



6 November 2024

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

I refer to your email of 26 September 2024 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Memorandum of Understandings to purchase offshore carbon credits*

- 1: Can you advise what types of bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements are being considered and what form they might take? For example, crediting for reductions occurring in another jurisdiction, linking to existing international emissions trading carbon markets or creating a new international carbon market/s with specific countries? Are there other methods being considered, and if yes, what are these? We want to understand the carbon offset strategy that the New Zealand Government is exploring.*
- 2. Can you advise if the Government is opening up dialogue on MOUs with any other country (e.g. in addition to Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines)? If yes, please list the other countries that the New Zealand Government is in correspondence with. If you are unable to list which countries, can you advise how many countries in total the Government is in dialogue with (i.e. to progress a MOU to purchase offshore carbon credits)?*
- 3: What progress is being made on these MOU's? How many have been signed? How many are close to being signed? If any are signed, can you please provide a copy of the signed agreement?*
- 4: Has the Government considered opening up discussions with Bhutan? We briefly discuss this opportunity in our discussion paper (see page 93 in the link above). I was in Bhutan last year and explored this idea (clearly not as a Government official, but I did meet with Government officials in Bhutan). I felt a collaboration between the two countries would provide a number of positive benefits for both countries and may be more digestible to New Zealanders. I am happy to meet to discuss this idea in more detail and/or introduce you to some of my contacts there.*

On 8 October 2024, MFAT transferred your request to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) under section 14 of the Act, as the information to which your request relates is believed to be more closely connected with the functions of the Ministry.

New Zealand is committed to the goals of the Paris Agreement and achieving its NDC1 target. We have already made significant advances toward achieving our domestic and international targets through the measures implemented under emissions reduction plan one (ERP1) and the proposals outlined for ERP2.

New Zealand continues to support international cooperation initiatives that reflect our national priorities and collective global effort towards a low emissions future. We know that climate change cannot be tackled alone and are committed to fostering international cooperation, sharing knowledge, and promoting solutions.

New Zealand participates in ongoing climate change cooperation and international initiatives with partners. For example, our participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF),<sup>1</sup> which is a cooperation framework among 14 Asia-Pacific countries that comprises of four cooperation agreements, one of which is the Clean Economy Agreement. This is focused largely on clean economy technologies and includes a Cooperative Work Program specifically on carbon markets.

As you noted, earlier this year, the Prime Minister made joint statements with counterparts from Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. This reflects our interest in collaborating on international climate action, potentially including NDC implementation.

New Zealand is also progressing efforts to address the challenge of NDC1 by exploring options for cooperation in international markets. This includes exploring cooperation opportunities with partner countries, market intermediaries, and entities that in the future could enable New Zealand to achieve additional mitigation action.

We are focused on partnerships that foster mutually beneficial outcomes. These types of arrangements could enable New Zealand to find synergies in our efforts to address climate change and draw on our respective strengths and expertise. For New Zealand this may include, for example, renewable energy, sustainable forest management, and researching agricultural mitigation technologies.

New Zealand has long recognised the value of international markets in enabling additional mitigation action than what is achievable through domestic means alone. There is also a need to ensure high-integrity international emissions reductions are counted towards NDCs. We want the Paris Agreement to have credibility, integrity and support our shared objective to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

As these opportunities are actively being explored, we are unable to share any further details but hope to share more in due course.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my response relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

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<sup>1</sup> [IPEF overview. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.](#)

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Jacqui Ruesga  
Manager International  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao