



Jobs for Nature / Mahi mō te Taiao

Programme Transition Strategy

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Context – Jobs for Nature

What has happened?

Over 450 projects have received Government funding through the Jobs for Nature Programme since its inception in 2020.

The Jobs for Nature Programme investment is enabling Treaty partners, communities, and businesses to build new skills and capability to support nature-based delivery through on-the-ground action. For iwi and hapū, Jobs for Nature funding has enabled tangata whenua to work as kaitiaki, allowing the Crown-Māori Treaty partnership to be expressed in their respective rohe. At the local level, Jobs for Nature is providing means for the Crown, iwi/hapū, communities, individuals, and the private/philanthropic sector to work collectively to achieve shared objectives.

Many funded projects include formal and informal training elements to build people's capability, and more than half of projects have reported capability building as an intentional objective. People employed (kaimahi) have developed a strong interest and motivation from meaningful work connecting with nature, and many have a desire to continue in the field.

This investment has provided a workforce development opportunity for communities, iwi/hapū and businesses to upskill and deliver nature-based work, which can be used as a platform for further environmental careers.

Jobs for Nature has empowered people and shown what can be achieved at place where government works with Treaty partners and community groups. Groups have opportunity to gain momentum, develop their case to leverage wider investment, and help achieve their community aspirations.

Aotearoa/New Zealand has the opportunity to tap into this interest, to help address significant environmental challenges affecting our regions over the long term. Doing so will leave a lasting legacy for the Jobs for Nature investment.

What is needed?

Crown funding allocated across the Jobs for Nature programme is time limited, with the majority of funding from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF). Some of the initial short-term projects, which had an immediate focus on supporting people through employment in mid-2020, have already concluded. Some funded projects have successfully seen people trained and transitioned into further environmental work. Other projects, which have more focus on capability building to fill known skills gaps in environmental management, have a longer time frame.

To carry the current momentum forward, delivery agencies need to be working with their funded project partners, local government, and iwi/Māori, to make plans now to transition beyond Jobs for Nature funding.

The current labour market is tight, and many industries nationally are facing skills shortages. Transition planning will help identify opportunities for people employed and trained through Jobs for Nature funding when projects end, leveraging the investment the capability built, and the motivation of those employed, for further environmental management work beyond the programme.

Project level transition plans also need to make sure outputs delivered are maintained, to achieve long-term benefits and outcomes for the environment (e.g., maintaining new plantings to maturity, ongoing pest management where needed). Agencies and partners may need to reprioritise or attract further funding to maintain outputs and/or secure nature-based employment opportunities for people employed as projects reach their completion milestones.

Why a programme-wide strategy?

Across the programme, projects are at varying stages of transition planning. A programme-wide Transition Strategy provides the overall approach in one place giving a line of sight, under a single purpose and shared objectives, while enabling the good mahi and planning already happening to be shared and applied more widely.

Purpose

The purpose of this Jobs for Nature Transition Strategy is:

To promote the long-term legacy of the Jobs for Nature programme investment in people and the environment, by supporting people and projects involved to achieve ongoing benefits beyond the life of current funding.

Objectives

To achieve its purpose, the Jobs for Nature Programme Transition Strategy has three overarching objectives. These cover three separate but interrelated themes: People/Tangata, Environment/Taiao and Resourcing/Rawa.

Theme	Objective
People / Tangata	1. Nature-based opportunities for people employed and/or trained through Jobs for Nature are well understood, visible and accessible
Environment / Taiao	2. Environmental outputs achieved on the ground are sustained over the long term, as necessary to deliver outcomes (including through strong local and regional partnerships)
Resourcing / Rawa	3. Resourcing pathways beyond Jobs for Nature for ongoing restoration work are visible and accessible ¹

The strategy aims to identify, and make visible, opportunities for people employed and upskilled to continue nature-based mahi, environmental outputs to be maintained long term, and potential external resourcing sources and pathways for continued restoration work. Existing examples of actions and opportunities under these themes are set out in Appendix 1.

