

Guide for applicants 2026

DOC Community Fund | Pūtea Tautiaki Hapori



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

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Cover Image: Hamilton's Frog, Ian G Crook

Introduction

This guide is for individuals or groups who are seeking funding from the Department of Conservation (DOC) Community Fund – Pūtea Tautiaki Hapori (**DOCCF**).

It outlines the eligibility and assessment criteria and provides an overview of the application and funding processes.

We recommend that you read this guide in full before completing an application.

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure that this guide is as clear and accurate as possible, the information it contains is general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. In the event of any uncertainty, the applicant should obtain independent legal advice.

Contact us

Please contact us if you have any queries related to the Fund.

Funds and Investment Team

Email: **doccf@doc.govt.nz**

Phone: **0800 86 20 20**

Quick check: who can apply?

The DOC Community Fund (DOCCF) supports community-led conservation projects that protect and restore threatened species and ecosystems across public and private land.

✓ Who can apply

- iwi, hapū and whānau
- community conservation groups
- non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

✗ Government departments and territorial authorities cannot apply.

Applicants must

- be a legal entity
- be GST registered.

Applicants currently receiving DOCCF funding are **unlikely to be successful**, as the fund aims to support a wide range of community-led projects.

✗ What we don't fund

- Academic scholarships or attainment of qualifications
- Activities required by law
- Activities where public use is restricted by copyright or patent
- Debt repayment or loan refinancing
- Firearms or ammunition
- Land purchase or vehicle purchase
- Local or central government fees and charges
- On funding (using DOC funding to issue grants to others)
- Participation in statutory processes or litigation
- Projects designed to generate personal or commercial profit
- Reimbursement of landowner time or voluntary labour
- Retrospective costs (incurred before a Deed of Grant is signed)
- Venture capital

These exclusions apply to both DOC funding and in-kind contributions included in the project budget.

What you need to know

- This funding round focuses on the protection of threatened species and threatened ecosystems.
- \$9.2 million is available.
- The minimum grant size is \$150,000.
- The maximum project length is 3 years.
- Applications can be submitted between **31 March and 30 April 2026** through our dedicated online portal.

What's new this year?

- A minimum contribution of 50% is required (co-funding and/or in-kind).
Applicants must provide a minimum contribution of 50% of the funding requested. For example, if you apply for \$300,000 of DOCCF funding, you must contribute \$150,000. This can be a mixture of co-funding (cash) and in-kind contributions (e.g. volunteer hours).
- Unless mana whenua led, engagement with iwi/hapū/whānau is a mandatory criterion. Applicants must demonstrate this support as part of their application. We will only accept evidence of support from iwi/hapū/whānau for this specific project.

Additional letters of support will not be accepted.

- Applications are limited to one per organisation.
The applicant must be the legal entity that would sign the Deed of Grant, if successful.

Important

- The DOC Community Fund is highly competitive.
 - Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding.
 - In 2025, fewer than 7% of applications were successful (20 out of 291).
-

Eligibility Criteria

To apply you must meet all of the following:

1. focus on protecting and restoring threatened species and/or threatened ecosystems.
2. have support from iwi, hapū, or whānau.
3. request a minimum of \$150,000 for projects of up to 3 years.
4. include a minimum contribution of 50% of in-kind and/or co-funding (50% of DOCCF grant requested).

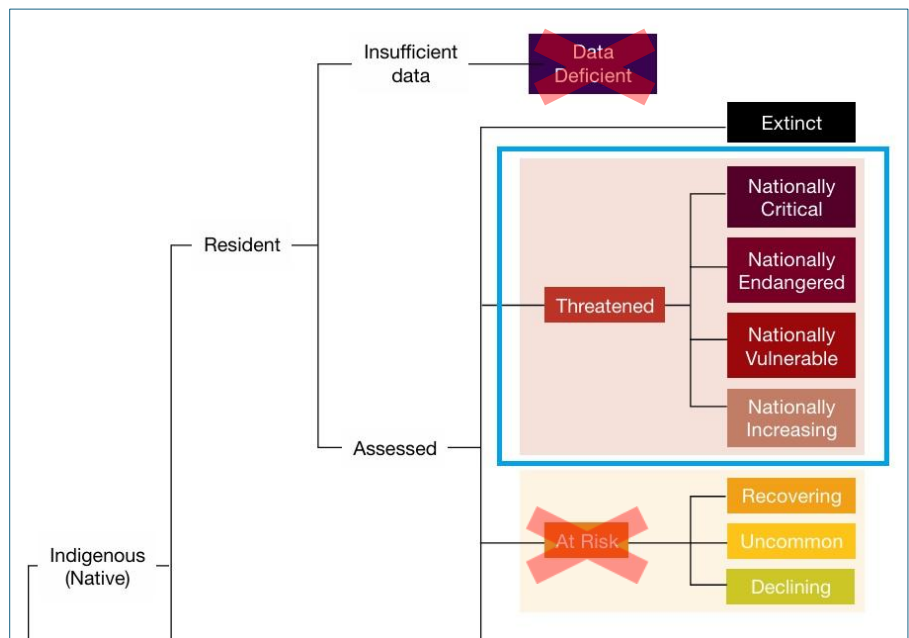
1. Protecting and restoring threatened species/ecosystems

Extinction risk is a key factor when prioritising conservation resources and why the DOCCF continues to focus on threatened species and threatened ecosystems.

Threatened species

More than 1,100 of our indigenous species are considered threatened. The term 'threatened' is used as an umbrella category for the following sub-classifications:

- Nationally Critical
- Nationally Endangered
- Nationally Vulnerable
- Nationally Increasing



Source: nzctcs.org.nz

Data Deficient and **At Risk** species are **not eligible for this fund**.

You can check the threat status of individual species using the New Zealand Threat Classification System (NZTCS) database at nztcs.org.nz. The NZTCS provides evidence-based assessments of extinction risk for species across Aotearoa, including marine species.

The database is searchable and can be exported to Microsoft Excel. If you are unable to find what you are looking for, try using the scientific name.

