



25 November 2021

OIAD-149

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 21 October 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

"I am interested in how much has been spent on the development of the Biodiversity NPS vs actual work with landowners to acquire and protect high value land. The development of the Biodiversity NPS started with Nick Smith a decade or so ago, as I understand it. Costs include working groups, legal advice, policy people etc spending time on its development etc. 1. Can you tell me the total cost of the Biodiversity NPS so far to your agency please? 2. Have you spent any money acquiring land, funding covenants for private landowners and iwi etc Thank you. I understand this may need to be treated as an OIA."

On 1 November you refined your request to costs incurred from October 2017, being the date the Labour Government formed. On 16 November we extended the time to respond to your request by ten working days to enable consultation associated with your request to be undertaken.

Since October 2017 the Ministry for the Environment has spent \$1,567,278 on the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB). \$1,199,152 of the total figure was personnel costs. The personnel costs quoted should not be considered an accurate reflection of the actual costs incurred, as staff working on the NPSIB are expected to spend approximately 25% of their time working on other Ministry work or projects as required. The remainder of the total cost covers associated operating costs, undertaking public consultation, travel and external resources.

In addition to the \$1,567,278, the Biodiversity Collaborative Group received funding of \$900,000 through the Ministry administered Community Environment Fund.

Legal advice for the NPSIB was financed through the Ministry's existing legal services operating costs and no external legal advice was required.

In response to the second part of your question, the Ministry does not directly buy land and provide funding for covenants. We do have several funds that aim to improve outcomes for Biodiversity. Information on current funds that the Ministry administers can be found through the following link - <https://environment.govt.nz/what-you-can-do/funding/>

Other agencies, such as the Department of Conservation, have a role in funding biodiversity protection and restoration around the country through groups such as the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust and the Nature Heritage Fund.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions 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.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment 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.

Yours sincerely

Electronically approved by Hayden Johnston

Hayden Johnston
Director - Water and Land Use Policy