Individual Jobs for Nature projects have different long-term objectives and approaches and plans in-train. In some cases, transition planning for individual projects will need to consider long-term outcomes across all three themes. The themes can then be considered in a holistic manner. For other projects, there may need to be more focus on one theme than another as part of their transition planning. Separating out these objectives allows for consideration of either scenario as needed for individual projects as they plan their next steps.

¹ Resourcing / Rawa are all encompassing terms not limited to grant funding; for example, this can also include commercialisation, incentives for investment, partnerships, in-kind contributions and volunteer hours to provide means to deliver further nature-based mahi.

Approach

This programme-wide strategy:

- provides a consistent overarching framework to enhance the legacy of the cross-agency programme, recognising that significant differences in the types and scales of work, and entities funded by Jobs for Nature, will require different solutions and approaches at place
- provides a mechanism to enable for projects to understand what is happening beyond their immediate area (both within and beyond Jobs for Nature), build stronger connections to collaborate with others, share lessons, build cases for further investment, and provide visibility of further nature-based employment pathways and funding opportunities
- provides a reporting mechanism to provide assurance that the transition planning that needs to happen at project levels is happening.

The Transition Strategy is not intended to replace existing transition plans or actions that projects already have underway across the programme, or require projects that already have clear and robust 'exit plans' post-Jobs for Nature to change their approach.

With this in mind, the programme Transition Strategy takes a two-fold approach, to supporting its purpose and objectives through (a) direct engagement between agencies and project partners (funding recipients) and (b) a digital platform to enable wider engagement between partners across the programme.

A. Direct engagement between delivery agencies and project partners

Delivery agencies will engage directly with their individual project delivery partners to understand needs, opportunities and provide tailored support. The Jobs for Nature Programme generally applies contracted arrangements between delivery agencies and on-the-ground delivery partners. The Transition Strategy utilizes these existing relationships.

Delivery agencies will coordinate with each other in this where appropriate, for example where the project is receiving Jobs for Nature funding from more than one agency.

Given the variety of delivery models, entity types, and scales of investment that exist across the Jobs for Nature programme, there can be no "one-size-fits-all" approach to transition planning. Instead, planning must be tailored to the different projects funded, considering more specific needs and opportunities for individual projects, people, and regions.

Delivery agencies' supporting projects is crucial, as projects often focus on milestone delivery and reporting in accordance with their contractual arrangements. Projects were not necessarily resourced to undertake longer term planning on their in original contracts (particularly projects that were set up with a short-term employment focus in light of the original context when the programme was established in 2020).

The level of tailored support that an agency needs to provide will vary depending on the scale and capability of the projects to facilitate their own transition plans.

At a minimum, agencies will:

- discuss with projects their longer term needs and aspirations beyond their current work programmes,
- enable projects to participate in the national digital platform (e.g., ensuring current contractual arrangements are not a barrier to participation),
- facilitate connections between projects and other regional entities where appropriate (e.g., regional councils, training institutes, Ministry for Social Development (MSD) to support worker transition).

Depending on the type of needs, agencies and partners may need to reprioritise or attract additional resourcing to support ongoing nature-based employment opportunities and/or maintain environmental gains. Agencies can support projects by providing visibility of resourcing sources, but they cannot determine the outcome of funding applications.

Agencies have already begun working with their respective delivery partners to support transition planning, and are at varying stages with this work, as outlined in Appendix 2.

Regular updates from agencies to the Secretariat will provide visibility of transition planning progress to the programme, and allow lessons and successes to be shared across the programme, as projects continue through their delivery phases and plan for transition.

B. A national digital network platform to enable stronger collaboration across the programme

The Secretariat is working with agencies and others to scope and develop a nationwide online collaborative platform, building on what exists currently.

The aim of this platform is to provide further support Jobs for Nature project participants to connect with one another (peer-to-peer), share resources and best practice, and provide visibility of opportunities to support transition across the people, environment, and resourcing themes (including regional nature-based employment and funding opportunities).

This centralised platform is not intended to replace existing relationships between projects (peer-to-peer), existing/emerging partnerships, communities of practice, or direct relationships between project partners and delivery agencies (contracted). Rather, the platform is intended to support existing work underway, providing a mechanism to share and collaborate more widely, for project partners to participate in at their own discretion.

Agencies and partners are providing input and content for the platform for other projects to learn from. This would include practical examples from successful project transitions and partnership approaches, and visibility of potential relevant resourcing opportunities beyond their Jobs for Nature funding.

Roles in implementing the strategy

Existing Jobs for Nature participants and external parties will have different roles to support implementation of this strategy.

A. Jobs for Nature Secretariat - Te Tari Mahi mō te Taiao

The Jobs for Nature Secretariat is a cross-agency team that supports coordination and oversight of the programme as a whole.

The Secretariat's role in supporting implementation of the Transition Strategy is to:

- provide an oversight mechanism that transition planning is happening (through regular reporting by Delivery Agencies)
- lead the start-up development of the national digital network platform
- maintain connection with central 'external' organisations and strategies to understand opportunities², particularly:
 - the Employment, Education and Training Sector (including Regional Skills Leadership Groups Secretariat and MBIE overseeing development of Industry Transformation Plans)
 - non-Jobs for Nature parts of Sustainable Land Use agencies (for example, the area of the Ministry for the Environment responsible for exploring biodiversity incentives as a Budget 2022 initiative)
 - the regional council sector
- share relevant information it obtains across agencies and wider sectors, including through the platform
- consider overall transition plans reported as part of the overall multi-year Jobs for Nature Programme evaluation.

B. Delivery Agencies - Ngā umanga kōkiri

'Delivery agencies' refers to the business units within the Government Ministries and Departments that are administering Jobs for Nature funding, through contracting relationships with project delivery partners. These are: Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, business groups within Ministry for Primary Industries (Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service, Agriculture and Investment Services and Biosecurity New Zealand), Toitū te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, and Ministry for business, Innovation and Employment (Kānoa – Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit).

Delivery agencies will

² Wider Government work programmes with links to the Jobs for Nature programme and/or nature-based solutions are outlined in Appendix 3

- engage with funding recipients to understand needs and provide tailored support to develop and implement their specific transition plans (as outlined in Approach A section above)
- work with wider sectors and agencies to explore external resourcing opportunities suitable for projects (for example, regional councils, private investment/philanthropic groups, Ministry for Social Development initiatives)
- participate in development of the national platform (including content development, for example other central government funding and employment opportunities)³
- enable projects to participate in the platform at projects' discretion (including through contract variations if necessary to facilitate this)
- seek to prioritise other agency funding streams if available to support projects with transition where needed
- build on partnerships that have emerged/matured through Jobs for Nature to deliver future work at place should investment become available (e.g. project entities, and iwi/Māori organisations)
- report to the Secretariat on progress on a quarterly basis, for monitoring of delivery of activities across agencies and projects to implement the Transition Strategy.

C. Delivery partners

'Delivery partners' is a term used to refer to the entities responsible for 'doing the work' on the ground as contracted by Delivery Agencies (noting in some cases work is delivered through sub-contracted third parties). There are a range of different types of delivery partners across the programme, with varying sizes and capabilities. Most of these groups were pre-existing before Jobs for Nature, however the investment has enabled them to expand their activities and/or increase their capability. A significant proportion of these groups are charitable trusts and local government organisations. A smaller proportion is through companies, incorporated societies, community groups and non-governmental organisations. Some funding is delivered directly through Jobs for Nature agencies.

Delivery partners will

- undertake their own transition planning, supported by delivery agencies
- participate on the network if they wish
- take advantage of opportunities for formal training for people employed (e.g. micro credentials - some projects may be eligible for financial support for training from the Ministry of Social Development)
- engage with others to share experience and collaborate
- report on their transition plans to Delivery Agencies as part of End of Project milestone reporting.

³ Ministry for the Environment and Department of Conservation are responsible for the largest proportion of Jobs for Nature funding and individual projects being funded, so are anticipated to provide the most support to development of the network platform.

D. Wider partnerships (including with tangata whenua, local government, community and non-governmental organisations)

Participation in the network isn't intended to be the only approach, or replace existing transition plans that projects may already have. In many instances government support may not be needed, and innovation and local solutions such as engagement between local projects and philanthropic groups, volunteer groups, regional and district councils are encouraged.

