



# Cabinet paper material

## Proactive release

### Hon Tama Potaka, Minister of Conservation

**Title:** Seeking agreement to consult on the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy - [24-B-0279]

**Date:** 5 May 2025

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These documents have been proactively released:

**Cabinet paper – Seeking agreement to consult on the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy - [24-B-0279]**

Date: 5 May 2025

Author: Office of the Minister of Conservation

**Cabinet Economic Policy Committee Minute – [CAB-24-MIN-0458]**

Date: 5 May 2025

Author: Cabinet Office

### Material redacted

No material has been withheld from these documents.

[In Confidence]

Office of the Minister of Conservation

Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

## Seeking agreement to consult on the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

### Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks your agreement to release a discussion document and initiate public consultation on the next implementation plan for *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 (ANZBS)*. I intend to replace the current implementation plan, which is not fit for purpose, with a new, more targeted plan to direct resources towards biodiversity action that will deliver on this Government's priorities.
- 2 I will return to Cabinet in 2025 to seek approval for the final implementation plan and to submit it to the Convention on Biological Diversity (**the Convention**), a multilateral treaty of 196 parties, to which New Zealand has been party since 1993.

### Relation to government priorities

- 3 The actions proposed in the discussion document align with my portfolio priorities to focus on high conservation value work, generate more sustainable revenue streams whilst controlling costs, and to better partner with Iwi, communities and business to drive greater opportunities within clear conservation parameters [ECO-24-MIN-0154]. It will support my goal to make DOC financially sustainable by 2026.
- 4 The actions proposed in the discussion document will support achievement of the national targets for the Global Biodiversity Framework [CAB-24-MIN-0366] recently agreed by Cabinet.

### Executive summary

- 5 Protecting and restoring our biodiversity is not the job of government alone. A successful implementation plan can support collective efforts across New Zealand, with actions that will grow third-party investment, and provide greater visibility of priorities to guide the choices of others about where they lead or contribute to conservation efforts.
- 6 The current ANZBS implementation plan was published in April 2022. It was developed as an interim document and listed more than two hundred actions that were planned or underway under the previous Government. It is not fit for purpose, and I consider a new approach is needed to reflect the direction of our Government. I want to ensure that the next implementation plan works for New Zealand, is achievable, practical and focussed on the actions that matter most.

- 7 I am proposing that our Government's implementation plan focus on a small number of critical actions for central and regional government to complete between now and 2030 and include financial data. The proposed critical actions cover four themes: prioritising investment, increasing revenue and non-government funding for biodiversity, growing capability and improving the evidence and knowledge base for more effective decision making for biodiversity.
- 8 The critical actions under these themes will support achievement of the national targets for the Global Biodiversity Framework [CAB-24-MIN-0366] recently agreed by Cabinet. They reflect the priorities of our Government and will address the state of our biodiversity. The proposed approach will be funded through agency baselines and is achievable with no additional financial cost to the Crown.
- 9 I seek agreement to publicly consult on the critical actions. Consultation will signal Government direction and will ensure actions are well-aligned, effective, practical and achieve maximum benefit.
- 10 I propose that consultation is targeted, focussing on key stakeholders and Iwi/Hapū, while offering the wider public the opportunity to submit on the discussion document.
- 11 After consultation feedback has been carefully considered, I propose to consult with relevant portfolio Ministers to finalise the ANZBS implementation plan – in particular, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Biosecurity, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Forestry and Minister for Oceans and Fisheries. I will then seek Cabinet approval on the final ANZBS implementation plan, and to submit it alongside the existing ANZBS to the Convention secretariat as New Zealand's revised national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

### Why action is needed to protect and restore biodiversity

- 12 Biodiversity supports New Zealanders' wellbeing and a healthy economy. Nature and our connection with nature, is part of both our national identity, and our international brand.
- 13 Biodiversity plays a significant role in underpinning New Zealand's primary industries and their economic contribution, with annual export revenue of the food and fibre sector estimated to have reached \$54.3 billion by 30 June 2024.<sup>1</sup> It also drives interest in New Zealand as a tourist destination, supporting tourism to deliver \$22.1 billion to our economy in 2023.<sup>2</sup> These industries also provide incomes and employment for many regional communities.
- 14 Our native forests store 1.8 billion tonnes of carbon, and there are further opportunities for restoration of forests and wetlands to increase carbon sequestration and support New Zealand's climate change goals. This may also present opportunities to support the government's commitments relating to afforestation, including of

<sup>1</sup> Ministry for Primary Industries (2024). Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries June 2024. <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/62637-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-June-2024>

<sup>2</sup> Stats NZ (2024). Tourism satellite account: Year ended March 2023. Retrieved from [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)

natives, on Crown land that has low conservation or agricultural value, as recently discussed by Cabinet [CAB-24-MIN-0439].

