

Independent Reference Group to support the development of an adaptation framework – Terms of reference

- 1 The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) is leading policy work to develop an adaptation framework to ensure New Zealand adapts to climate change in a way that minimises overall long-term costs to New Zealand and New Zealanders, while recognising that there are issues of well-being, fairness, transition, and specific Māori interests to be addressed.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 2 The purpose of the Independent Reference Group (the Group) is to support the Ministry by testing ideas and providing advice regarding policy development for the adaptation framework, specifically in relation to sectors directly impacted by climate change, including Treaty partners, banking, insurance, and local government.

FUNCTIONS OF THE GROUP (roles and responsibilities)

- 3 The functions of the Group are governed by these Terms of Reference.
- 4 The primary function of the Group is to support policy development for the adaptation framework so that policy is grounded, practically viable and implementable.
- 5 The Group may also provide advice to the Minister of Climate Change, as agreed between the Ministry and the Chair.
- 6 The form of the advice provided by members of the Group will be established by the Ministry and may include meetings with officials and/or the Minister of Climate Change. It may include commenting on papers produced by officials or third parties.
- 7 Members of the Group may, as required by the Ministry and in consultation with the Chair, be involved in 'deep dives' on specific topics alongside other parties. The Ministry will decide on the focus and nature of the deep dives and may invite members of the Group to participate or advise.

GROUP MEMBERS, APPOINTMENTS, ROLE OF CHAIR AND SECRETARIAT

- 8 The Group will have at least 5 members, including the Chair.
- 9 All members will be appointed by the Ministry.
- 10 The initial appointments are for a period of 8 months. Any decision to extend appointments, or to end them earlier, will be made by the Ministry.

- 11 The role of the Chair is to lead the Group by setting agendas in consultation with the Ministry and providing the main point of liaison with the Group, confirming collective views and any meeting minutes from the Group. If the Chair is unable to perform their duties at any time, the Ministry may ask another member to act as the Chair.
- 12 The Ministry may add additional expertise to the Group at any stage. The Ministry will have the final decision on who will contribute, for how long, and in what capacity.

REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Members

- 13 Members will be selected for their skills, experience and knowledge of working in sectors that are, or are likely to be, affected by natural hazard risk and climate change.

Chair

- 14 As a member of the Group, the Chair will have the skills, experience and knowledge expected of members. In addition, the Chair should have significant experience of governance and previous experience as a Chair. Familiarity with government processes would be useful.

TIME COMMITMENT

- 15 The Ministry may ask members to respond individually to ideas and papers that are shared with them, or to respond together with other members, or as a group.
- 16 As the work performed by members will vary, the time that each member will contribute to this work may fluctuate but should not exceed approximately half a day per week.
- 17 For practicality, meetings of the Group or between individual members will normally be held on-line, however members may be asked to attend in-person from time to time.
- 18 The Ministry has a budget to operate the Group, including travel costs. The Group and its members will not have an independent budget.

PRINCIPLES

- 19 The members of the Group will adhere to the following principles:
- Members will contribute their experience as experts, leaders and decision-makers. Members will seek to take a cross-sectoral and system view.
 - Members recognise that the Group is advisory in nature and:
 - there is no requirement for members to reach a consensus view on any topic
 - there is no obligation on the Ministry or the Minister of Climate Change to follow the advice provided by the Group.

OPERATION OF THE GROUP

- 20 At the first meeting of the Group, the members will discuss and confirm agreement to the Terms of Reference. They will also agree on an approach to an initial work plan.
- 21 The Ministry will support the Group by providing relevant papers and information in advance of each meeting of the Group.
- 22 The Chair, supported by the Ministry, will set a forward work plan covering matters relevant to the Group's purpose. The Ministry will support the Chair to set meeting agendas, with a specific view to where the Group can meaningfully contribute to the development of the adaptation framework.
- 23 Items for the agenda may also be proposed by the Ministry or the members or Chair of the Group. All agenda items will be subject to the Chair's approval.
- 24 The Ministry may provide feedback to the Group on how its advice was considered.

CONCLUSION OF WORK

- 25 The Group may be disestablished by the Ministry at any time or at the close of 8 months.

FEES and EXPENSES

- 26 Where it is appropriate that fees are paid, fees will be paid according to the Cabinet Fees Framework. The Group was assessed as Group 4, level 2 under the Framework. The daily fees will be \$974 for the Chair, and \$616 for members.
- 27 The Chair and members will be reimbursed for actual and reasonable travel, meal and accommodation costs on receipt of invoice. The Chair and

members will seek approval from the Ministry if they intend to claim reimbursement for other expenses.

CONFIDENTIALITY

28 The work of the Group is confidential.

29 Members of the Group will:

- be discreet in all matters relating to the work of the Group. This includes matters relating to the Ministry, the Minister, and the affairs of the New Zealand Government
- keep confidential all information relating to the matters they obtain or become aware of through their work with the Group (the “information”)
- not, other than as required by law, disclose or discuss the information with any person who is not:
 - part of the Group or
 - employed by the Crown, or an officer, employee or authorised agent of the Ministry.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

30 Members will perform their functions in good faith, with honesty and impartiality, and will avoid situations that may compromise their integrity, or otherwise lead to conflicts of interest.

31 Members will complete a Conflict of Interest Declaration, and if necessary, a Conflict of Interest Management Plan will be prepared.

32 A conflicts of interest register will be maintained by the Ministry. Members are expected to regularly reassess whether any new conflicts have emerged as the work progresses and inform the Chair immediately.

33 Members who have a specific, real conflict of interest in relation to an issue or item at any time will advise the Chair and recuse themselves from consideration of those issues or items.

MEDIA

34 The Group, and Group members acting in that capacity, will not make media statements relating to the issues considered by the Group without the prior agreement of the Ministry.

35 If members of the Group are asked to provide comment on any issue relating to the work of the Group, or relating to the issues the Group is considering, they will forward the question or request to the Chair and to the Ministry for the Environment through the mailbox: AdaptationSecretariat@mfe.govt.nz.

AMENDMENTS

- 36 The Ministry may amend these Terms of Reference at any time following consultation with the Chair.