Delivery entities, iwi/hapū, the Crown, local government and community groups are in some places engaging in more formalised partnerships to achieve objectives at place. For example, Kōtahitanga mō te Taiao (in Te Taihū / Top of the South Island) is a good example of a well-functioning at-place partnership between iwi, local government, the Crown with support from an international environmental non-governmental organisation. These are encouraged as a potential mechanism to leverage wider investment (for example, private / philanthropic).

At the local level, local government (regional and district councils) and landowners are encouraged to continue commissioning local Jobs for Nature delivery partners to provide opportunities for participants to apply the skills they have acquired through Jobs for Nature funding to deliver wider benefits.

Appendix 1: Opportunities emerging across People, Environment, and Resourcing themes

People / Tangata

- Projects should take advantage of opportunities for formal training for people employed (e.g. micro credentials). Some projects may be eligible for MSD support for training.
- There are a range of employment opportunities available for people with skills developed through Jobs for Nature programme:
 - Nature-based sectors - DOC core operations, freshwater management, environmental monitoring, nurseries/ecological advice, mātauranga Māori advice
 - Other sectors – e.g. agriculture (including farm advisory services), horticulture, biosecurity, forestry, construction/infrastructure.
- At the regional level projects can share information informally with Regional Skills Leadership Groups to inform regional employers of upcoming opportunities, and MSD work brokers who provide a work placement service for future opportunities. Early Response teams in MSD are also working with people in Jobs for Nature projects who are concluding employment or the projects are nearing completion to ensure employment pathways are identified and opened and any skills and experience are continued to be utilised by those individuals.
- People can develop their expertise into broader careers – e.g. mātauranga Māori, farm environmental planning, resource management/planning practitioners, environmental science, project management and administration. There is opportunity to link to tertiary education to further develop people's careers.

Environment / Taiao

- Successful long-term delivery of environmental outcomes at place depends on well-functioning local relationships/partnerships. Treaty partners (iwi/hapū) and regional councils have roles to play as at place delivery partners for environmental management. Collaboration and partnership can be at different scales (for example, multi-region Kotahitanga mō te Taiao (across Te Tau Ihu / Top of the South), or more local place/rohe-based collaboration.
- Local community groups have a role to play also, including the volunteer sector. Projects should work alongside local community groups and local government where possible to motivate and mobilise community 'ownership' of delivering outcomes in their areas.
- On private land, the use of covenants should be considered if not already part of a contractual arrangement (e.g. DOC's funding of QEII Trust Open Space Covenants and Restoration Agreements as part of Jobs for Nature, or kawenata through Nga Whenua Rāhui for Māori-owned land). Further support should be considered to protect land/assets if necessary (e.g. funding for weed and predator control).

Resourcing / Rawa

- Central government funding streams (Budget 2022 initiatives (e.g. MPI Advisory Services, Increasing Natural Sequestration), delivery of biosecurity (e.g. Wallabies, Wilding Conifers, LINZ biosecurity), Research and Development Tax Incentive (RDTI), Business Growth Fund (in development)).
- Future government funding decisions on environmental management should be done with input from regional councils and consider previous Jobs for Nature investment (if any) – to align funding streams between central and regional government for joint outcomes.
- There are options for project entities to commercialise (if they choose), for example becoming contractors/preferred suppliers for landscape and freshwater restoration work by regional councils, DOC and landowners.
- Some international investors are looking for 'impact investment' opportunities, which generally need to be of a large scale to attract investment.
- Philanthropic sector – projects being able to partner (demonstrating value proposition). International investors are more likely to invest where strong partnerships are in place, and government funding is in place to 'de-risk' further investment.
- Some local market mechanisms can provide opportunity to fund environmental mitigations/offsets (e.g., catchment-based opportunities).
- Proposed regulatory changes and non-regulatory incentives for nature-based solutions (e.g., Emissions Trading Scheme, proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity and associated work to explore biodiversity protection incentives).
- Targeting Jobs for Nature projects, entities and people employed for delivery of future central and local government nature-based investments.

