



s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s  
9(2)

Thank you for your email of 3 November 2022 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. Has any offshore emissions reduction already occurred this year and if so, the details of the location, volume, costs, types of trees, reduction calculations, and agreements with the other concerned nation.*
- 2. Documents and communications since the start of 2022 which detail plans to fund carbon removal and greenhouse gas offsetting activities offshore.*
- 3. Advice on how that funding will contribute to NZ meeting our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*
- 4. How that funding will be distributed through until 2030 - will it be linear funding from 2022 onwards, or more at the backend of 2022-2030.*
- 5. When these costs will be brought into Budget appropriations.*
- 6. The estimated costs of offsetting emissions domestically vs. offsetting emissions offshore (and a breakdown of the costs for each country being considered)*
- 7. Advice on assessing and verifying the credibility of such removal activities.*
- 8. And any checks to ensure offshore tree planting, or other carbon removal methods, will still be in place going forward (eg. checks to ensure those trees won't be felled after a said amount of time)*
- 9. Advice on any risks that those offshore removal activities may fail to make the expected contribution to addressing NZ's greenhouse gas emissions.*

On 11 November 2022, you were notified that an extension of 20 working days was required as the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request were such that a proper response could not reasonably be made within the original timeframe.

I have answered your questions below.

- 1. Has any offshore emissions reduction already occurred this year and if so, the details of the location, volume, costs, types of trees, reduction calculations, and agreements with the other concerned nation.**

I can confirm that New Zealand engaged in no offshore emissions reduction activities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement in 2022.

**2. Documents and communications since the start of 2022 which detail plans to fund carbon removal and greenhouse gas offsetting activities offshore.**

The Ministry does not hold any documents or communications dated between the beginning of 2022 and the date of your information request that detail plans to fund carbon removal and greenhouse gas offsetting activities offshore. I must therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the documents alleged to contain the information requested do not exist.

**3. Advice on how that funding will contribute to NZ meeting our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)**

The Ministry has identified one document in scope of this part of your request. I am withholding that document in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

**4. How that funding will be distributed through until 2030 - will it be linear funding from 2022 onwards, or more at the backend of 2022-2030.**

No decision has yet been made on how that funding will be distributed through until 2030. I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.

**5. When these costs will be brought into Budget appropriations.**

The Ministry does not yet know when these costs will be brought into Budget appropriations. I must therefore refuse your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.

**6. The estimated costs of offsetting emissions domestically vs. offsetting emissions offshore (and a breakdown of the costs for each country being considered)**

The Ministry has identified one document in scope of this part of your request. I am withholding that document in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

You may find the Climate Change Commission's advice to the New Zealand Government on its first three emissions budgets and direction for its emissions reduction plan 2022-2025 useful: <https://www.climatecommission.govt.nz/public/Inaia-tonu-nei-a-low-emissions-future-for-Aotearoa/Inaia-tonu-nei-a-low-emissions-future-for-Aotearoa.pdf>

**7. Advice on assessing and verifying the credibility of such removal activities.**

**8. And any checks to ensure offshore tree planting, or other carbon removal methods, will still be in place going forward (eg. checks to ensure those trees won't be felled after a said amount of time)**

**9. Advice on any risks that those offshore removal activities may fail to make the expected contribution to addressing NZ's greenhouse gas emissions.**

The Ministry has published a work-in-progress draft relating to ensuring the environmental integrity of any offshore mitigation that may be used to meet our NDC commitments. A copy of this draft can be found here: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/international-action/about-the-paris-agreement/new-zealand-and-international-carbon-markets/standards-guidelines-environmental-integrity-international-carbon-markets/>.

Beyond this, the Ministry does not hold the information you have requested in questions 7, 8, and 9. I must therefore refuse these parts of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information 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).

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).

Ngā mihi



**James Coombes**

Acting Director – Natural and Built System  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao