



## Jobs for Nature Programme

Date Submitted:	5 November 2020	Tracking #: 2020-B-07285.	
Security Level	Unclassified	MfE Priority:	Urgent

	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment	<b>Discuss</b> with officials <b>Agree</b> to meet with SLU Ministers and Reference Group	9 November

Actions for Minister's Office Staff	<b>Return</b> the signed report to MfE.
Number of appendices and attachments 1	Titles of appendices and attachments (ie separate attached documents): 1. Jobs for Nature Reference Group Investment Framework

### Ministry for the Environment contacts

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Principal Author	Moana Everson		
Director	Lorena Stephen	s9(2)(a)	
Deputy Secretary	Martin Workman		✓

## Jobs for Nature Programme

Key MfE Work Programmes This advice relates to the following:				
Environmental Management System Reform	Freshwater System Policy & Implementation	Jobs for Nature	Waste & Resource Efficiency	Climate Change
Scope & Objectives	Allocation	Jobs for Nature Roles & Responsibilities	Waste Levy Implementation	Mitigation
Partnering & Engagement	Rights & Interests	Te Mana O Te Wai	Waste Strategy & WMA Review	Markets
Interagency Working Arrangements	Governance & Oversight	Freshwater Improvement Fund	Container Return Scheme, Product Stewardship	Adaptation
Initial Policy Decisions	Implementation	Other Investment		Funding
	Freshwater Regulations			Governance

### Key Messages

1. The purpose of this briefing is to outline opportunities for Ministry for the Environment (MfE) Jobs for Nature investment.

### Overall objectives and programme of work

*What is Jobs for Nature?*

2. Jobs for Nature presents a new approach to Government support for economic recovery, focusing on three core objectives:
  - Creating employment opportunities for 11,000 to 13,000 people, at pace and with regional spread
  - Enduring benefits for freshwater ecosystems and water quality, biodiversity, climate change and cultural values
  - Supporting sustainable land use and the implementation of new regulatory requirements, including for freshwater, biodiversity, and climate change.
3. The programme provides a unique opportunity to support people into meaningful careers where there are known skills gaps. For example, the programme provides opportunities to upskill people in farm planning, mātauranga Māori and monitoring/compliance to support implementation of new freshwater policy measures.
4. The programme presents significant opportunities for value-add across the environmental management system by:
  - creating jobs in a coordinated manner, including working with local communities (for example, regional councils, catchment groups, iwi and Māori)
  - building capability within regions to deliver bespoke and effective solutions
  - creating and improving the environment over the medium to long term
  - maximising collective environmental, social and economic outcomes across agency work programmes, by assessing gaps, avoiding duplication and leveraging collective impact (for example, co-funding where appropriate)
  - gaining insights through programme oversight and forecasting, to provide guidance to ongoing policy formulation, regulation and system-wide strategy
  - building implementation options and examples to work alongside regulation, promoting environmental improvement and further community buy-in.

### *Roles and responsibilities*

5. When the programme was established, Cabinet authorised the 'Sustainable Land Use' Ministers group<sup>1</sup> to make joint decisions to approve funding for proposals greater than \$1 million.<sup>2</sup> Funding approvals for smaller projects are made at departmental level.
6. An independent Reference Group, chaired by Doug Leeder of Bay of Plenty Regional Council, provides programme oversight and assurance to SLU Ministers. The Reference Group meets monthly to provide feedback to agencies on proposed funding allocations, informed by the Reference Group's Investment Framework (Appendix 1).
7. As at 26 October 2020:
  - funding has been approved for 129 distinct projects across all regions, worth a total of \$671.3 million (including \$539.2 million in Crown contributions)
  - 70 projects are in contract (\$132.1 million of Crown contributions). Contracting is underway for other approved projects.
8. SLU agencies are using both pre-existing and new approaches to deliver projects at pace. For example, the Department of Conservation is establishing Regional Alliances as a new delivery model, bringing together central government, local government and local Treaty partner representatives to assess project proposals, focus funding and make decisions in a regionally appropriate way.
9. A cross-agency Secretariat, housed within MfE, supports SLU Ministers, the Reference Group, and cross-agency officials' groups.