Species groups are reassessed approximately every five years.

Threatened naturally uncommon ecosystems

Naturally uncommon ecosystems are those that would naturally occur over a small area in the absence of human activity. They often have highly specialised and diverse collections of flora and fauna.

Of the 72 naturally uncommon ecosystems, **45 are classed as threatened** exhibiting a high probability of being lost. Sub-categories include:

- Critically Endangered
- Endangered
- Vulnerable

A list of threatened naturally uncommon ecosystems can be found in the summary table on the next page of this guide.

Short descriptions and example locations for these ecosystem types are provided in [Appendix E](#), pages 24 - 31.

Further information can also be found on the Bioeconomy Science Institute: Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research Group website (landcareresearch.co.nz/publications/naturally-uncommon-ecosystems).

Threatened Naturally Uncommon Ecosystems

	Critically endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable
Coastal	Coastal turfs	Active sand dunes	Coastal cliffs of mafic (basic) rocks
	Shell barrier beaches (chenier plains)	Coastal cliffs of calcareous rocks	
		Coastal cliffs of ultramafic (ultrabasic) rocks	
		Dune deflation hollows	
		Shingle beaches	
		Stable sand dunes	
		Stony beach ridges	
Geothermal	Fumaroles		
	Geothermal stream sides		
	Heated ground (dry)		
	Hydrothermally altered ground (now cool)		
Induced by native vertebrates	Marine mammal haulouts		Basic cliffs, scarps & tors
	Seabird burrowed soil		
	Seabird guano deposits		
Inland & alpine	Inland outwash gravels	Boulderfields of volcanic rocks	Boulderfields of calcareous rocks
	Inland saline (salt pans)	Braided riverbeds	Cliffs, scarps & tors of mafic (basic) rocks
	Inland sand dunes	Frost hollows	Cliffs, scarps & tors of calcareous rocks
	Old tephra (>500 yrs) plains / frost flats	Sandstone erosion pavements	Moraines
	Strongly leached terraces and plains	Volcanic dunes	Scree of calcareous rocks
			Young tephra (<500 yrs) plains and hillslopes
Subterranean / semi-subterranean	Cave entrances	Sinkholes	
Wetland	Ephemeral wetlands	Domed peat bogs	Blanket mires
	Gumlands	Dune slacks	Estuarine margins
	Damp sand plains	Lagoons	Lake margins
		Seepages and flushes	

Content collated and adapted from [Naturally Uncommon Ecosystems](#). Bioeconomy Science Institute. Manaaki Whenua

2. Support from iwi/hapū/whānau

If a project is not mana whenua led, applicants must show they have support from local iwi, hapū, or whānau to be eligible.

Strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau is a priority for the Minister of Conservation and DOC. The DOCCF supports these priorities by requiring all applicants to engage with iwi/hapū or whānau. Engagement can improve project outcomes by incorporating local knowledge, history, and cultural values.

Support can be evidenced via a letter or email and should clearly reference the proposed project or activities.

3. Minimum of \$150,000 for projects of up to 3 years

You must request at least \$150,000 in funding for the whole project. Funding requested does not need to be split equally across project years. For example, you can request more in the first year and less in later years, or any other combination that meets the minimum amount and the maximum project length.

- Projects can run for one, two or three years.
- There is no upper limit, but the fund is highly competitive and often oversubscribed.
- If you request a high amount of funding, you will need to provide more detailed information in your application.

4. Minimum contribution of 50% of in-kind and/or co-funding

Applicants must contribute at least 50% of the requested funding, either as co-funding (cash) or in-kind support.

In-kind contributions are when someone helps your project by giving time, skills, or materials instead of money. It's support that has value, because it's something your project would normally need to pay for.

This could include things like:

- volunteer labour
- expert advice
- the use of tools or machinery
- donated plants, fencing, traps, or fuel.

This contribution will help maximise the impact of the fund and improve the sustainability of conservation gains beyond the grant. For more information on how to calculate in-kind contributions, see [Appendix A](#), page 18.

Assessment criteria

We assess applications against the criteria below and in comparison with other eligible applications, as this is a competitive fund.

Applications will be assessed on:

1. benefits for the target threatened species/ecosystem and wider conservation benefits.
2. project readiness, capacity and capability to deliver the project successfully and on time.
3. sustaining biodiversity benefits beyond the funding period.
4. how the project will enable iwi/hapū/whānau to act as rangatira and kaitiaki.
5. iwi/hapū/whānau input into, and support for, the proposed activities.
6. level of contribution towards the project (in-kind and/or co-funding).
7. community engagement and collaboration.

1. Benefits for the target threatened species/ecosystem

As part of your application, you will need to identify the target species **or** ecosystem your project will focus on.

If your project directly impacts other threatened species or ecosystems, you can include these as the secondary focus in the application form.

Your application will be assessed on how strongly your project will benefit the target species or ecosystem identified, as well as any additional benefits to secondary species or ecosystems.

We consider:

- the threat status and conservation priority of the species/ecosystem.
- the importance of the site or area for persistence.
- how well the proposed activities address the identified threats.
- the likely impact of the project on reducing extinction risk.
- any wider conservation benefits, such as benefits for other species, habitats or ecological processes.

Projects that focus on species or ecosystems at higher risk of extinction are generally assessed more favourably, where all other factors are equal.

2. Readiness, capability and capacity to deliver

We assess how ready your project is to start and whether your organisation (or partners) has the capability and capacity to deliver successfully.

The key question is: **can this project realistically start and successfully deliver on time if funded?**

We look for:

- a clear and realistic delivery plan.
- clearly described roles and responsibilities, including appropriate governance.
- experience delivering similar conservation work, or projects that build on existing work.
- a delivery approach that matches the scale and complexity of the project.
- approvals, permits and landowner permissions identified, including the status of these (pending/secured).
- Health & Safety plan in place.
- a budget that aligns with the proposed activities, with sufficient detail for funding sought.
- value for money.

Approvals and Permissions

- Identify approvals required at application stage.
- It is acceptable for some approvals to be in progress.
- Funding cannot proceed until required approvals are secured.

