CASE STUDY:

Environmental Science and Research

NONSUCH

BACKGROUND

The Institute of Environmental, Science and Research (ESR) is the New Zealand government research agency dedicated to the health, wellbeing and safety of our communities. They use world leading science to monitor disease, test food and products, safeguard our water, support the justice sector and more. ESR were experiencing challenges in delivering robust portfolio management practices and the organisations Board and Senior Leadership team wanted greater visibility of what projects and scientific initiatives were being undertaken across the organisation.

THE CHALLENGE

The ESR Board and Senior Leadership team did not have full transparency over how many projects were underway across their entire organisation and so could not understand the total investment in their portfolio of projects.
Additionally ,as projects are run from different areas across the organisation (i.e. scientific research versus ICT) an understanding of the impact on the organisations resources was not transparent.

THE SOLUTION

Nonsuch worked with their Senior Management and Leadership teams to develop portfolio management practices to support their specific and niche project environment and decision-making criteria. The engagement started with a quantification of strategic drivers which were then prioritised and documented with clear dimensions describing each one. We worked with all members of the Senior Leadership Team to develop a new Portfolio Governance Group (PGG), which were given responsibility for making portfolio decisions going forward. This group was established as part of this programme of work and a PGG Terms of Reference was developed.
The next step was a stocktake of all the projects across the ESR environment where there were 30 individual Cost Centre Managers and 105 projects on the collated list. Once the stocktake and weighted strategic drivers were in place, each project was assessed against each driver to understand its strategic contribution, and then prioritised. The divisional stocktakes were then collated together and a final list of prioritised projects produced.

THE OUTCOME

This engagement adapted ESR's delivery methodology by putting robust structures, processes and resources in place to enable ESR projects to be assessed against the strategic drivers and effectively prioritised within the portfolio supporting effective decision making for the Senior Leadership Team.

The organisational leadership can now make more effective decisions on how their portfolio is investment in and where the organisation is best placed to apply its scare resources.

HIGHLIGHTS

The highlights of this engagement were:

- Working closely as part of the ESR project management team to support the ESR Senior Leadership Team.
- Creating transparency on the actual number of projects being managed across the organisation.
- Being able to develop the Portfolio Governance Group to ensure that visibility of projects across the organisation could be maintained.
- Raising awareness of the power of project data and facilitating strengthened decision making.

References

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