
Westland Tai Poutini Allocation Assessment Process Information Sheet

The Department of Conservation (the Department) is implementing an open allocation process for the limited supply aircraft landing opportunities within Westland Tai Poutini National Park.

The allocation process is separate from the concession process. The allocation stage is used to assess and rank operators, and it determines how many allocations will be awarded to each applicant. Once allocation decisions are made, only the successful operators will move onto the concession assessment stage. To avoid any delays, we encourage you to submit the allocation application form and the standard concession application form at the same time.

The granting of a concession allows for the operation of a business on public conservation land. Concessions granted will be for a term of 10 years. This will provide more certainty for operators to plan their activities. The Department recovers costs for processing concession applications, and a quote will be supplied when those applications are being reviewed.

Businesses must have both an allocation and a concession to operate in the National Park. The success in securing one of these does not guarantee the success of the other.

Applications for allocations open **Thursday 19 March 2026 and close 5pm, 24 April 2026.**

All enquiries regarding this document and the application process must be made via email to westland-allocationprocess@doc.govt.nz by **5pm, 02 April 2026**. Enquiries received after this date and time may not be considered. Enquiries will be collated with answers shared to all applicants and on the Department's website by **5pm, 09 April 2026**.

Allocation process

Applications will be evaluated by the Assessment Panel against the criteria which are equally weighted (Appendix 1).

The Panel is expected to have voting members as representatives from:

- The Department of Conservation
- Ngāti (Kāti) Māhaki ki Makaawhio and / or Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- West Coast Conservation Board

In addition to these voting members, the following representative are proposed to be available to provide advice to the Panel:

- Aviation expert (TBC)
- Development West Coast.

A probity advisor will oversee the allocation process as an impartial representative to ensure a fair and robust process and provide an independent assurance review.

Conflicts of interests will be declared and managed in line with the Department's policies. The Panel will be tasked with assessing the applications against the criteria and provide ranking recommendations to the Department to make the final allocation decision.

Applicants are required to demonstrate their experience, capability and capacity against the criteria. The Panel will assess applications and make recommendations based on the information provided - it will not request additional information from applicants or other sources (other than directly relevant information already held by the Department, such as past compliance).

The quality of evidence and standards demonstrated by applicants will be important determinants in the evaluation process. For example, simply stating the applicant has a required attribute without providing examples may be assessed as being of little or no weight to attract a score. Similarly, general information or statements that do not demonstrate success, experience or explain actual roles and responsibilities may be given little or no weight in the evaluation process. The table in Appendix 1 sets out examples that could help demonstrate how an applicant meets the criteria. It is not an exhaustive list. It is up to each applicant to determine how best to demonstrate they meet the selection criteria.

Applicants will be required to meet a minimum score to receive an allocation. Each criterion will be ranked out of 10 with a possible maximum overall score of 50. For each criterion the applicant must score over five or more, equating to an overall minimum score of 25, in order to receive an allocation. The scoring scale is attached in Appendix 2.

Finalisation of permits

The Department aims to notify applicants of their allocations by July 2026. The Department may request additional information from applicants ahead of granting a concession.

Concessions will be granted for a 10-year term and will specify the activities and allocation being authorised. However, the Department reserves the right to review and adjust allocation levels every three years to ensure effects of the activities are consistent with the values of the Park. This will allow the Department to make any necessary changes, such as increases or decreases in allocation numbers, resulting from changes in the operating environment or utilisation levels.

The process for reviewing and amending allocation levels will be specified in the conditions of the concession.

Annual limits

The Department will not apply daily allocation limits and will retain the existing annual limits. Overall landing limits will remain as they are, with a focus on maximising the utilisation of those limits. The Department will review limits at the three-yearly review.

Landing sites

Permitted aircraft landing sites are set out in the Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan.

If one or more of the Plan landing sites become unsafe or unsuitable for landing, the Department may, at its discretion, put temporary arrangements in place to support safe operations. In those circumstances, the local DOC Operations Manager may:

- permit landings at Salisbury Snowfield, and/or
- remove the aircraft shut-down requirement at Gem and Jewel.

Any such change will be communicated by the Department to all operators. When the Department advises that a landing site is unusable, that site is not available for landings until the Department advises otherwise.