Appendix 2: Summary of actions underway across agencies to support Jobs for Nature transition

Ministry for the Environment

MfE is analysing the ongoing needs of its funded projects (which have a focus on freshwater management), making connections to the Ministry of Social Development's Regional Employment Service for future placements and considering its response to the Cawthron Institute's analysis of catchment community groups. MfE is working to build relationships between projects and regional councils, exploring partnerships and communities of practice, and working with the Akina Foundation Ltd and Toha to develop an 'impact investment' model to consider private capital investment opportunities.

Department of Conservation

DOC has undertaken a review across its programme to understand the transition planning needs across DOC-funded Jobs for Nature projects. Carried out in August 2022, the review found that of the 188 projects interviewed:

- 156 partners want to continue their project.
- 164 partners need further funding to sustain their project outcomes.
- 117 partners have a plan in place to sustain their outcomes beyond JFN with support from others.

Using information from the review, DOC are now developing a Transition Plan. The plan will inform DOC's approach to supporting transition, which will be followed by an implementation plan. The plan has two primary objectives:

- To identify the Jobs for Nature projects that are delivering to DOC's key strategic priorities (for instance, projects undertaking work in the top Ecological Management Units, with threatened species, or those enabling being an honourable Treaty partner)
- To identify opportunities and pathways available for natural clusters of projects (for instance, projects that have opportunities to commercialise, or projects working on similar work e.g., Kauri dieback, nurseries and freshwater).

QEII Trust and Ngā Whenua Rāhui funded Jobs for Nature projects are also helping to support long-term environmental outcomes by providing legal protections over applicable land.

Ministry of Primary Industries

MPI is undertaking analysis to determine projects that have a need for transition. This includes development of Budget 2022 initiatives, particularly those in relation to the Emissions Trading Scheme amendments, and the new Planning and Advisory Service within Te Uru Rākau to support project delivery and maintenance over time (which is expected to stand up by June 2023). Biosecurity New Zealand has future baseline funding and partnership arrangements in place to continue to deliver National Wallaby Eradication and Wilding Conifer Control activities beyond 2023/24. MPI is undertaking work to define future funding requirements to achieve the strategic objectives of the

Wilding Conifer programme and will continue to explore opportunities to reduce or offset control costs and to seek contributions from beneficiaries of the Programme.

Toitū Te Whenua - Land information New Zealand (LINZ)

LINZ is continuing to work with funding recipients to ensure delivery of its funded projects. LINZ has released its *Biosecurity and Biodiversity Strategy*, which aligns with the *Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy - Te Mana o te Taiao*. It has also provided LINZ a guide to setting priorities and making investment decisions. This strategy is directing the development of a prioritisation framework to help LINZ determine their overall investment priorities for their Biosecurity & Biodiversity programme. It is also driving the development of a framework for how LINZ will engage with partners and stakeholders, to share data and information, and to involve them in the operational planning.

Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit

Kānoa is supporting delivery of its Fencing of Waterways projects that remain in contract (a number have already completed). These projects were originally contracted to pre-existing commercial entities and charitable trusts.

Appendix 3: Connection to wider government work programmes

There are a range of government strategies and work programmes beyond the Jobs for Nature programme requiring nature-based skills and capacity to deliver actions over time. Implementation of the Transition Strategy will support delivery of a range of objectives set out under these strategies, by providing opportunities for further delivery of nature-based work to respond to climate change, biodiversity and biosecurity challenges.

These include:

- *Te Mana o te Taiao* - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (and Action Plan)
- *Te hau mārohi ki anamata Towards a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy* - Aotearoa New Zealand's first Emissions Reduction Plan
- *Urutau, ka taurikura: Kia tū pakari a Aotearoa i ngā huringa āhuarangi Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand* - Aotearoa New Zealand's first National Adaptation Plan
- *Essential Freshwater*: including the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 and associated national environmental standards and regulations
- *Towards a Predator Free New Zealand* - Predator Free 2050 Strategy (and Action Plan)
- Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) internal *Land Information New Zealand Biosecurity and Biodiversity strategy*
- *National Wilding Conifer Control Programme*
- *National Wallaby Eradication Programme*

At place nature-based action will also likely be needed to support sectors with implementing the wider resource management reforms (which includes an objective to protect and where necessary restore the natural environment).