shape and deliver the organisation's strategic direction, fostering collaboration and alignment across all functions and offering innovative insights to inform and enhance the organisation's delivery of its core objectives.
- Ensure robust governance, risk management, and compliance with legal, regulatory, and public sector requirements.
- Promote health, safety, and wellbeing as a strategy priority, embedding it into systems, culture, and leadership practice.
- Apply a whole-of-science systems approach by actively collaborating across the broader science system, ensuring integration beyond an Earth Sciences NZ perspective.
- Engage effectively with the Board, government, iwi, sector partners, and stakeholders to advance Earth Sciences NZ's mission and reputation.
- Uphold collective accountability for organisational performance, financial sustainability, and continuous improvement, resource stewardship, and delivery of public-good science impact.

Strategic Leadership & Integration

- Lead the development, articulation, and implementation of a cohesive, future-focused science strategy that positions Earth Sciences NZ as a national and global leader in earth, environmental, and natural resources science.
- Integrate science strategy across all missions (Geological Hazards, Weather and Climate Hazards, Energy, Land and Freshwater, Atmosphere and Climate, Oceans), ensuring alignment with organisational priorities, government direction, and stakeholder needs.
- Translate government policy, national science priorities, and emerging trends into actionable science strategies and programmes.
- Oversee the integration of science strategy functions post-merger, ensuring a unified, mission-led approach to research planning and delivery.
- Champion a culture of scientific excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement, ensuring science programmes are impactful, future-ready, and responsive to changing needs.
- Identify and manage strategic, operational, and reputational risks related to science strategy and delivery, ensuring business continuity and stakeholder confidence.
- Champion scientific integrity, ethics, and awareness of emerging developments, ensuring the organisation remains at the forefront of scientific discovery and application.
- Forecast trends in science and technology, advising on future capability needs, investment priorities, and resourcing models to ensure long-term organisational resilience and impact.

Research Bidding Strategy & Process

- Lead the organisation's research bidding strategy, ensuring a proactive, coordinated approach to identifying, prioritising, and pursuing funding opportunities from government, commercial, and international sources.

- Oversee the end-to-end research bidding process, including opportunity scanning, bid development, internal review, submission, negotiation, and post-award management.
- Establish and maintain robust processes, tools, and governance for bid preparation, ensuring quality, compliance, and alignment with strategic priorities.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with key funders (e.g., MBIE), research partners, and stakeholders to maximise success rates and influence funding priorities.
- Monitor and report on bidding performance, pipeline health, and lessons learned, driving continuous improvement in bid quality and outcomes.
- Develop internal capability in bid development through training, mentoring, and resource development, fostering a culture of excellence and collaboration in research funding.

Revenue Generation & Commercialisation

- Guide the development and commercialisation of science services, products, and intellectual property, ensuring offerings are market-relevant, innovative, and deliver measurable impact and revenue.
- Identify and pursue new revenue streams, commercial partnerships, and business opportunities that leverage Earth Sciences NZ's scientific expertise and assets.
- Lead the negotiation and management of commercial contracts, partnerships, and licensing agreements, ensuring mutually beneficial outcomes and compliance with organisational policies.
- Oversee the lifecycle management of science products and services, from concept to market, ensuring quality, relevance, and sustainability.
- Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to translate research outputs into practical solutions for government, industry, iwi, and the wider community.
- Achieve science revenue targets and support the organisation's commercial growth by identifying and developing new opportunities.

People Leadership, Direction and Development

- Inspire and grow high-performing teams by shaping a collaborative, inclusive culture grounded in the Earth Sciences NZ's purpose, values, and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Ensure clear direction, clarity and alignment for the Science Strategy function, ensuring efforts are focused on achieving organisational objectives.
- Identify and develop capabilities required to meet current and future business needs, promoting a culture of personal growth, succession planning and supporting capability building across the organisation.

Board and Stakeholder Relations

- Build and maintain influential relationships with key external stakeholders – including government agencies, iwi/hapū, research institutions, universities, and commercial partners – nationally and internationally, to advance Earth Sciences NZ's strategic science priorities and impact.
- Maintain and grow national and international collaborations, representing Earth Sciences NZ in high-level science forums, consortia, and partnerships, promoting the organisation's visibility, reputation, and leadership in earth and environmental sciences.