A range of different approvals and permissions may be required for you to undertake your project, including from landowners, DOC, or local and regional councils. The type of permission required will depend on your activity, type of organisation and whether your project is on public conservation land, or private land.

For more information on approvals and permissions see [Appendix B](#), page 19.

Health and safety

DOC is committed to best practice health and safety and adhering to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). It is important that your organisation has the necessary health and safety policies, resources and expertise to safely undertake and complete your project.

All applicants who are approved for funding will be required to have a project-specific Health and Safety Plan in place that is suitable to support the safe delivery of the project.

For further guidance on the HSWA, visit the WorkSafe [website](http://www.worksafe.govt.nz/laws-and-regulations/acts/hswa/) (www.worksafe.govt.nz/laws-and-regulations/acts/hswa/).

Project budget

DOCCF grants can be used towards activities that are focused on conserving indigenous biodiversity. This includes costs associated with training (e.g. health and safety, Growsafe certification) and funding for salaries / contractors where these are vital to the project.

Budgets should be clear, itemised and proportionate to the funding requested.

We look for:

- costs that are reasonable and realistic for the proposed activities.
- a budget that clearly shows how the funding will be used.

Your budget must:

- include enough detail for the assessment panel to understand all costs.
- include the year that co-funding will be spent (co-funding must be for this project).
- present all costs **exclusive of GST**.

Examples of how this looks in the application form are provided below.

The screenshot displays two sections of the application form. The top section, titled 'Budget', shows a table with columns for 'Deliverable *', 'Budget item *', 'Requested (\$) *', and 'Co-funding (\$)'. A single row is visible with the following data: Deliverable '1', Budget item '100x traps at \$50 each. Trapping contractor at', Requested '\$16,700.00', and Co-funding '\$2,000.00'. A 'Total (\$)' of '18,700.00' is shown on the right. The bottom section, titled 'Contributions', shows a table with columns for 'Source and resource provided', 'Co-funding amount', 'In-kind funding amount', 'Financial Year', 'Contribution Status', and 'Comments (optional)'. Two rows are visible: 'Volunteers - Trap Checks' with a co-funding amount of '0.00' and in-kind funding of '10,000.00' for 'FY 26/27', and 'Council Grant' with a co-funding amount of '50,000.00' and in-kind funding of '0.00' for 'FY 26/27'. A 'Total' row shows a co-funding amount of '50,000.00' and in-kind funding of '10,000.00'. A large red 'Example' watermark is overlaid on the screenshot.

Note the list of exclusions "[what we don't fund](#)" on page 4.

3. Sustaining biodiversity benefits beyond the funding period

Projects funded must deliver biodiversity benefits that continue beyond the funding period. We need to understand how the gains achieved during the project will be maintained over time.

Applications should explain:

- what will happen after the DOCCF funding ends.
- whether ongoing maintenance work is required (or if not, why not).
- how any ongoing work will be funded and delivered.
- who will be responsible for maintaining the outcomes over time.

We look for confidence that long-term requirements are realistic, achievable, and supported.

4. Enabling iwi/hapū/whānau to act as rangatira and kaitiaki

We assess how the project will recognise and support the role of iwi, hapū and whānau as rangatira and kaitiaki within the project area.

Strong applications:

- align with iwi, hapū or whānau aspirations
- enable meaningful participation, leadership, or stewardship in project design, delivery, or governance
- support mātauranga Māori where appropriate
- focus on genuine empowerment rather than symbolic involvement or one-off involvement.

Applications are stronger where relationships are well established, clearly described, and reflected in how the project will be delivered in practice.

5. Iwi, hapū or whānau input and support

Applications must provide evidence of meaningful engagement with relevant iwi, hapū or whānau specifically related to the project funding is being sought for.

We look for:

- engagement that has occurred early in the project development
- support that is specific to the project and location
- involvement that has informed project design, delivery, or governance
- support from appropriate or mandated representatives, where applicable.

Applications that rely on generic or unresolved engagement are unlikely to score well.

6. Level of contribution to the project

We assess the level and nature of co-funding and in-kind contributions supporting the project.

These contributions need to be directly supporting the project you are seeking DOCCF funding for. In-kind contributions can only be considered where they replace costs that would otherwise need to be paid for by the applicant, for this project.

Strong applications:

- clearly describe all cash and in-kind contributions
- show that contributions are secured or highly likely
- demonstrate that contributions strengthen delivery and outcomes
- are not overly dependent on uncertain or aspirational funding.

Higher contributions, where confirmed, will be assessed more favourably.

7. Community engagement and collaboration

We assess how well the project engages with the wider community and contributes to collaboration in the local conservation landscape.

Applications should explain:

- who you will work with and how
- how community involvement adds value to the project
- how collaboration supports delivery and avoids duplication.

We look for projects that are well connected, locally supported and contribute to positive conservation outcomes beyond the project itself.

Supporting documents

You may include **up to three** supporting documents:

- I. a map of your project area
if possible, please indicate main habitats/vegetation types, human activities (on-site and neighbouring), existing or proposed fencing, restoration/protection areas, traplines, monitoring points.
- II. evidence of iwi/hapū/whānau support
no other support letters/emails will be accepted.
- III. a document that directly relates to the project delivery
e.g. restoration plan, pest management plan, species management plan, biodiversity strategy for your local area.

