

Serious Fraud Office

Strategic Areas of Focus

The Serious Fraud Office seeks to commit its specialist expertise to cases which have the greatest potential impact in disrupting and deterring serious fraud.

To help stakeholders understand where we are prioritising our resources, we have developed a list of strategic areas of focus. We aim to have at least 40% of our investigations and prosecutions fall within these focus areas, which will be reviewed and updated every 12 - 18 months. This list does not represent our entire caseload and we continue to encourage and receive all complaints and referrals involving suspected serious or complex fraud. Any complaints or referrals we receive will be assessed against our statutory criteria, including the scale of the alleged crime, its impact on victims, its complexity and the degree of public interest.



Corporate and commercial fraud that threatens New Zealand's reputation as a safe place to do business

The SFO was established to tackle corporate fraud exposed in the economic recession of the 1980s and it remains an enduring priority, particularly as New Zealand enters another recession period. Corporate fraud threatens our reputation and undermines confidence in the reliability of our regulatory systems.

Foreign bribery or foreign influence allegations

Foreign influence and bribery of foreign public officials is hugely damaging to societies and the SFO has a role to play in ensuring we protect New Zealand's interests in the face of such threats, as well as ensuring our own institutions operate internationally with high levels of integrity.



Misappropriation of targeted Government funding (including emergency recovery or rebuild)

Targeted funding responds to a specific need. Fraud on these funds further exacerbates the issue it was intended to address and undermines Government efforts. In emergency situations, the need to deliver funding urgently can mean reliance on high trust, quick distribution mechanisms, which are more vulnerable to exploitation.

Fraud that targets or disproportionately harms a particularly vulnerable community or group

While the vulnerability of victims is always a relevant factor, the targeting of a particularly vulnerable group can be especially destabilising to our social fabric and damaging to trust in community leadership and institutions. It is important those who target such communities are held to account, as well as to highlight where particular sectors of society may need protection or attention.



Disruption of emerging trends

The SFO doesn't have the capacity for volume, but we can strategically choose cases to ensure greatest impact. We will look for opportunities to disrupt, at an early stage, emerging trends which have the potential to be the 'thin edge of the wedge' of significant future harm.

Corruption of public officials where health and safety is compromised

While corruption cases are a perennial priority, we are particularly focused on offences that threaten the health and safety of New Zealanders and those who visit our country. This is particularly relevant to public procurement in sectors where substandard outcomes have the potential to cause injury and possibly death, including construction, roading and healthcare.



Frauds perpetrated or facilitated by trusted professionals or professional enablers

There is a strong need for deterrence in respect of gatekeepers and to preserve the integrity of our professional institutions.