



# National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

## Summary of biodiversity incentive pilots

This information sheet supports the release of an exposure draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB). It focuses on the biodiversity incentive pilots which were announced alongside the exposure draft and feature in the draft Implementation Plan.

This information sheet should be read alongside the exposure draft summary. Those wishing to gain a deeper understanding of the NPSIB should read the full exposure draft.

## Background

Supporting and incentivising positive biodiversity action is a crucial part of the response to ongoing biodiversity decline. One way of achieving this is by improving access to and generating a range of financial and non-financial incentives that support landowners.

In early 2022, the Ministry for the Environment undertook a process to identify and develop options that enable and promote positive biodiversity action. Early workshops with participants identified strengths and weaknesses in the current incentive system and identified potential solutions that could be tested through pilots.

### **Four key focus areas were identified:**

1. improved alignment across existing strategies and priorities in regions
2. funding availability and accessibility
3. reporting, monitoring and evaluation
4. training and career pathways.

Development of the pilot options focused on what would make the biggest difference for landowners and communities on the ground, while also addressing the key focus areas.

# Biodiversity incentive pilots

Three pilots have been proposed.

1. **Funding a regional biodiversity coordinator** to better support communities to achieve biodiversity outcomes.
2. **Developing and implementing a digital platform** that connects resources (funding, information and support) and the users of those resources.
3. **Establishing an innovation fund** that supports alternative approaches for funding biodiversity action.

Pilots are intended to be trialled for a year before potentially being expanded or renewed for a longer period.

## Regional biodiversity coordinator

The regional biodiversity coordinator pilot will provide one full-time equivalent role to support a regional community to achieve its biodiversity aspirations. We acknowledge that coordinators exist in various forms already. This is a chance to build upon, and possibly expand these roles, increasing their reach within a region, or taking this to regions who do not yet have these systems.

The biodiversity coordinator will provide a consistent contact for the community for information, advice, funding and contracts for undertaking biodiversity work. The pilot will focus on non-financial tools and support and will be trialled in two regions.

This pilot addresses key focus areas 1 and 4. The objectives of this pilot are to:

- empower local communities to achieve their biodiversity aspirations
- align activities across related priorities and strategies
- promote behavioural change that moves away from individualistic approaches to biodiversity action
- provide biodiversity career pathways.

## Digital platform

The digital platform pilot will test if a centralised platform can support increased biodiversity action and improve access to existing support for landowners with biodiversity on their land, including Significant Natural Areas (SNAs).

This pilot will connect users to resources, including information, advice and guidance, and potential investors and businesses to projects that they may wish to support to meet their social and environmental goals.

Having a test platform will help provide insights into who will benefit, whether it can be scaled up to a country-wide platform and outline the technical features that are needed to make it work. This will be trialled in two regions. This pilot addresses key focus areas 2 and 3.

## Innovation fund

The innovation fund pilot will develop a contestable fund, administered by the Ministry, that allows applications for small sums to enable communities, landowners and organisations to access funding.

This funding will enable the testing of new approaches to biodiversity protection, maintenance or restoration without having to guarantee the success of the project (as exists in most current funding).

This pilot addresses key focus area 2 and will be trialled in the same regions as the regional coordinator pilot to promote uptake. We are in the process of finalising the regions in which the pilots will be tested and will provide more details on these soon.

## **How the NPSIB and biodiversity incentive pilots work together**

Implementation support is critical to the success of the NPSIB. The pilots aim to support and incentivise action that protects and enhances biodiversity. Actions that are supported by the biodiversity incentive pilots will help to achieve the objective of the NPSIB: to protect, maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity.

### **Further considerations**

#### **Limiting the number of regions**

These are intended to be pilot projects. The pilots will be evaluated before potentially being rolled out more widely.

#### **Developing the pilots**

We held workshops in February 2022 to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the current biodiversity incentives system, as well as identify potential solutions. Stakeholders who attended the workshops, included the primary sector, NGOs, energy generators, councils, academics and businesses. There were also officials from a number of government agencies.

Stakeholder reference groups included a smaller subset of the same individuals who were willing and able to commit further time to the project.

#### **How these incentives benefit landowners**

Many landowners are already actively managing biodiversity on their land. These pilots seek to improve and expand the supporting measures available. Those with existing biodiversity on their land, including SNAs, will more easily be able to access information, support and resources to help with management and enhancement, if they wish to undertake this work.

The pilots will facilitate connections and information and resource sharing, and expand the range of landowners engaging in positive action. Landowners will also be able to clearly see what funding is available to assist them with biodiversity improvement.