Operators must not use Salisbury Snowfield or operate at Gem and Jewel without the shut-down requirement unless and until the Department has given explicit permission (including any conditions that apply).

Flexible allocation pool

The Department will introduce a flexible pool of allocations and is exploring an online booking system to allow concessionaires to purchase additional allocations as needed.

Concessionaires will only be able to access allocations via the flexible pool once they have exhausted 80% of their total allocation or provide evidence that they are likely to and have a clear plan for use of the allocation (such as specific bookings – speculative bookings are not permitted). There is no limit on how much one operator can access the pool if these criteria are met. Concessionaires may be required to pay activity fees in advance when accessing the pool. These additional allocations are non-refundable.

Access to the flexible pool for ‘low-use’ operators will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (see below).

Criteria for access and use of the flexible pool will be reviewed following the first year of use.

Differentiating ‘low-use’ operators

‘Low use’ operators are defined as concessionaires who are awarded a fixed allocation to land in the Park 100 times or less per year. These operators will have limited access to the flexible pool. Access to the pool must be requested via the local DOC Operations Manager, who will consider the merits of the request, availability within the pool, and competing demands for allocation, including usage levels across all operators.

Allocation review

After three years, utilisation of allocations will be reviewed. This will include an assessment of concessionaire loaning activity and a flexible pool (if implemented). This may see a change in allocation numbers.

Surrenders

The Department will not implement a surrender process for unused allocation at this time. It will instead review utilisation of allocation on a three yearly basis and make any adjustments to allocations to address low utilisation by individual operators.

Timetable

The following timetable provides an outline of the proposed timing of this allocation process. All dates are indicative only and may be clarified or amended if required.

Stage	Date
Applications open	19 March 2026
Questions submitted by potential applicants	02 April 2026
Answers provided by the Department	09 April 2026
Application period closes	24 April 2026
Panel assessment	27 April 2026
Decision made by Department	June 2026
Applicants notified of allocation outcome	July 2026
New concessions take effect	September 2026

Due diligence

The applicant must:

- conduct, and is entirely responsible for conducting, their own independent investigations, analysis and other due diligence in respect of all matters associated with this request for applications.
- form their own independent opinion, including as necessary obtaining its own independent professional advice, as to whether to apply and on what basis.
- seek clarification on any uncertainties or ambiguities in the application documents before submission.
- verify all information provided in their application to the best of their ability.

Activity fees

The Department is implementing an interim fee assessment that provides CPI adjusted pricing for the first year of concessions, at which time it is expected that a national pricing review for aircraft landings will be complete. The first rent review will occur at the end of this first year to take account of the review findings. Activity fees will be reviewed three-yearly from there through the Department's standard rent review process.

The Department will not apply seasonal activity fees or differing fees across landing sites. Minimum fees will also not be introduced, given the inability to return unused allocation through a surrender process.

Activity fees for year one is detailed in the table below.

Aircraft take-off or landing activity	Activity fee
Single drop off or pick-up	\$26.00 + GST per person
Single glacier landing	\$34.00 + GST per person
Shuttle service	\$40.00 + GST per person within a 2-week period
Multiple sites	\$48.00 + GST per person per day
Multiple sites including glacier	\$55.00 + GST per person per day

The pricing for year two through to year four will be communicated to concessionaires as soon as possible (likely later in 2026). If there is a significant change, we will consider phasing it in to enable concessionaires more time to adjust to a change.

Submission of Applications

Lodgement details

Applications must be lodged via email to westland-allocationprocess@doc.govt.nz by **5pm, 24 April 2026**. Lodgement of applications to any other email address or employee of the Department may not be accepted.

Further information on request

The Department may seek clarification of applications, including requesting further information, via email to the applicant.

Appendix 1: Selection Criteria

The bullet points in the table below are examples of information that could help demonstrate the criterion is being met. The Department recognises operators are likely to have a variety of ways of illustrating they meet the criteria depending on the nature of their operation.

The Department may provide any information and evidence to the Panel to support the assessment of applications.

