

The following is an excerpt from 'BRF-4090: Waste investment priorities, processes and controls'. The briefing was submitted to Minister for the Environment Hon Penny Simmonds on 16 February 2024.

Investment categories

For investment in projects through the funds we consider there are six key types of project, or investment categories. These different categories typically address the waste issue at different levels on the waste hierarchy. We summarise these below and can provide further detail in a separate briefing:

- Infrastructure: New or expanded resource recovery and processing facilities including Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), transfer stations, onshore recycling / processing facilities.

Key waste streams

We propose to focus on waste streams and materials that provide the biggest “bang for buck” in terms of high volume for diversion from landfill, high potential for harm (environmental or human), high public concern, and where we think there is reasonable ‘achievability’. These priorities could include:

- C&D – high landfill volume, a mixture of materials; but typically a lower level of ‘harm’. There has been some investment and expansion in C&D resource recovery facilities in the last three years. The key investment opportunity is in sorting and processing facilities for materials recovery and consolidation.
- Organics – high landfill volume, good markets for a range of reprocessed organics including biogas and soil amendments / compost, and reduces methane generation. There has been investment in different processing technologies (such as anaerobic digestion) and a number of medium to large scale opportunities currently under assessment. A small number of partner organisations were funded to deliver national-scale food waste reduction programmes across three categories: household, Māori-led, business.
- Plastics – from commercial sources and packaging – very high public interest and opportunities for better recycling and product design. Infrastructure is the key investment category for plastics, together with innovation to prevent, reduce or design out plastic waste. Future investment could be either through pursuing opportunities already in the PIF pipeline, running another round of the PIF, or adding a plastics investment signal to the WMF.
- Kerbside recyclables - containers and packaging such as bottle glass, aluminium, plastics and fibre packaging, all of which need more onshore markets / processing options to increase circularity.
- Supporting solutions for special products that have high public concern / potential for harm eg tyres, e-waste & batteries, agrichemicals, refrigerant gases (to support product stewardship opportunities or schemes).