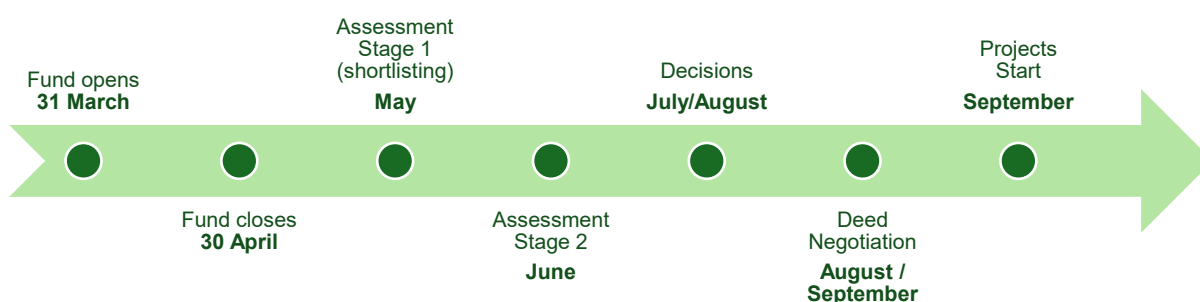
How to apply

To apply, you will need to submit an online application through our application portal [Enquire](https://fms-cp.doc-enquire.cloud/round/RND-0000043/7) (fms-cp.doc-enquire.cloud/round/RND-0000043/7). The application form questions are also available in [Appendix C](#), page 21.

You need a RealMe login to access Enquire and the application form. [RealMe](https://www.realme.govt.nz) (www.realme.govt.nz) is a secure login service provided by the New Zealand Government. It lets you use one username and password for various online Government services. You will need to use your personal RealMe login to access the application form. Note that RealMe serves as a login tool and does not share any of your data.

Important dates

The DOCCF opens for applications on **31 March** and closes at **5 pm, Thursday 30 April 2026**. Applications must be received before the deadline for your project to be considered for funding.



When you will hear from us *

On receipt of your application	Automated response
After shortlisting is completed	June 2026
Following funding decisions	July / August 2026
Starting Deed negotiations	From August 2026

* All dates are indicative only and may change. Any change will be notified through the DOCCF website: www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/funding/doc-community-fund.

Assessment process

The DOCCF uses a multi-stage assessment and decision-making process to ensure funding is allocated fairly and delivers strong conservation outcomes.

We typically receive many more applications than can be funded. If the fund is highly oversubscribed, applications will be assessed through a two-stage process:

- I. Shortlisting of applications.
- II. Shortlisted applications assessed in more detail.

Stage I: Shortlisting of applications

- Shortlisting is based exclusively on the information presented in the application form.
- Do not assume any prior knowledge by DOC staff.
- No additional information can be sought at shortlisting.
- Applications undergo an eligibility check.
- Applications are assessed against the published criteria, considering the expected biodiversity benefits and the overall strength of the proposal.
- If we receive a high number of applications, we may use AI to assist with summarising applications.
- Applicants are notified of the outcome after the shortlisting stage.

Stage 2: More detailed assessment

- The more detailed assessment includes broader context to ensure the greatest biodiversity outcomes.
- Assessors use information from your application, along with relevant technical advice and local context, to understand the strengths of your proposal.
- Due diligence is included at this stage.
- Final funding decisions are made following this assessment process, and all shortlisted applicants are notified of the outcome.

When can projects start?

- If your application is successful, you will receive an offer of funding.
- It is important that all information in your application is accurate and complete, as incorrect or missing information may result in the application not proceeding, or an offer of funding being withdrawn at any stage.
- The offer of funding may include some conditions you will need to fulfil prior to deed negotiation, or before the Deed of Grant is signed.
- If you accept this offer you will proceed to Deed negotiation with the Funds & Investment Team at DOC. This is to refine and confirm your project details and agree to the terms and conditions of a Deed of Grant.
- This negotiation phase must be completed within three months. If negotiation takes longer, the funding offer may expire.
- You will need to be GST registered before we enter a Deed of Grant. Please ensure you understand the requirements to register.
- If any part of your project will take place on Public Conservation Land (PCL), written approval in the form of a Community Agreement or Work Authorisation from your local DOC office is required.
- The project can begin once the Deed of Grant is signed by both DOC and your organisation.

Step	Timeframe
Receive Offer of Funding	July / August
Accept offer and agree any funding conditions	Within 7 days
Negotiate Deed of Grant and meet any funding conditions	Up to 3 months
Upfront payment, project can begin	On signing of the Deed
Progress Reports to DOC, incl. evidence of expenditure	3-6 monthly

- An initial grant payment (typically 25% of the year 1 grant) will be paid upfront.
- Progress Reports and Annual Reports are required throughout the project.
- At least 10% of the final year's funding will be retained and paid upon completion..

Further information on reporting and payments will be provided to successful applicants.

Appendix A: In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions are non-cash goods, services, or time that directly support delivery of your project and would otherwise need to be paid for by the applicant.

They must be:

- directly related to the funded project
- using reasonable and market-based values
- applied consistently across the project
- able to be clearly explained and justified.

In-kind contributions should not inflate budgets or replace costs already funded by another source. These contributions need to be linked to project deliverables.

Category	Estimated Value	Examples
Goods: donated or loaned	Current retail prices or standard hire rates	Materials (plants, compost, signage); equipment (loaned machinery); technology (software, GPS, cameras); infrastructure (fencing, sheds, water tanks).
Services: no-cost or reduced cost	Standard market rates	Transport/logistics, communications, specialist advice.
Time: General volunteer time	Living Wage	Planting, weeding, trap checks, basic pest control, basic monitoring.
Skilled or professional volunteering	Market rates \$100–\$250/hr	Ecologists, engineers, surveyors, designers, legal/governance advisors.
Coordinator / facilitator roles	\$35 - \$50/hr	Coordination, rostering, logistics, data management, reporting.
Management roles	\$50 - \$55/hr	Strategic oversight, decision-making, risk management.
Specialised contractor roles	Standard market rates	Pest control, hunting, technical surveys, specialist tasks.

Co-funding is the cash contribution to a project that is provided by the applicant and/or third-party funders (other than the DOCCF) and is used to meet the total project costs.

Appendix B: Approvals required (permissions, permits, consents)

- Identify approvals required at application stage.
- It is acceptable for some approvals to be in progress.
- Funding cannot proceed until required approvals are secured.

Landowner permissions

Public conservation land (PCL)

If your application is successful and your project is being undertaken on PCL, you will need to obtain written approval in the form of a Community Agreement or Work Authorisation from your local DOC office.

