

Advice to Deputy Secretary PID on FTR activities in context of changing administration – for calls week commencing 24 October

19 October 2023

Purpose:

1. To identify and recommend FTR-team led regional implementation activities to be paused/stopped while the direction of new administration is confirmed (see Table 1).
2. To identify FTR project team learnings/activities that align with our current understanding of the direction of new administration.
3. Talking points to support calls to be made to our project partners in regions.

Underlying assumptions:

1. That there will be repeal of the NBEA and SPA (and stopping implementation of that legislation) as per the National Party '100 Day Plan' and 'Blueprint for a Better Environment' policy.
2. That broader work with regions (in the short term and subject to approval) could be considered under 'stewardship' of the environmental management system. This might include capability, capacity, building system knowledge and readiness for future change.

Table 1: Proposed actions on current FTR-led activities

| FTR team activity | Current status | Pause/Stop? | Rationale for advice | Risks in actioning advice | Mitigation |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Taranaki FTR scoping | Funding agreement in place for FTR scoping exercise (\$400K). Delivery partners project team underway on scoping exercise with intent to submit FTR scoping report to MfE by 31 Mar 2024. Upcoming engagements paused. | Pause engagement and advisory work until we get clarity regarding new government objectives. | The scoping design, template and funding is specific to readying the region for the new RM system processes and products under the NBEA/SPA. Funding is specifically within that scope. Delivery partners are only part way through the project and have signalled that the final FTR scoping report will be submitted by 31 March 2024. | Moderate – partners will not be surprised given the election outcome and it is important the Ministry does not appear tone deaf by continuing to drive a former agenda. There may be some frustration/concern that the exercise has been a wasted time and effort and that regional capacity enabled through the project may be lost. | Acknowledgment of the regional benefits achieved through the scoping exercise to date and how this will benefit in future; especially relationships and understanding of technical capability and capacity across regional partners. Acknowledgement that work to date can inform position statement for the incoming government. |
| Tasman/Nelson FTR scoping | Funding agreement in place for FTR scoping exercise (\$300K). Delivery partners project team preparing to submit draft FTR scoping response to MfE by 30 Oct 23. | Pause MfE engagement and advisory work upon delivery of draft report. | The scoping design, template and funding is specific to readying the regions for the new RM system processes and products under the NBEA/SPA. Funding is specifically within that scope. The scoping exercise is at near completion with a draft report to be submitted by the end of Oct 23. Project wrap-up at that stage will provide relevant learnings from the draft final report and overall process. | Moderate – partners will not be surprised given the election outcome and it is important the Ministry does not appear tone deaf by continuing to drive driving a former agenda. There may be some frustration/perception that the exercise has been a wasted time and effort. Low risk that 'end of project' learnings will not be extracted due to early wrap-up. | Acknowledgment of the regional benefits achieved through the scoping exercise to date and how this will benefit in future; especially relationships and understanding of technical capability and capacity across regional partners. |
| Tairāwhiti Readiness for resilience focused spatial planning | No formal agreement in place. FTR team has provided feedback to iwi and GDC on their initial project proposal which was framed specifically around readying for the new RM system processes and products and assumed FTR status. No response from iwi and GDC following our feedback and no upcoming engagement scheduled. | Pause (including engagement) until there is certainty on the 'fit' of this project with new administration priorities. | The National Party policy document indicates support for cyclone impacted regions but the nature of their desired approach is still to be understood. MILU work (under RMA and resilience) is also driven by the 2x Ministerial appointees into the region, and we could potentially package our implementation work with MILU moving forward. | Moderate – partners will not be surprised but will seek some signal from the Ministry as to whether it intends to progress key aspects of future resilience planning work. | Note that work and conversations about future resilience planning will continue as part of MILU/SWIR activities. |
| Hawke's Bay Readiness for resilience focused spatial planning | No formal agreement in place. FTR team has planned engagements with partners around testing possible scope/outputs. Upcoming engagement (late Oct) paused. | Pause (including engagement) until there is certainty on the 'fit' of this project with new administration priorities. | The National Party policy document indicates support for cyclone impacted regions but the nature and extent of their desired approach is still to be understood. | Moderate – partners will not be surprised but will seek some signal that the Ministry as to whether it intends to progress key aspects of future resilience planning work. | Note that work and conversations about future resilience planning will continue as part of SWIR activities. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Greater Wellington Technical assessment of spatial plan | No formal agreement in place. Initial discussions between FTR team and GWRC around scope consideration. Action sitting with GWRC to come back with more detailed scope, timeframes, delivery options and cost estimates. | Pause (including engagement) until there is certainty on the 'fit' of this project with new administration priorities around spatial planning. | The new administration may consider that progressing spatial planning is a tool worth progressing – particularly for large urban environments. | Low - partners will not be surprised given the election outcome. | Not required |
| Regional Readiness Project (other regions) | Draft 'regional readiness' project brief has been tested with LGIG Project Hub and T&I directors. Next step was to commence work on a project plan. Project has not been costed and no budget has been allocated. | Pause/Stop | Readiness project brief has been framed in the context of the new RM system processes and products. The new administration may consider that progressing spatial planning is a tool worth progressing – particularly in urban environments. If so, readying the relevant regions for that could be valuable. | Low. There has not been wider engagement on regional readiness although some signals on the 'iwi-hapu' needs assessment work have been made. NOTE: if there is to be a new RM system designed, regional readiness will be a key tool to build capability/capacity efficiently and effectively, ahead of activation. Progressing readiness in the short-term risks appearing tone deaf and ineffective if design of a new RM system is signalled. | Not required |

Key aspects from FTR to consider as part of future implementation design

1. The 'Learnings Framework Tool' developed through the FTR scoping exercise will have value in informing both current and future approaches to regional implementation.
2. A key FTR learning is that implementation considerations must be more actively considered and integrated at the policy/system design stages. Much of what FTR has learned could contribute to delivering efficiencies in future system design and implementation policy/planning.

We have identified the following themes/criteria to frame 'no regrets' regional implementation work under in the current operating environment:

1. Building capacity and capability of system partners (LG and iwi)
2. Regional level governance and relationships
3. Collaboration and partnership on implementation design approaches
4. System stewardship activities (esp. operational/implementation policy)
5. Learnings framework tool (to capture, collate and disseminate learnings from RM/regional implementation activities)
6. Building FTR implementation learnings into system/policy design process early.

