Operations Cost Analyst

Position Description – Finance

Team:	Commercial Finance Operations	**Location:**	Auckland – Millenium Centre
Reports to:	Operations Cost Manager		
Role Type:	Permanent		

About Us

KiwiRail's Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose—Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand)—speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.



Safety, health, and well-being are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the role

The Operations Cost Analyst supports the Operations Cost Manager in delivering KiwiRail's cost intelligence capability. The primary focus of this role is the production of standard costs and cost-to-serve analytics that underpin pricing decisions and profitability assessment across KiwiRail's freight and logistics operations.

- **Develop and maintain standard cost models:** Build and update product and corridor-level standard cost structures, ensuring they accurately reflect operational drivers and input costs.
- **Generate cost-to-serve analytics:** Produce regular CTS reporting that enables the business to understand the full cost of delivering services by product type, trading corridor, and customer segment.
- **Analyse operational cost drivers:** Develop unit-cost and efficiency measures that explain the relationship between operational activity, resource consumption, and financial outcomes.
- **Support pricing, planning, and margin analysis:** Provide costing inputs and analytical support to Pricing, Commercial, Finance, and Operations teams, enabling data-driven pricing, forecasting, and profitability decisions.
- **Deliver profitability insights:** Develop P&L analysis at the corridor, product, and customer level to identify opportunities for productivity, margin, and cost improvement.
- **Maintain and enhance financial models:** Continuously improve the accuracy, efficiency, controls, automation, and usability of cost models and analytical tools.

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

- **Develop and maintain standard costing models** for freight products, services, routes, and operating activities, ensuring outputs are accurate, reconciled, well-documented, and consistently applied.
- **Deliver cost-to-serve, profitability, and P&L analysis** across products, trading corridors, and priority customer use cases, providing insights that support commercial and operational decision making.
- **Develop cost and support profitability analysis** at train, corridor, customer, service, and commodity level, incorporating rail-specific operating drivers such as GTKM, NTKM, train starts, locomotive hours, wagon cycles, crew utilisation, terminal activity, and network access requirements.
- **Analyse operational cost drivers and performance**, including utilisation, asset consumption, labour, fuel, maintenance, terminal activity, service requirements, and other operational factors that influence cost and profitability.
- **Undertake variance analysis and performance reporting**, identifying material variances between actual and standard costs, determining root causes, and supporting the development of corrective actions.
- **Provide analytical support for pricing, planning, forecasting, business cases, and investment decisions**, including scenario modelling and sensitivity analysis.
- **Support investment evaluations and asset utilisation analysis** through modelling of lifecycle costs, cost avoidance opportunities, and return-on-investment outcomes.
- **Develop and maintain unit-cost and performance measures**, ensuring consistent definitions and application across products, services, and operating activities.
- **Maintain the integrity of costing data and models** through robust reconciliation, validation, documentation, and control processes, ensuring outputs reconcile to approved financial and operational datasets.
- **Support the development and ongoing enhancement of KiwiRail's costing capability**, including cost allocation methodologies, cost-driver frameworks, dynamic costing models, and profitability reporting.
- **Drive continuous improvement, automation, and responsible use of AI-enabled tools** to improve the efficiency, quality, repeatability, and accessibility of costing and analytical outputs.

- **Lead the costing contribution to cross-functional commercial reviews**, working with Operations, Customer & Growth, Pricing, and Finance teams to validate assumptions, challenge inputs, build confidence in outputs, and ensure costing information is understood, trusted, and effectively applied in business decision making.
- **Support benefit identification and tracking**, quantifying productivity, pricing, cost-reduction, and margin-improvement opportunities arising from analysis.
- **Prepare reports, presentations, and commentary** that communicate complex cost and profitability information clearly and effectively to stakeholders.

Key Relationships **Here are the key relationships relevant to this role**		**Manage /Lead**	**Deliver to**	**Collaborate with**	**Advise or inform**
Internal	Operations Cost Manager		✓		
	Chief Financial Officer		✓		✓
	GM Commercial – Operations & Infrastructure		✓		✓
	Commercial Finance Manager – Operations			✓	
	Pricing & Commercial Team			✓	✓
	Freight Operations Team			✓	
	Customer & Growth Team			✓	
	IT Team			✓	
External	External cost benchmarking contacts / industry peers				✓

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing	• You prioritise safety by identifying and addressing hazards, ensuring the wellbeing of others. • You follow through on commitments, acting with integrity in all situations. • You are confident in challenging unsafe behaviours and have courageous safety conversations. • You adhere to KiwiRail's health and safety requirements and promote a proactive safety culture.
Customer Focus	• You build rapport with internal stakeholders, ensuring their needs are understood and met. • You deliver high-quality costing outputs that support sound commercial and pricing decisions. • You tailor financial analysis and reports to suit different audiences, ensuring clarity and relevance. • You respond promptly to queries and provide accurate information that supports stakeholder confidence.
High Performing Teams Skills	• You actively collaborate with colleagues, contributing positively to team tasks. • You share knowledge and support others in building costing and financial analysis capability. • You contribute to a positive team culture and support the success of the wider Finance function.
Commercial Acumen	• You use cost data and analytical insights to inform pricing and profitability decisions. • You identify opportunities for financial process and model improvements and implement changes. • You ensure compliance with financial policies and costing standards across all reporting activities.
Role specific domain	• You organise your time effectively, ensuring tasks are prioritised and delivered to a high standard. • You apply sound judgement when building cost models, based on thorough analysis, validated data, and transparent assumptions. • You challenge data, assumptions, and methodologies constructively, surfacing issues early and recommending practical improvements. • You actively participate in collaborative CTS scoping and review sessions, constructively testing assumptions, validating operational inputs, and building stakeholder confidence in costing outputs. • You understand operational cost drivers and translate them into meaningful unit-cost, variance, and performance insights. • You find practical solutions to costing challenges and proactively suggest methodology, control, automation, and reporting improvements. • You use AI-enabled tools appropriately to improve analytical productivity, support insight generation, strengthen documentation, and automate

