
Department of Conservation Expert Advisory Panel

Terms of Reference

7 November 2024



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Background

1. The Department of Conservation (DOC) is undertaking significant work to modernise New Zealand's conservation regulatory system, in line with the Government's Fiscal Sustainability Programme and Ministerial Priorities, as outlined below:

Government's Fiscal Sustainability Programme	Related Minister of Conservation Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System reforms that strengthen fiscal discipline	Fixing concession processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reprioritisation, informed by assessments of value for money of existing spending and performance• Better spending and planning over the medium-term to drive results	Targeting investment in high value conservation outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Securing savings and revenue, informed by assessments of value for money of existing spending and performance• Embedding a culture of continuously improving value for money• Ensuring we stick to the allowances we set	Generating new revenue and recalibrating costs

2. This major programme of work will
 - Modernise the conservation regulatory system, by improving performance in processing and contracting concessions and permissions, and reforming the legislative framework relating to the use of public conservation land by third parties; and
 - Generate new revenue and build a more commercially savvy conservation system by 2026.

Purpose

3. The Expert Advisory Panel (the Panel) has been stood up to act as an independent sounding board and to provide DOC with expert advice – in the form of feedback for the Director-General – on the following areas of our work:
 - Revenue / commercial work, including delivery of the Minister of Conservation's revenue action plan;
 - Proposed changes to legislative settings, in particular concessions-related changes;
 - Broader regulatory modernisation programme, including contract elements of concessions (leases, licenses, easements) and how to unlock economic opportunities while better managing risks to the Crown; and
 - Other topics as agreed.
4. The Panel is expected to:
 - Test DOC's thinking, advice and actions for progressing and responding to these key Ministerial priorities;
 - Provide the Director-General and the Minister, if requested, an independent perspective on DOC's work in these areas – and whether it is financially, economically and commercially robust; and
 - Provide high impact advice to DOC on other priority matters as required.

Scope and Responsibilities

5. The Panel is expected to convene for one hour, once a month, alongside members of DOC's Senior Leadership Team and relevant internal experts and advisors. While the meeting time is expected to be one hour, it is anticipated that meeting preparation and communication between meetings will equate to a total time commitment of around one day per month. Additional time and input may be added by agreement.
6. The Panel will be convened for an initial period of one year (12 meetings in total).
7. The following work programmes have been identified by DOC as relevant for receiving external expert advice on by the Panel.

Ministerial priority	Relevant DOC work programmes:
Fixing concession processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conservation Amendment Bill (including exploring competitive allocation) • Implementation of regulatory performance targets • Milford Opportunities Project • Concession charging and contract settings, including decommissioning
Targeting investment in high value conservation outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Visitor Network – targeting investment at high use recreation areas • Economic opportunities on Public Conservation Land (PCL)
Generating new revenue and recalibrating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Sustainability Review • Performance Plan • Revenue Action Plan

8. The above list is not exhaustive, and members may be asked to provide advice to DOC on other high priority matters as required.

Approach

9. The Panel will provide their expertise to DOC in an advisory capacity, alongside the development and implementation of DOC's work as outlined in the scope and responsibilities section of this document. Specifically, DOC seeks the Panel's expertise in:
 - System thinking
 - Regulatory design, policy and implementation
 - The needs of end-system users, particularly the private sector
 - Finance and charging in a public sector context
 - Economic activity in the conservation context
 - Public-private partnerships and infrastructure development
 - Markets and competition
10. The Panel will not be required to make any formal decisions or be accountable for DOC's decisions and will not be allocated delegations for implementation of this work.
11. To ensure DOC receives considered advice, the Panel will be provided with a meeting pack five days prior to the meeting.

12. The Secretariat function for these meetings will be owned and run by the DOC's internal Governance team which sits inside the Office of Director-General.

Members

13. Members are expected to:
 - Prepare for the meeting by reading all relevant materials provided to them
 - Provide timely responses to questions outside of meetings
 - Ensure confidentiality of business is maintained as appropriate
 - Declare any conflicts of interest.

Deliverables

14. More detailed deliverables will be developed as DOC moves through this work programme.

Meetings

15. Meetings will be held at Conservation House, Manners Street, Wellington, however members may choose to attend online via Teams.
16. Meetings will last for approximately 1 hour, once a month on a Tuesday, and be run with key members of DOC's Senior Leadership Team, and any relevant internal experts or advisors.
17. The Secretariat will send out invites and will endeavour to provide at least one month's notice of the meeting date and time.
18. Apologies will need to be made to the Secretariat, and where a member is unable to attend more than two meetings in a row, DOC may consider finding an alternative member.

Estimated Charges

19. The Panel will be remunerated in line with the Cabinet Office Circular - CO (22) 2 - Revised Fees Framework for members appointed to bodies in which the Crown has an interest.
20. It is expected that members' time at meetings, meeting preparation and communication and responses to items between meetings will equate to one day per month as standard. Additional time by mutual agreement.
21. The daily rate for Panel members has been calculated at \$952 per day.

Conflicts of Interest

22. All parties need to be aware of potential conflicts of interest both real and perceived. Independence and objectivity are critical to the advice received by DOC.
23. The Secretariat will keep a conflict-of-interest register, which will be reviewed and updated by the meeting Chair at the start of each meeting. Where a conflict exists, the meeting will agree to a mitigation plan as provided by the member, prior to the meeting beginning.