- Support the CEO in building strong shareholder relationships, particularly with MBIE, through accurate, strategic performance reporting and effective relationship management.
- Serve as a strategic partner to the CEO and Board, providing clear, forward-looking advice on science direction, innovation, revenue growth, and organisational sustainability to support effective governance and decision-making.
- Lead confident, timely engagement with the Board and relevant sub-committees on matters of science strategy, research, innovation, and commercialisation, ensuring the Board is well-informed and equipped to make strategic decisions.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW)

An executive leader at Earth Sciences New Zealand owns and champions a proactive HSW culture across the organisation. This includes:

- Own and champion a proactive HSW culture across the organisation, modelling visible safety leadership and embedding HSW into strategic decision-making, planning, and delivery.
- Take personal accountability for organisational critical risks, ensuring they are identified, understood, and actively managed. This includes regular review of risk controls, assurance activities, and escalation of emerging risks.
- Demonstrate legal and ethical responsibility for HSW, recognising that executive leaders may be held personally accountable for failures in managing known risks.
- Lead by example through safety conversations, site visits, and engagement with frontline teams, reinforcing a culture of openness, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Ensure consistency and integration of HSW practices across Earth Sciences NZ, supporting a unified approach to wellbeing and risk management.
- Support incident investigations and corrective actions, ensuring timely response, appropriate support for affected workers, and effective implementation and review of improvements.
- Report risks and issues transparently and promptly to the Chief Executive and Board to ensure that critical information is surfaced and acted upon at the highest levels of the organisation.

Leadership Expectations

An executive leader at Earth Sciences New Zealand empowers and enables their teams for success—equipping people to deliver on our goals and foster a strong, positive culture. This includes:

- **Strategic Leadership**: Articulates a bold and future-focused vision, aligning teams and stakeholders around shared strategic priorities. Demonstrates foresight and influence in shaping organisational direction and leading transformative change.
- **Systems Thinking:** Enhances organisational and system-wide performance through fostering collaboration, championing innovation, and leading meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- **Adaptive Leadership:** Demonstrates curiosity, courageous decision-making, and inclusive leadership while navigating complexity with integrity and foresight. Embraces ambiguity as an opportunity for innovation, modelling resilience and self-awareness in the face of uncertainty. Leads organisational adaptability by championing continuous learning and responding decisively to emerging challenges and opportunities across the organisation and science system.

- **Capability Development:** Builds organisational capability by empowering leaders at all levels, investing in talent development, and embedding a high-performance culture that supports growth, accountability, and innovation.
- **Performance and Accountability:** Drives ambitious outcomes through strategic prioritisation, effective resource stewardship, and a commitment to empowering others. Holds self and others accountable for delivering outcomes that advance organisational goals and science impact.

Responsibilities of all Employees

- Comply with all Earth Sciences NZ policies, procedures and frameworks, and act in line with the organisational values.
- Contribute to our healthy and safe workplace by following Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) expectations outlined in and integrated into our operational practices and HSW Frameworks, including undertaking HSW training and participating in health monitoring programmes relevant to your work.
- Work effectively as a team member by fostering good relationships and supporting others by providing coverage of other functions as required and ensuring workloads are evenly spread.
- Have the flexibility to adapt and develop as the organisation and its environment evolves.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Internal	External
• Executive Leadership Team, Board of Directors, Managers and Leaders	• Shareholding Ministers; MBIE; Senior Managers of DoC, MfE, MPI, MFAT, NEMA, National Hazards Commission, Iwi, CEOs and Senior Managers of regional councils; CEOs of business organisations and major corporates within New Zealand and globally; CEOs and members of Māori organisations /authorities; CEOs and Senior Managers of the Institute for Bioeconomy Science, Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science and the NZ Institute for Advanced Technology; the World Meteorological Organisation and national meteorological offices; senior leaders at national and international universities; international collaborators including offshore research institutions.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and Experience

- A relevant post graduate tertiary qualification, PhD or equivalent in science or engineering, or equivalent capability gained through a combination of education and executive-level experience.
- Preferably a tertiary qualification in Business Administration or equivalent experience.
- Extensive scientific experience and at least 10 years in a senior science leadership position.

Skills, Knowledge and Attributes

- Proven ability to lead science transformation and integration, aligning strategy with organisational goals.
- Executive-level experience in developing and delivering business and commercial strategies within a science-focused organisation.
- Proven track record of delivering commercial growth through strategic business development and executing revenue-generating business strategies.
- Demonstrated success in forming commercial partnerships with government and industry to grow revenue.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to operationalise plans and lead through ambiguity.
- Advanced influencing and stakeholder engagement skills, with a strong record of driving high performance.
- Recognised scientific authority with established international reputation and network in relevant scientific disciplines.
- Deep understanding of research, innovation, applied science and science delivery processes.
- Knowledge of New Zealand's science and technology sector, including funding mechanisms.
- Strong collaboration and relationship-building skills, including with Māori, respecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tikanga.
- Holds up to date knowledge of relevant science fields and emerging trends.