### **Ministry for the Environment's Jobs for Nature investment**

10. MfE has \$500 million to focus on freshwater improvement projects, and has taken a three-phased approach to this allocation. Phase One and Two are now underway so the focus for the coming months will be on realising the opportunity to create a long-term legacy with strategic investment in Phase Three.

#### **Long-term direction**

11. The Reference Group considers the Jobs for Nature programme has highlighted a history of short term and ad-hoc environmental investment that has resulted in a deficit in strategic investment in the environmental system.
12. Their view is that while the programme to date has focused on opportunities for short-term employment gains, an enduring and sustainable approach is also needed to secure long-term legacy environmental, training and employment outcomes. The programme provides an opportunity to apply Treasury's Living Standards Framework, by demonstrating how government investment can positively impact social capital, human capital and natural capital.
13. At its 4 November meeting, the Reference Group identified six key areas which they believe will be critical to achieve long-term gains:
  - Pivoting the programme to shift emphasis from job creation 'at pace', in light of more recent unemployment data and forecasting, including that the economic impact from COVID will have a long tail.

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<sup>1</sup> SLU Ministers' group is composed of Ministers with the following portfolios: Environment, Climate Change, Conservation, Agriculture, Forestry, Biosecurity, Regional Economic Development, Land Information, Local Government

<sup>2</sup> Some aspects of the pre-Budget 20 Jobs for Nature funding is not subject to SLU Ministerial decision making

- Focusing investment in projects that have system-wide and enduring environmental impacts.
  - Increasing focus on building capability and capacity of people, to improve long-term job prospects while filling skills gaps in the freshwater management system, working jointly with the Employment, Education and Training sector
  - Strengthening focus on a partnership approach for delivery at place, maturing the model of regional level governance and decision-making, where possible, to achieve outcomes.
  - Streamlining the national approach for administration and delivery taking an integrated cross-agency approach which draws on the strengths of central agencies.
  - Taking a longer-term view to the legacy this programme could create across the Natural Resource Sector and the sustainable funding models that would support this.
14. The Reference Group will provide a briefing to SLU Ministers in week of 9 November and would like to meet with SLU Ministers to discuss future programme opportunities. We recommend this take place at the first SLU Ministers' meeting scheduled for 16 November.

### **Phase One**

15. In Phase One, MfE allocated:
- \$167 million to "Quick Start projects" and the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme
  - \$10 million (transferred to MPI) for catchment group projects in Bay of Plenty, Manawatu-Whanganui, Otago and Canterbury, that will help with land restoration, wetland protection, remediation of waterways, planting, pest control, and the increased uptake of farm environment plans.

### **Phase Two**

16. MfE is currently allocating funding through the following Phase Two initiatives.
- Te Mana o Te Wai (TMoTW) Fund (\$30 million)*
17. The TMoTW Fund aims to improve freshwater bodies that are significant to Māori, alongside the Jobs for Nature employment objective. MfE is looking at TMoTW-funded projects contributing information, activities and skills that will assist regional councils to implement the new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM).
18. MfE will seek your agreement to the TMoTW fund design in December 2020, and plan to open the next TMoTW funding round following approval. In the first quarter of 2021, MfE anticipates assisting in the development of applications.

### *Freshwater Improvement Fund (FIF) (\$55 million)*

19. The FIF supports projects that make a significant and measurable improvement to rivers, lakes, streams, groundwater and wetlands, and support recovery from COVID-19.
20. Applications for Round 2 of the FIF closed in September, with 72 applications received, and funding approvals will be sought in November. Round 3 applications will be open from 27 January 2021 to 10 February 2021, with funding approvals to be sought in March.

### *At-Risk Catchments (\$12 million)*

21. The project aims to identify at-risk catchments and apply the learnings from exemplar catchments (including Manuherekiā and Pelorus/Te Hoiere, as well as the Phase One-funded Kaipara Moana Remediation) to make a real difference where serious issues exist. This will support a research base to guide how to make catchment-scale environmental

improvements.

### Phase Three

22. MfE has approximately **s 9(2)(f)(iv)** to allocate in Phase Three.
23. Phase One, and the Freshwater Improvement Fund in Phase Two, focus on quick start projects (with rapid job creation as a key objective). Based on Reference Group advice, MfE proposes a more strategic approach to Phase Three funding, to deliver employment pathways for more permanent jobs and target interventions that result in enduring improvements to the freshwater management system.
24. MfE is developing a funding strategy to guide allocation of Phase Three funding. Allocation will support the implementation of the new NPS-FM and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater.
25. MfE proposes that Phase Three investment be used to improve the health of waterways and create jobs, including by:
  - prioritising projects that reduce erosion and sedimentation of waterways; protect highly culturally/ecologically important waterbodies/receiving environments; improve high recreation use areas.
  - deliberately incorporating into projects (and funding), actions to proactively increase the capability and capacity of people across the freshwater management system, especially those gaps in capability and capacity that are critical to the rollout of the Essential Freshwater reforms. These may include: farm and land management advisors; freshwater farm plan certifiers and auditors; catchment/community coordinators, farming contractors and their workers (eg, fencing, planting, earthworks), capacity in matauranga Māori, mahinga kai; environmental and cultural monitoring and modelling. In all these areas, increased employment driven by Phase 3 funding is likely to lead to enduring career paths.
  - Working in partnership with key actors/partners in the freshwater management system, especially councils, Māori, rural support sectors, and training bodies. This may require some funding specifically for recruiting and training key people, for example in monitoring and science (where these positions cannot be delivered through a specific restoration project).
26. MfE is working on options to deliver Phase Three funding in a more planned and proactive manner rather than traditional contestable funding approaches. Delivery options could include nationwide programmes, working with Regional Alliances or strategic relationships with councils, iwi and Māori, or possibly sector groups. We will seek your agreement to the Phase Three funding strategy in **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**.

### Upcoming issues and events

27. We recommend SLU Ministers meet monthly to make joint funding decisions.

Issue or event	Lead agency	Further information
Meet with Jobs for Nature Reference Group <b>November 2020</b>	MfE	The Reference Group would like to meet with SLU Ministers to discuss its advice on the programme as a whole. A paper to SLU Ministers will inform this discussion.

Approval of Freshwater Improvement Fund Round 2 projects <b>November 2020</b>	MfE	SLU Ministers will be asked to make decisions on applications received in Round 2 of the Freshwater Improvement Fund in November 2020. Applicants will be notified immediately after confirmation of approval to ensure that funding deeds can be completed in a timely manner, which enables a prompt start to projects.  Similar funding decisions for Round 3 will be sought in March 2021.
Approval of DOC proposals <b>November 2020</b>	DOC	DoC is continuing to assess proposals within its funding streams, and will seek SLU Ministers' decisions to fund proposals mid-November.
Approval of TMoTW fund design <b>December 2020</b>	MfE	We will seek your approval of the design of the TMoTW fund.
Approval of Phase Three strategy <b>s 9(2)(f)(iv)</b>	MfE	We will seek your agreement to the Phase Three strategy. Following approval of this strategy, MfE will seek to draw down the remaining <b>s 9(2)(f)(iv)</b> .

### Interlinkages

28. The Jobs for Nature programme is coordinating with the social sector (Employment, Education and Training (EET) agencies) to measure job creation and connect jobseekers with opportunities at the regional level.

### Next steps

29. SLU Ministers meet in the week of 16 November to:

- discuss programme opportunities with the Jobs for Nature Reference Group, and
- make decisions on funding proposals.

30. We recommend SLU Ministers meet monthly thereafter, to make ongoing Jobs for Nature funding decisions.

## Recommendations

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We recommend that you:

- a. **Note** that the Sustainable Land Use (SLU) Ministers group has joint responsibility for approving funding for projects greater than \$1 million in value from particular funding streams within the Jobs for Nature programme
- b. **Note** project funding approvals will be sought from SLU Ministers in the week of 16 November, and monthly from then onwards
- c. **Agree** that incoming SLU Ministers (once appointed) meet with the Jobs for Nature Reference Group on 16 November

Yes/No

## Signature

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Lorena Stephen  
Director, Sustainable Land Use Operations

Date 6/11/2020

Hon David Parker  
Minster for the Environment

Date

**Appendix 1: Jobs for Nature Reference Group Investment Framework  
(September 2020)**