Private and non-DOC managed land

If your project includes work on private or public land not managed by DOC, you must have permission from the landowner to carry out your project.

If your application is successful, you will need written confirmation that the landowner agrees to the work being undertaken on their land, and that they are complying with their duties and obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act for your work on their land.

Council consents

Depending on your activities and location, you may also need approvals from:

- a district or city council (for example, land-use, earthworks, vegetation clearance, fencing, tracks, or structures), and/or
- a regional council (for example, works in or near waterways, wetlands, riverbeds, coastal areas, water takes, or discharges).

Council requirements vary by location and activity. We recommend you:

- contact the relevant council (for example, a duty planner or pre-application service) to confirm whether any consents or approvals are required.

DOC approvals or permissions

The appropriate DOC permission you may need to apply for will depend on the nature of your activity, the type of organisation involved, and whether the project is situated on public conservation land or private property.

For example, you need a permit to interact with wildlife or use PCL for reasons other than personal recreation.

For more information on what approvals, permissions and/or permits are required please see: [Permissions: Get involved](http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/) (www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/) or contact your [local DOC office](http://www.doc.govt.nz/footer-links/contact-us/office-by-name/) (www.doc.govt.nz/footer-links/contact-us/office-by-name/).

Types of DOC permissions you may need:

For activities on Public Conservation Land:

- Use of pesticides or traps
- Hunting and fishing
- Seed collection
- Drone use
- Wildlife handling (survey, catch, hold, release)
- Wildlife translocations
- Interacting with freshwater species (may also need Ministry of Primary Industries authorisation)
- Research and collection (inc. in Marine Reserves)
- Taking a dog with you
- Vehicle access
- Any structures you need.

For activities outside of Public Conservation Land:

- Interacting with freshwater species (may also need Ministry of Primary Industries authorisation)
- Interactions with marine mammals
- Wildlife handling
- Wildlife translocations

For approximate timeframes see DOC's website: [How long it takes to process an application: Permissions](http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/how-long-it-takes-to-process-an-application/) (www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/how-long-it-takes-to-process-an-application/).

Appendix C: Application Form Questions

Organisation Details

- Applicant name
- GST registration
- Governance description
- Key contacts

Applications **must** be submitted via our online portal

Project Summary

- Project Name: max 10 words
- Project Description: max 300 words
- Years of funding sought (number of years)
- Describe the project site and provide GPS coordinates
- Which DOC Region is your project located within?
- What type of land is your project on? (Public, Private, Māori)
- Does any part of your project site have legal protection? (describe)

Biodiversity benefits

- What is your target threatened species/ecosystem? (one only)
- What other threatened species/ecosystems will benefit? (choose from drop-down)
- How are the species/ecosystems connected? (if applicable)
- What are the current threats to the species/ecosystem and what are the activities you will undertake to address these? (deliverables)
- How will these activities contribute to wider conservation benefits?
- Expected outputs (choose from list and add targets).
- Expected outcomes (maximum of 5)
- How will you measure progress towards these outcomes? (describe)

Sustaining biodiversity benefits

- How benefits will be maintained once the DOCCF funding finishes? (describe)
- How will the community or partners remain involved over time? (describe)

Readiness, capability & capacity

- Key project personnel and their experience (describe)
- Summary of successfully completed projects of a similar nature (describe)
- List the property owners for your project site. Do they agree to the project work?
- Identify any consents or permits needed, including Community Agreement for work on PCL.
- Do you have a current Health and Safety plan to support delivery of your project?

Iwi/hapū/whānau support for project

- Describe how iwi, hapū, or whānau were involved in developing the application
- Provide evidence of support

Community engagement & collaboration

- Who are you collaborating with, what's their involvement? (describe)
- How do you plan to increase community engagement? (describe)

Deliverables and project budget

- Expected start date for your project.
- Outline the key deliverables for your project, for each project year.
- Provide project costs for the entire duration of the project (online budget table)
- Include co-funding and/or in-kind contributions (minimum 50% of amount requested)

Supporting Documents

- Up to 3 supporting documents (map, support letter/email, restoration plan).

Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How can I apply?

Applications can only be made using the online application form accessible through the Enquire portal.

Can I submit an offline application instead?

No. To ensure a consistent process, offline applications will not be accepted.

No late submissions will be accepted. Please ensure your application is submitted by **5pm 30 April**.

Can universities apply?

Yes, universities are eligible to apply, however offering scholarships or seeking funding for the attainment of qualification is not eligible.

Can companies apply?

Companies are eligible to apply, noting that the project must be operated on a not-for-profit basis.

What do you mean by target species/ecosystem?

As part of your application, you will need to identify the target threatened species or ecosystem your project will focus on.

If your project also directly supports other threatened species or ecosystems, you can include these as the secondary focus in the application form.

Where can I find the species or ecosystem's threat status?

Species can be checked at [NZTCS](#). There is a table listing threatened ecosystems on page 8 and more detailed information in Appendix E, with links to further information.

Do I need to have all my permits and approvals in place at the time of application?

You do not need to have all permits and permissions secured before applying, but you should identify what is required and estimate how long it will take to obtain them.

If your application is successful, you may need to have permits in place before signing a Deed.

Where can I get help about delivering a project?

Your local DOC office may be able to help. A list of offices and contact details are available on the DOC website.

Is there a maximum amount I can apply for?

There is no upper limit, but the fund is highly oversubscribed.

Are there any exclusions/things you do not fund?

There is a list of exclusions on page 4.

How will projects be assessed?

Applications are assessed against the criteria and compared with other applications.

Information on how projects will be assessed is on pages 10 - 14.

When will projects know if they have been successful or not?

Applicants will be notified directly.

Notification regarding the outcome of shortlisting is expected in June 2026 and funding decisions in August 2026. Projects may start from September 2026, dependant on Deed negotiation.

What are 'in-kind' contributions? / How do I calculate these?

In kind contributions are when someone helps your project by giving time, skills, or materials instead of money. These need to be things your project would otherwise need to pay for.

For more information see page 9 and Appendix A.