15 In 2013, Landcare Research estimated the economic value of New Zealand's land based ecosystems at \$57 billion dollars a year across areas such as the provision of water, erosion control, recreation, flood regulation and pollination.<sup>3</sup>

16 While biodiversity provides many economic, social and cultural benefits to New Zealanders, these benefits are at risk because our biodiversity is in trouble. New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of threatened species in the world.<sup>4</sup> More than 4,300 species are threatened with extinction or at risk of becoming threatened if decline continues. Many of our ecosystems are significantly reduced in extent, with only 30% of original forest cover and 10% of our inland wetlands remaining. There are also emerging biosecurity threats to our native species, such as the imminent arrival of the avian influenza.

### Why we need a new implementation plan

17 The current implementation plan was published in April 2022. It was developed as an interim plan and comprises a long list of more than two hundred actions. It is not fit for purpose, and I consider a different approach is needed. Effort is currently spread too thinly, and it is not feasible to achieve the large number of goals within the strategy within the next six years, or within existing baselines.

18 Cabinet recently approved national targets for biodiversity to 2030 that have been submitted under our obligations to the Convention. Cabinet agreed that these comprise the thirteen existing objectives of the ANZBS and their underpinning goals, amended to reflect this Government's priorities. Cabinet noted that a new implementation plan will be submitted based on the direction of our national targets and to ensure clear action is focussed on the most important work across the biodiversity system.

19 Development of the next implementation plan will enable us to meet our commitments under the Convention and its Global Biodiversity Framework.

*I propose the implementation plan be based on four themes*

20 I intend the next ANZBS implementation plan to focus on critical actions for central and regional government (Appendix 1), to shift our biodiversity system in a way that makes sense to New Zealand, reflecting our Government's priorities and our constrained resources. The implementation plan will also acknowledge and identify existing work programmes in Government that continue as business as usual and support achievement of all national targets.

<sup>3</sup> Landcare Research, 2013 'Total economic value' of New Zealand's land-based ecosystems and their services. This covers all New Zealand and is not limited to public conservation lands and waters.

<sup>4</sup> Bradshaw, C.J.A; Giam, X.; Sodhi, N.S. 2010: Evaluating the relative environmental impact of countries. *PLoS ONE* 5(5). <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0010440>.

- 21 I have chosen to focus on actions that matter the most for central and regional government to complete, because of their responsibility to develop the policy settings and oversee delivery of the protection and restoration of our biodiversity. Central and regional Government working in partnership will be critical for delivery of the implementation plan and the national targets. I am proposing actions within four themes:
- 21.1 **Agreed biodiversity priorities are driving investment and action.** Actions will drive coordinated effort into critical biodiversity work across New Zealand. A national picture of our most important areas for biodiversity will prioritise programmes to protect and restore degraded habitats, recover native species and develop nature-based solutions.
- 21.2 **Increased external funding, revenue and support is delivering more work on biodiversity priorities.** Actions will make it easier for others to contribute, drive more effort and broaden the current funding base for biodiversity. This includes a biodiversity investment prospectus, improved accessibility and coordination of government support and potential incentives for biodiversity protection on private and Māori land, and support for business sector efforts to establish a system for nature-based financial disclosures. I will also seek to generate new revenue from public conservation lands and waters for biodiversity and other work in line with my Revenue Action Plan.<sup>5</sup>
- 21.3 **An evidence and knowledge-based approach is driving improvements in practice and decision making for biodiversity.** Actions will improve data, knowledge and systems and ensure we understand the costs and return on investment from our efforts to protect and restore biodiversity. Effective monitoring indicators will give assurance that agencies are working on the right things in the right places, and efforts will have the greatest impact.
- 21.4 **Increased capability and support enables New Zealand to address the state of our biodiversity.** Actions will ensure that New Zealanders understand the state of our biodiversity and are motivated and enabled to take action. Agencies and the wider sector will collaborate to address capability gaps.
- 22 Many other groups and individuals are playing a significant role in implementing the ANZBS. These areas of focus and the critical actions will guide them. Their work is crucial to addressing the state of our biodiversity and is making a difference.
- 23 The Department of Conservation has led development of critical actions with cross-agency partners, in particular the Ministry for the Environment, Biosecurity New Zealand, Land Information New Zealand, and Te Uru Kahika (for Regional and Unitary Councils).
- 24 Subject to Cabinet approval, I intend to release the attached discussion document (Appendix 2) in March 2025. I intend to focus efforts on consulting with key

