

Advisory Group on Green Growth Initiatives – Terms of Reference

Background

International trade is important to New Zealand's economy and with the majority of that trade derived from our natural resources the decisions made around the use of natural resources will be of increasing importance. The concept of green growth provides a framework for aligning environmental and economic performance.

While New Zealand is already undertaking a number of activities to align environmental stewardship and economic performance, we need a more coherent strategy.

To achieve this, there are three areas of work to be undertaken by the Advisory Group who will evaluate and advise the Government on:

- how New Zealand, and in particular government agencies, can help exporters leverage greater value in international markets from New Zealand's clean, green brand;
- opportunities for smarter use of existing technologies and innovation, as well as greater development and adoption of new technologies (including clean technology) in New Zealand's productive sectors; and
- the options for New Zealand's small and medium sized businesses to move to a lower carbon economy while sustaining the desired level of productive growth.

Objective of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group is being established to evaluate and advise on opportunities for green growth to contribute to an increased rate of economic growth for New Zealand. The Advisory Group will provide this advice in a report to the Minister for Economic Development and the Minister for the Environment by 20 December 2011.

Scope of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group will provide analysis and recommendations to the Government related to the three areas of work outlined above. It will be supported by a Secretariat made up of officials from the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry for the Environment (further details below).

In its work and preparation of recommendations, the Advisory Group will be mindful of the Government's goals as expressed through the Economic Growth Agenda work. This will ensure that any recommendations are informed by a balanced assessment of costs and benefits.

The Advisory Group should take account of international efforts relating to a strategy for green growth and the alignment of environmental stewardship and economic performance. In particular, the Synthesis Report of the Green Growth Strategy being prepared by the OECD is scheduled for release at the Ministerial Council Meeting in May 2011. Other relevant international agencies are also preparing reports which should be useful in formulating advice to the Government.

Out-of-scope

The Advisory Group should not evaluate existing government programmes or existing reviews. The Advisory Group should not get involved in the detail of issues that have other venues (such as water reform).

The Advisory Group should not duplicate work already underway within government and under investigation by other advisory groups and forums. For example, evaluation or consideration of the Emissions Trading Scheme and waste policy are outside the scope of the Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group should not investigate fiscal policy interventions such as green taxes.

Expectations of Advisory Group members

Following the establishment of the Advisory Group, it is expected that members will be available to meet on a monthly basis between January and December 2011. The members need to be sufficiently involved in order to steer the work and to be able to provide recommendations to Government by 20 December 2011.

Outside of formal meetings, the Chair can play a more active role including engagement with external stakeholders.

The Advisory Group as a whole will not necessarily be expected to form a consensus on all areas of their final report. Where there is no consensus, the report should cover the areas of disagreement and the competing perspectives.

Resources

The Chair will be supported by a joint MED-MfE Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide organisational support, analytical support at the direction of the Advisory Group, and assist in the drafting of the Advisory Group's report.

To ensure that the Advisory Group has the necessary information at hand, and to minimise duplication where possible, the Secretariat will provide the Advisory Group with relevant research where available.

The Advisory Group may request that external consultants be engaged to advise on specific issues where in-depth knowledge is required.

The Advisory Group cannot include all those with a legitimate interest in the issues it will be discussing. Nor will members necessarily have the most expertise in some of the areas discussed. It is therefore expected that the Secretariat will maintain contact with a wider group of stakeholders (including other government departments), and feed this into the Advisory Group.

Ministers will meet regularly with the Advisory Group Chair as work progresses. It is not intended that Ministers attend regular meetings of the Advisory Group but will be briefed by officials and where necessary provide input to the process via the Secretariat and the Advisory Group Chair.