

# J4N YEAR 3 EVALUATION

## MAIN MESSAGES



ALLEN + CLARKE

The \$1.185 billion Jobs for Nature programme successfully demonstrated that large-scale, cross-agency environmental funding programmes can be effectively implemented. The third year of the independent evaluation provides insights for designing future programmes of similar scale and complexity.

### Cross-agency collaboration works with the right architecture

The J4N programme succeeded because of strong Ministerial commitment, formal programme architecture including a dedicated Secretariat, and allowing agencies to retain autonomy over their expertise areas while contributing to shared goals enabled effective collaboration.

### Procurement must be adaptive to evolving priorities and contexts

The J4N programme demonstrated the value of flexible procurement strategies that evolved from rapid job creation (leveraging existing initiatives) to procurement approaches that built local capacity and supported iwi development. However, misaligned contracting models across agencies created challenges, causing confusion and high compliance costs for funded organisations.

### Regional partnerships deliver when built on existing foundations

The DOC-supported Regional Partnership Groups that built on pre-existing collaborative structures (like Kotahitanga mō te Taiao) were more effective and sustainable than newly created entities. Success of these groups hinges on providing adequate operational funding for coordination activities.

### Strategic capacity building creates lasting value

J4N successfully shifted from immediate job creation to long-term capability building, resulting in sustainable employment pathways and enhanced environmental stewardship capacity, particularly for iwi and hapū.

### Data systems require early planning and standardisation

Inconsistent metrics and reporting requirements across agencies limited comprehensive programme assessment and created unnecessary administrative burden. This highlights the importance of early planning for data systems and standardised metrics to prevent costly retrofitting and enable effective cross-agency monitoring and evaluation.

### Embedded and ongoing sustainability planning enables lasting impact

The programme created significant employment and environmental benefits, with long-term environmental impacts showing promise. Engaging in early sustainability and transition planning, and providing ongoing support to maintain momentum beyond the initial programme phase is crucial for sustained impact.



## Early attention to critical success factors enhances programme effectiveness

Large-scale, cross-agency, targeted funding programmes like J4N require careful attention to design and implementation factors across multiple components. The evaluation identified critical success factors that agencies should consider when implementing similar initiatives, organised by key programme components in the table below.

### Cross-agency approach

- Establish a well-resourced secretariat from the outset to align agencies, maintain focus, and provide a single line of communication to Ministers.
- Ensure incentive settings are conducive to collaboration by balancing incentives (such as funding) with directives (such as Ministerial mandates for cooperation).
- Recognise individual agency priorities by allowing agencies to retain autonomy to contribute to shared objectives without compromising their core missions.

### Procurement and contracting approach

- Regardless of delivery pressures, ensure projects include business cases or modelling of expected benefits, costs, and risks, ensuring shared understanding among stakeholders.
- Consider social procurement approaches to build capacity and capability, particularly for iwi and local businesses, with adequate support and active contract management to ensure successful outcomes.
- Align contracting approaches across agencies to standardise terms, performance metrics, and reporting requirements, facilitating collaboration and streamlining project management.

### Regional arrangements

- Build on existing groups to enhance effectiveness, leveraging established trust and local knowledge for future crisis response or funding opportunities.
- Ensure effective strategic facilitation with strong leadership and capacity building for regional groups to manage restoration projects effectively.
- Invest adequate resources into the functioning of regional groups, including funding for coordination and secretariat functions, to maintain focus and momentum.

### Capacity building

- Embed formal training and qualifications into project delivery requirements to ensure individuals have the necessary knowledge and skills for effective environmental project management.
- Establish strong partnerships with iwi, hapū, and Māori to support long-term capacity building, respecting their autonomy and leveraging their expertise for sustainable project outcomes.
- Develop a clear mechanism to articulate environmental and conservation capacity needs, using this intelligence to strategically plan and address current gaps and future requirements.

### Data, reporting and accountability

- Agree on programme-level reporting requirements early to avoid delays and inconsistencies, ensuring all stakeholders have a shared understanding of data needs.
- Establish standardised data collection methods and definitions to ensure comparability and reliability across initiatives, facilitating accurate impact assessment.
- Design reporting processes to be straightforward and efficient, providing support to smaller organisations to meet requirements without compromising data quality.

## Project delivery

- Set clear objectives and well-defined deliverables to provide a structured roadmap, ensuring stakeholder alignment and adaptability for successful project outcomes.
- Ensure projects appoint a dedicated project manager from the outset to provide clear leadership, consistent oversight, and effective coordination of project activities.
- Ensure meaningful participation and leadership from iwi, hapū, and Māori to achieve long-term impacts and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitments.
- Where possible, support projects that secure matched funding to amplify initial investments and sustain efforts over time, enhancing the project's impact and longevity.

---

## Transition and sustainability

- Integrate sustainability planning into the initial project design and provide ongoing support to ensure long-term success, treating funding as 'seed funding' for future aspirations
- Maintain agile project structures that can scale up or down, allowing flexibility and adaptation to sustain projects over time and respond to evolving needs and challenges.
- Provide consistent support throughout the project lifecycle, including access to expertise, funding, and resources, to maintain momentum and achieve long-term sustainability.