<sup>5</sup> On 12 August 2024 Cabinet approved my Action Plan for increasing third-party revenue for conservation and the underlying objectives and principles. Approval was also given to progress work on two key actions: investigating, and publicly consulting on, access charging for some areas of public land; and investigating the introduction of rent for access for mining activities on public conservation land [CAB-24-MIN-0293].

stakeholders and Iwi/Hapū, while offering the wider public the opportunity to submit on the discussion document, should they wish to. This targeted approach will ensure actions are supported, well-aligned, effective, practical and achieve maximum benefit.

## Implementation

- 25 Central and regional government will lead implementation of the critical actions in the final implementation plan. Each critical action will be assigned to a lead agency, who will work collaboratively with other agencies to deliver the action within current agency baselines and the identified timeframe.
- 26 ANZBS was developed with groups, organisations and individuals outside of central and regional government and they will continue to play a significant role in improving biodiversity outcomes in their communities.
- 27 Subject to Cabinet approval, I intend to submit New Zealand's updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan, consisting of ANZBS (unrevised) and the next implementation plan, to the Convention secretariat.
- 28 The Department of Conservation will provide, to both myself and relevant Ministers, an annual progress report detailing the delivery status of the programmes and critical actions in the next ANZBS implementation plan, and this will be publicly available.
- 29 I also intend to provide national reports to the Convention to demonstrate New Zealand's contribution to global goals and targets. National reports will be based on indicators developed for the Global Biodiversity Framework and are expected to be submitted by 28 February 2026 and 30 June 2029.

## Cost-of-living Implications

- 30 There are no cost-of-living implications arising from this paper.

## Financial Implications

- 31 This paper does not have direct financial implications. The proposed actions and supporting programmes will be funded through agency baselines.
- 32 Actions under the "Agreed biodiversity priorities are driving investment and action" theme will see investment shift towards high priority species, habitats and places and away from lower priority work in line with my goal that DOC is financially sustainable by 2026.
- 33 Additional actions may be proposed through engagement with Iwi/Hapū and public consultation. If there are additional financial implications as a result of this, they would be subject to Budget and reprioritisation processes and agreed by Cabinet before the implementation plan can be finalised.

## Legislative Implications

- 34 There are no legislative implications for this paper.

## Impact Analysis

### Regulatory Impact Statement

35 The Regulatory Impact Analysis requirements do not apply for this proposal.

### Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

36 The Climate Implications of Policy Assessment requirements do not apply for this proposal.

### Population Implications

37 There are no population implications for this paper. Public and stakeholder consultation on the implementation plan will enable people to provide further information on potential impacts and opportunities of the proposed actions.

### Human Rights

38 There are no human rights implications for this paper.

### Use of external resources

39 There were no external resources used leading up to this paper.

### Consultation

40 Engagement with Iwi/Hapū has commenced and will continue through the consultation period. This reflects my commitment to maintain and build positive working relationships with Iwi to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities. It recognises the significant and increasing role of the Māori economy, much of which is supported by our biodiversity, and the strong and enduring connection that Iwi/Hapū have to lands, waters and species within their areas of interest.

41 Early engagement to shape the themes was undertaken with the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA), the Otago and Auckland Conservation Boards, New Zealand International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Committee and national Māori organisations including the Pou Taiao of the Iwi Chairs Forum, Te Tira Whakamātaki, and the Predator Free 2050 Kaitiakitanga Collaborative Group. Further engagement on the proposed actions has been undertaken with Conservation Boards, the NZCA, Ngā Whenua Rāhui Komiti and Environmental NGOs.

42 The following agencies were provided the opportunity to review the content of this paper: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, The Treasury, Ministry of Health, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Education, Ministry for Primary Industries, Te Puni Kōkiri, The Office for Māori Crown Relations – Te Arawhiti, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry for the Environment, Land Information New Zealand, Ministry for Women, Statistics New Zealand, and the Environmental Protection Authority.



- 43 Feedback on this paper was received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for the Environment, Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora, Ministry for Primary Industries, Land Information New Zealand, Te Puni Kōkiri and Statistics New Zealand.