Do I need to provide evidence of co-funding?

Not at application stage. You will need to advise us if contributions are "confirmed" or "pending" at the time of application.

I'm not GST registered; can I still apply?

Applicants should be GST registered. If you're not currently, but are able to register if your application was successful, you're welcome to apply. Please ensure you understand the requirements to register.

If my organisation has multiple independent branches, can I only submit one application?

Each branch can submit one application, as long as each branch can enter into a Deed of Grant independently.

I have endorsed an application / I'm co-leading a project can I submit my own application?

Yes.

I am a private landowner; do I need to consult with iwi/hapū/whānau?

Strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau is a priority for Department of Conservation. The DOCCF supports this by requiring all applicants to engage with iwi/hapū or whānau. Engagement also strengthens relationships and improves project outcomes by incorporating local knowledge, history, and cultural values.

Appendix E: Threatened Naturally Uncommon Ecosystems

Naturally uncommon ecosystems are those that would naturally occur over a small area in the absence of human activity. They often have highly specialised and diverse collections of flora and fauna. Of those 72 ecosystems, **45 are classed as threatened** (critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) exhibiting a high probability of being lost. These are listed in the table below.

- Locations are examples only, unless specified.
- Ecosystem names link to factsheets on Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research’s website which contains images and longer descriptions.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEMS				
Category	Ecosystem name	Short description	Diagnostic feature(s)	Location examples
Coastal	Coastal turfs	Coastal low-stature herb-dominated vegetation maintained by salt spray and wind; induced by marine mammals in some locations	Turf vegetation usually under 5 cm tall	Tunnel Beach (Otago), Long Point (Southland), Te Kaukau Point (Wairarapa)
	Shell barrier beaches (chenier plains)	Accumulations of shell and coarse sand deposited in foreshore zones, forming low ridges or plains; saltmarsh and/or mangrove communities may occur landward	Bars and ridges of shell and coarse sand in foreshore areas extending landward	Confined to Auckland / Waikato regions (Pollen Island, Pūkorokoro / Miranda)
Geothermal	Fumaroles	Geothermal vents emitting steam and gases with highly acidic hot soil conditions; supports specialised microbial and plant communities	Active or recently active volcanism; presence of hydrogen sulphide	Taupō Volcanic Zone (Waikato)
	Geothermal stream sides	Margins of geothermal streams with high temperatures and unusual water chemistry.	Presence of steam and plant species adapted to warmer temperatures	Taupō Volcanic Zone (Waikato), along the Alpine Fault (South Island)
	Heated ground (dry)	Areas where heat flow from geothermal activity belowground creates warm soil conditions	Warm soil supporting unique plant assemblages	Taupō Volcanic Zone (Waikato)

	Hydrothermally altered ground (now cool)	Soils changed by geothermal steam that are strongly acidic and infertile; low in organic matter and phosphorous	Presence of prostrate kānuka (<i>Kunzea ericoides</i> var. <i>microflora</i>)	Taupō Volcanic Zone, (Waikato)
Induced by Native Vertebrates	Marine mammal haulouts	Coastal areas modified by marine mammals (seals); sites shaped by frequent disturbance and enriched by animal excrement; soils may be compacted; unique plant assemblages; coastal turfs may be induced in high use areas	Mammal presence and pungent odour; generally confined to rocky shorelines at present	Cape Foulwind (Westland), Chalky and Breaksea Islands, (Southwestland)
	Seabird-burrowed soils	Areas where soils have been disturbed and enriched by burrowing nesting seabirds; track formation and bird excrement are other drivers	Unstable pot-holed ground; open grassy areas to under low-statured forest	Mercury Islands (Waikato), Punakaiki (Westland), Seaward Kaikōura Range, (Canterbury)
	Seabird guano deposits	Deposits of seabird excrement of varying depths high in nitrogen and acidic; vegetation depends on age of excrement and bird activity; colony size ranging from 100s to 1000s of birds	Significant accumulations of greyish white excrement on rocks and adjacent soil; pungent odour	Cape Kidnappers (Hawke's Bay), Kaikōura Headland (Canterbury)
Inland & Alpine	Inland outwash gravels	Plains of inland basins with coarse, well drained and infertile gravelly substrates; frost and wind are important erosional forces	Gravelly, sparsely vegetated plains of dry inland basins	Mackenzie Basin (Canterbury), Upper Clutha and Waitaki River basins (Otago)
	Inland saline (salt pans)	Small, flat pan-like features with high soil salt content and alkalinity owing to naturally poor drainage and high evaporation rates	Grey-white pan-like features often occurring as a mosaic of small patches	Confined to Central Otago
	Inland sand dunes	Inland non-volcanic sand dune formed from river sands that have not been influenced by coastal processes	Stabilised sand deposits with vegetation like riverbed sand deposits	Upper Clutha and Waitaki basins (Otago), Ashburton, Rakaia River valleys, (Canterbury)