repeatable tasks, while applying judgement, validation, privacy, and data-security controls.

- You stay current with costing techniques, financial technologies, data tools, and industry best practice.

Decision Making

The Operations Cost Analyst is accountable for the quality, accuracy, reconciliation, and usability of cost data and analytical outputs within their remit, and provides advice to the Operations Cost Manager and other stakeholders on matters related to standard costing, cost-to-serve analysis, operational cost drivers, variance analysis, and profitability insights.

Key decision-making requirements of the position include:

- Design and methodology choices within approved cost models and analytical tools
- Data validation, reconciliation, and quality assurance of financial and operational cost inputs
- Definition and application of unit-cost measures, cost drivers, and model assumptions, within approved methodologies
- Prioritisation of analytical workload in line with business needs
- Escalation of material data issues, model limitations, control weaknesses, or significant cost variances

Human Resources Delegations	Nil
Direct reports	Nil
Finance Delegations	Nil
Budget (operating and capital)	Nil
Travel Delegations	Nil
Statutory powers	Nil

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is administration-based and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- limited walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- limited lifting of up to 7 kg archive boxes

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and experience

Essential:

- **5–6 years of relevant experience** in a financial analysis, management accounting, costing, operational analytics, or commercial analysis role.
- **Demonstrated experience in standard costing and/or cost-to-serve methodology** — candidates with previous costing experience are strongly preferred.
- **Advanced proficiency in Excel** and financial modelling, including the ability to build, maintain, reconcile, document, and improve complex multi-driver cost models.
- **Sound understanding of cost allocation approaches** including activity-based costing (ABC) or ABC Lite principles.
- **Experience in actual-to-standard, cost-driver, or performance variance analysis**, including the ability to identify, quantify, and explain material variances.
- **Experience working with large and complex financial and operational datasets**, including data extraction, reconciliation, validation, exception analysis, and control checks.
- **Experience in P&L analysis** at a product, corridor, or customer level.
- **Understanding of unit-cost, productivity, utilisation, and operational performance measures** and how these influence cost and profitability outcomes.
- **Ability to translate complex cost data into clear, actionable insights** for non-finance stakeholders.
- **Strong analytical and problem-solving skills** with high attention to detail and accuracy.
- **Ability to challenge data, assumptions, and methodologies constructively**, while maintaining positive working relationships.
- **Experience working collaboratively across Finance, Operations, and Commercial teams.**
- **AI literacy and responsible use capability**, including the ability to use approved AI-enabled tools to support analysis, reporting, documentation, automation, and problem solving, while validating outputs and protecting confidential or sensitive information.

Desirable:

- Experience in the transport, logistics, or infrastructure sectors, with an understanding of operational cost structures.
- Exposure to cost-to-serve modelling in a freight, supply chain, or similar operational environment.
- Familiarity with ERP, asset-management, transport-management, or operational systems, such as SAP, Maximo, or comparable platforms.
- Experience with business intelligence tools such as Power BI.
- Experience with data-query or transformation tools such as Power Query, SQL, or equivalent.
- Knowledge of pricing methodology and its relationship to cost structures.
- Understanding of fleet, asset, labour, fuel, terminal, maintenance, and network-related cost drivers.
- Experience developing automated reporting, management dashboards, or repeatable analytical processes.
- Experience applying AI-enabled productivity or analytics tools to improve finance, reporting, modelling, data preparation, or decision-support processes.
- Experience facilitating or contributing to cross-functional operational, commercial, or costing workshops.

Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- You communicate clearly and confidently, tailoring your message to different audiences.
- You collaborate effectively with colleagues and contribute to team success.
- You stay calm and composed under pressure and adapt to changing priorities.

- You take ownership of your outputs and seek opportunities for continuous improvement.
- You apply sound judgement, validate your assumptions, and surface data issues proactively.
- You are curious about emerging tools and technologies, including AI, and apply them responsibly to improve the quality, efficiency, and impact of your work.

Other Requirements

- You can pass regular drug and alcohol screenings.
- You hold a current and valid NZ driver's licence.

Qualifications

- You hold a relevant tertiary qualification in accounting, finance, economics, data analytics, engineering, operations research, or a related discipline, or have equivalent industry experience.
- A CA, CPA, CIMA, or similar professional accounting qualification, or progress towards one, is desirable.