Criteria	Description	Example of what an operator could provide
Operator experience	Provide evidence of the operator's past performance and experience in this or related operations that support the operator's ability to comply with all necessary regulatory requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operator can demonstrate compliance with conditions of their concession, including concessions held in other areas of New Zealand. • The operator has worked constructively with the Department, including resolution of any compliance issues and areas of improvement identified. • The operator provides timely notification of incidents to the Department. • The operator demonstrates their familiarity with mountainous terrain and local conditions, as well as adequate facilities, aircraft, and staff to undertake aircraft operations in the Park. • For operators new to the area, operator demonstrates how experience in other locations can be applied to this location, and how they would adapt/set-up for operating in the area.
Impacts on and benefits to conservation	Demonstrate the operator's contribution to achieving conservation outcomes, including processes in place to mitigate visitor impacts and preserve the historic and natural values of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind returns to conservation. • Contribution to conservation, scientific, and mātauranga research. • How the operator will mitigate the impacts on visitors, including use of flight paths and other noise mitigation measures that minimise disruption to the valley floors. • Use of shorter flight paths where consistent with the Park plan and the above point. • Use of more efficient or larger aircraft. • Adoption of sustainable aviation fuels. • Local indigenous vegetation carbon offsetting.

Recognising Treaty rights and interests	Describe how the operator raises visitors' awareness, knowledge, and understanding of mana whenua connection to and aspirations for the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the operator's cultural capability and understanding of mana whenua's connection to and aspirations for the area. • Examples of any educational material provided to visitors and evidence of any input from mana whenua during development. • Evidence of an active and positive relationship with mana whenua. • Importance of taonga (resource or land) to the activity. • Utilises and enhances kaitiakitanga, connection to whenua, and customary practices (may include modern technology). • Promotes general awareness of tikanga and mātauranga Māori.
Offerings to visitors	Describe the operator's offering to visitors, including how they align with the vision and outcomes outlined in the relevant Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of experience offered to customers. • Readiness of the applicant to begin their operation. • How the operation meets the vision and outcomes for the place as outlined in the relevant Management Plan. • Information to visitors about the natural history of the park and reserves, including the rules to manage these areas.
Benefits to the local area	Describe the benefits that the operator brings to the local area, including economic, social, cultural, and educational benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment or training opportunities . • Enhance cultural, historic or conservation narratives at place • Build authentic relationships with mana whenua and communities.

Appendix 2: Proposed scoring scale

Rating	Definition	Score
Exceptional	Exceeds the requirement to an exceptional extent. Exceptional demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services. Major and enduring cost transparent benefits and/or innovation with reduced risk and supporting evidence. Demonstrates ability to go beyond DOC's requirements and add measurable value.	10
Outstanding	Substantially exceeds the requirement. Extensive demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services. Major cost transparent benefits and/or innovation with little or no risk and supporting evidence.	9
Excellent	Significantly exceeds the requirement. Sound understanding of the requirements and demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services. Significant cost transparent benefits/innovation with few risks and supporting evidence.	8
Very good	Exceeds the requirement in some aspects. Above average demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services. Moderate cost transparent benefits / innovation with little or minor risks and supporting evidence.	7
Good	Satisfies the requirement with some minor benefits. Demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources, and quality measures required to provide the goods / services, with supporting evidence and/or cost transparency. Minor benefits may have some risk or increased cost.	6
Acceptable	Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration by the Operator of the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources, and quality measures required to provide the goods / services, with supporting evidence and/or cost transparency.	5
Fair	Minor reservations The answer conveys compliance but lacks some evidence and/or cost transparency. Some minor reservations about the Operator's capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services.	4
Marginal	Considerable reservations The answer is compliant but lacks credible evidence and/or cost transparency. Some	3

	significant reservations about the Operator’s capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services.	
Poor	Serious reservations The answer is partially non-compliant and has little supporting evidence. Major reservations about the Operator’s capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources and quality measures required to provide the goods / services. Operator would need extensive guidance.	2
Unacceptable	Substantially non-compliant. Insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that the Operator has the capability, understanding, experience, skills, resources & quality measures required to provide the goods / services, with little or no supporting evidence.	1
Totally non-compliant	No answer provided or is totally noncompliant and does not attempt to meet the requirement.	0