	Old tephra (>500 years) plains - frost flats	Plains or flats of the volcanic plateau with pumice-derived soils, severe year-round frosts and shrubby cold adapted vegetation different from frost hollows	Dominance by the shrub monoa (<i>Dracophyllum subulatum</i>); mat-forming mosses and lichens	Confined to North Island volcanic plateau (Rangitāiki Conservation Area, Kāingaroa Plateau)
Inland & Alpine	Strongly leached terraces and plains	Very infertile terraces, plains or dry shingle fans formed as part of ancient glacial processes; fans are cone-shaped deposits formed where streams or rivers exits a narrow, steep valley	Prevalence of bog pine (<i>Halocarpus bidwillii</i>) and mat-forming mosses and lichens	Mavora Basin (Southland), Mackenzie Basin (Canterbury), Molesworth Recreation Reserve (Marlborough)
Subterranean or Semi-subterranean	Cave entrances	Distinct transitional zone between subterranean and surface environments; influenced by light and air flow; can be shaded, wet or dry; occur in various rock types but prevalent in limestone; entrance sufficiently large to support a distinct assemblage of species	The zone at the opening of a cave, extending to the limit of light penetration but not further	Waikato-King Country, Northwest Nelson Westland (Nelson-Tasman), Banks Peninsula (Canterbury) and Otago Peninsulas (Otago)
Wetlands	Ephemeral wetlands	Wetlands with a pronounced and noticeably long seasonal dry phase; may not be wet in all years; on plains or flats with scant summer rainfall; supports species adapted to drying out	Wetland with a pronounced dry phase; occur in a range of settings, landforms and substrate types	Country-wide but pronounced on the eastern side of the Main Divide (South Island) and Mackenzie Basin (Canterbury)
	Gumlands	Flat to rolling heathland with strongly leached infertile, acidic, and seasonally waterlogged soils; topsoil layers are thin and sometimes peaty; deposits of kauri gum are common	Heathland dominated by mānuka (<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>) and other shrubs and sedges	Confined to Northland and Auckland (Ahipara Plateau, Lake Ohia, Kaimaumu, Maitahi, Wiroa; Albany Scenic Reserve)
	Damp sand plains	Flat areas amongst active coastal dunes where wind has removed sand down to a level where the water table is permanently just below the surface or occasionally above it	Low-lying damp to wet sandy areas amongst active coastal dunes	Between the Manawatū and Rangitikei Rivers (Manawatū–Whanganui)

ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEMS

Category	Ecosystem name	Short description	Diagnostic feature(s)	Location examples
Coastal	Active sand dunes	Predominantly coastal dunes whose physical landscape and ecological character results from continuously moving wind-blown sand; bare to sparsely vegetated in their natural form	Dominance by two sand-binding species: Spinifex (<i>Spinifex sericeus</i>) and Pingao (<i>Ficinia spiralis</i>)	Aupōuri Peninsula (Northland), Manukau Heads (Auckland), Farewell Spit (Nelson) Mason Bay (Stewart Island)
	Coastal cliffs of calcareous rocks	Limestone or marble cliffs next to the ocean; from highly exposed to sheltered and shaded sites; from dry to wet; vegetation influenced by wind and salt spray	Habitats from bare rock with only mosses and lichens to deeper soils supporting woody vegetation	Napenape (Canterbury) Castlepoint (Wairarapa) Punakaiki (West Coast)
	Coastal cliffs of ultramafic (ultrabasic) rocks	Ultramafic or serpentine cliffs next to the ocean; high in metal oxides and toxic metals, low in essential plant nutrients; from highly exposed to sheltered and shaded sites; from dry to wet; vegetation influenced by wind and salt spray	Rocks dark greenish grey to red or orange where highly weathered and oxidised; prevalence of many rare endemic species	Confined to Hikurua Surville Cliffs (Northland) and D'Urville Island (Marlborough)
	Dune deflation hollows	Depressions within coastal dune systems where wind erosion has lowered the ground surface, exposing material too coarsely grained to be moved by wind; transitions into a damp sand plain when water table is just below the surface	Stable, armoured surface within or adjacent to active dune fields	Between the Manawatū and Rangitīkei Rivers (Manawatū–Whanganui), Kaitorete Spit (Canterbury)
	Shingle beaches	Beaches comprised of sand, water-smoothed gravel and cobbles; common where shingle-laden rivers enter the ocean or where shingle is eroded from coastal	Dominance of gravels and cobbles; vegetation cover ranging from sparse to near continuous cover	Canterbury and Hawke's Bay, Onoke Spit (Wairarapa)

		cliffs; shoreface often gives rise to a ridge beyond the high tide mark		
Coastal	Stable sand dunes	Previously active dunes now stable; distant from the ocean and no longer impacted by coastal processes	Notable soil development; near continuous and often woody vegetation cover	Rangitāiki Plains (Bay of Plenty), Manawatū-Whanganui dunes
	Stony beach ridges	Former beach crests no longer influenced by wave action and comprised of wave-deposited water-smoothed gravel and cobbles no longer or rarely influenced by the ocean	Ridges becoming older in a landward direction; woody vegetation in hummocks to near continuous cover	Pūkorokoro / Miranda (Waikato), Pukerua Bay (Wellington), Rāangi (Marlborough), Kaitorete Spit (Canterbury)
Inland & Alpine	Boulderfields of volcanic rocks	Areas of frost-weathered volcanic rock on gentle gradients; little to no soil development other than between blocks or boulders	A continuous or patchy sea of blocks or boulders in areas of volcanism	Mt Ruapehu (Tongariro National Park)
	Braided riverbeds	Bed of a braided river with evidence of channel migration within the riverbed and the riverbed across its floodplain; high sediment loads with shifting shingle and gravel islands	Gently sloping and broad gravelly floodplain with multiple mobile channels	Ngaruroro River (Hawke's Bay), Rangitikei River (Manawatū-Whanganui), Rakaia, Rangitata, and Tasman rivers (Canterbury)
	Frost hollows	Areas on terrace and valley floors where cold air accumulates; shrubby vegetation adapted to severe frosts and poor drainage; differ from old tephra (>500 years) plains – frost flats	Frosts prevent species in surrounding vegetation types from establishing, especially tall forest	Waiou River Valley (Southland), Buller River Valley (West Coast)
	Sandstone erosion pavements	Areas of flat to gentle slopes lacking topsoil and exposed to chemical weathering; cracks and fissures may be present; those associated with coal deposits of greatest concern	Bare rock patches on ridges, plateaus, and mountain tops	Denniston and Stockton plateaus (Westland), Herbert Range (Nelson-Tasman)

	Volcanic dunes	Mostly inland sandy to gravelly dunes derived from volcanic deposits reworked and deposited by wind and water; form in sheltered sites and around sand binding vegetation forming hummocks	Low mounds in a chaotic pattern of hummocks and hollows, intermixed with hard, gravelly surfaces	Mt Ruapehu (Tongariro National Park)
Subterranean or semi-subterranean	Sinkholes	Natural bowl-shaped depressions in limestone or karst landscapes where surface water drainage has led to the dissolution and collapse of the underlying substrate	Depressions where the ground's surface collapses into an underground cavity	Western Waikato-King Country, Northwest Nelson, Central Westland, Northeastern Otago
Wetlands	Domed peat bogs	Bogs that over time, through peat accumulation, develop a signature convex dome raised above the local topography; high rainfall results in waterlogging; low nutrient and acidic conditions	Wetlands dominated by <i>Sporadanthus ferrugineus</i> and <i>Sporadanthus traversii</i> among other specialised flora	Confined to the Waikato (e.g. Kopuatai Peat Dome) and the Chatham Islands
	Dune slacks	Nutrient-enriched moist depressions between shore dunes or in a sandbank; periodically holds water; vegetation is typically wetland adapted; occur in association with active dunes	Permanently damp to seasonally wet habitats in coastal dunes; wetter than damp sand plains	Tangimoana and Himatangi (Manawatū-Whanganui), Mason Bay (Stewart Island)
	Lagoons	Shallow body of water separated from the ocean by a beach ridge or barrier bar; connects to the ocean during storms and flooding events; salinity fluctuates from fresh to nearly seawater	Dynamic aquatic system driven by riverine and ocean processes	Te Waihora Lake Ellesmere (Canterbury), Waituna Lagoon (Southland), Ōkārito Lagoon (West Coast), Lake Ōnoke (Wairarapa)
	Seepages and flushes	Wetland habitat where nutrient and oxygen rich groundwater emerges; seepages tend to be wetter for longer periods than flushes; areas of a few to several 10s of m ²	Herbaceous species dominate; saturated soils exclude woody plants	Widely occurring but most pronounced in the montane zones of wetter districts

VULNERABLE ECOSYSTEMS				
Category	Ecosystem name	Short description	Diagnostic feature(s)	Location examples
Coastal	Coastal cliffs of mafic (basic) rocks	Cliffs of mostly volcanic origin (e.g. basalt) next to the ocean; from highly exposed to sheltered and shaded; from dry to wet	Vegetation driven by wind and salt spray; woody plants stunted, wind shorn	Whangārei Harbour (Northland), Banks Peninsula (Canterbury), Caitlins (Southland)
Inland & Alpine	Boulderfields of calcareous rocks	Fields of large fragments of fallen limestone and marble rock; usually little soil development; lichens and mosses the only colonists initially, followed by mat-forming plants	Deposits of large (>0.25 m) fragments of fallen rock on gentle slopes	Wharepapa/Arthur Range and Matiri Range (Kahurangi National Park), Garibaldi Range (West Coast), Chalk Range (South Marlborough), Castle Hill Basin (Canterbury)
	Cliffs, scarps and tors of calcareous rocks	Outcrops of limestone or marble; sparsely vegetated by species tolerant of shallow soils, full sunlight, drought, or damp and shady crevices; high numbers of rare endemic plants	Cliffs are high steep faces; scarps are cliffs along plateau edges; tors are mounds of glacial eroded bedrock with steep sides	Widespread across the North Island (Wairarapa) and South Island (Nelson, Canterbury)
	Cliffs, scarps and tors of mafic (basic) rocks	Outcrops of mostly volcanic rock (e.g. basalt); vegetated by species tolerant of shallow soils, full sunlight, drought, or damp and shady crevices	Cliffs are high steep faces; scarps are cliffs along plateau edges; tors are mounds of glacial eroded bedrock with steep sides	Throughout Northland and the Coromandel Peninsula; Banks and Otago Peninsulas
	Moraines	Accumulation of rock deposited by glacial action or left behind after glacial retreat; dry, raw soils sparsely vegetated by mosses and lichens; scattered herbs and shrubs; those east of the Main Divide of greatest concern	Rocks marking the extent of a glacier; distinguished from boulder fields by the mode of formation	Throughout the Mackenzie Basin (Canterbury), Upper Rangitata and Waimakariri rivers (Canterbury), Hakatere Basin (Canterbury), Upper Clutha River Valley (Otago)

	Screes of calcareous rocks	Accumulated fine to coarse limestone rock, ranging from gravel and cobbles to patches of boulders covering slopes often with protruding bedrock; mostly above tree line	Shingle slides sparsely to mostly unvegetated owing to downslope movement	Wharepapa/Arthur Range and Matiri Range (Kahurangi National Park), Chalk Range (South Marlborough)
Inland & Alpine	Young tephra (<500 years) plains and hillslopes	Deposits of fine to coarse grained material recently (<500 years) ejected during volcanic eruptions; soils poorly developed and lacking organic matter	Composed of volcanic ash, pumice and gravelly sand	Mt Taranaki, Mt Tarawera, Tongariro National Park, Whakaari White Island
Wetlands	Blanket mires	Peat wetlands covering undulating low relief terrain; precipitation and/or groundwater fed; vegetated by mosses, sedges and some shrubs; typical of cool, windy, and wet locations	Wetlands that accumulate peat but at a reduced rate relative to a domed bog	Southland, Westland, Rakiura / Stewart Island, Subantarctic Islands
	Estuarine margins	Transitional habitats of estuaries where open water grades into freshwater wetland or terrestrial habitats; behind sand spits and coastal embayments, at river mouths, and in drowned river valleys; vegetation influenced by salinity, tides, wave action, and topography	Estuary edges influenced by coastal and riverine processes; salt-tolerant vegetation; shoreline slope influences ecosystem extent and zonation	Throughout the country in coastal areas with a permanent direct connection to the ocean
	Lake margins	Transitional habitats between aquatic and terrestrial habitats bordering lakes and tarns (small higher altitude lake-like water bodies); species composition driven by episodic wetting and drying; functions similar to an ephemeral wetland but with a corresponding water body.	Relates to the ephemeral margin of the lake or tarn influenced by a fluctuating water level; width of margin may vary annually.	Throughout the country from sea level to above tree line; lakes as larger low to mid-altitude water bodies; tarns as smaller mid-altitude to alpine water bodies.

Content collated and adapted from [Naturally uncommon ecosystems. Bioeconomy Science Institute. Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research Group.](#)