## Communications

- 44 Following Cabinet's decision, I will announce the commencement of public consultation in March 2025 and release the discussion document through the Department of Conservation website.

## Proactive Release

- 45 I intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper, subject to any redactions to protect our ability to make future decisions on the ANZBS implementation plan within 30 working days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet, or on announcement of the public consultation as appropriate.

## Recommendations

The Minister of Conservation recommends to the Committee:

- 1 **Note** that the next ANZBS implementation plan will deliver the priorities of our Government, support achievement of the national targets, and deliver on our international commitments, through critical actions and supporting programmes that central and regional government will undertake between now and 2030.
- 2 **Note** that the proposed critical actions and supporting programmes are achievable within current agency baselines.
- 3 **Authorise** the Minister of Conservation to release the attached discussion document for public consultation on the next ANZBS implementation plan.
- 4 **Note** that following consideration of feedback from public consultation, the Minister of Conservation will return to Cabinet to seek approval of the final ANZBS implement plan and to submit it alongside the ANZBS to the Convention secretariat as New Zealand's national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

[Authorised for lodgement]

Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation



## Appendix 1: Draft critical actions for the next ANZBS implementation plan

Themes	Critical actions
Agreed biodiversity priorities are driving investment and action.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Develop a national picture of our most important biodiversity</b> values and quantify the costs to protect and restore priority species and habitats.</li> <li>2. Tackle biodiversity loss by prioritising programmes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>protect and restore high-priority degraded habitats</b> (e.g. impacts from browsers, weeds, predators)</li> <li>○ <b>recover native species</b></li> <li>○ <b>develop nature-based solutions</b> for biodiversity and climate change (e.g. wetland restoration), in light of environmental and climate change responsibilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Increased external funding, revenue and support is delivering more work on biodiversity priorities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Develop a biodiversity investment prospectus</b> to attract and direct external investment into biodiversity priorities.</li> <li>4. <b>Generate new revenue</b> from public conservation lands and waters to invest back into biodiversity.</li> <li>5. <b>Increase commercial investment in biodiversity</b> by supporting the business sector to develop a system for private sector nature-based financial disclosures, reporting and investment.</li> <li>6. Increase the <b>protection of biodiversity on private and Māori land</b> by improving the accessibility and coordination of government support and incentives.</li> </ol>
An evidence- and knowledge-based approach is driving improvements in practice and decision making for biodiversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Agree and implement an <b>achievable set of priority indicators</b> for monitoring progress in national targets, monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, and meeting statutory and international reporting requirements.</li> <li>8. Support Māori to <b>use knowledge systems, including mātauranga</b>, in decision making and biodiversity management.</li> <li>9. Capture and <b>embed the lessons from existing partnership-based delivery models</b> for biodiversity and biosecurity management to inform decisions on future programmes.</li> <li>10. Encourage optimal <b>investment in nature-based solutions</b>, including the restoration and protection of native ecosystems for carbon and biodiversity benefits, by improving the evidence base, developing case studies and operationalising existing research.</li> </ol>
Increased capability and support enables New Zealand to address the state of our biodiversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Develop a cross-sector plan to <b>address the most important capability gaps</b> in the biodiversity system.</li> <li>12. <b>Increase New Zealanders' awareness of the value of our biodiversity</b>, show how they can make a difference to biodiversity in their communities, and drive urgency and momentum for action.</li> <li>13. Establish cross-agency <b>emerging risks capability for domestic biosecurity</b> to horizon scan, share intelligence and support decision-makers in prioritising emerging risk management.</li> </ol>

**Appendix 2: Action for nature: implementing New Zealand's biodiversity strategy 2025 - 2030**

RELEASED BY MINISTER OF CONSERVATION



# Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy: Release of Discussion Document on the Next Implementation Plan

**Portfolio**                      **Conservation**

On 20 November 2024, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the next implementation plan for *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020* (ANZBS) will deliver the priorities of the Government, support achievement of the national targets, and deliver on New Zealand's international commitments through critical actions and supporting programmes that central and regional government will undertake between now and 2030;
- 2 **noted** that the proposed critical actions and supporting programmes, outlined in the paper under ECO-24-SUB-0272, are achievable within current agency baselines;
- 3 **approved** the release of the discussion document attached under ECO-24-SUB-0272 for public consultation on the next ANZBS implementation plan;
- 4 **noted** that, following consideration of feedback from public consultation, the Minister of Conservation will report back to ECO to seek approval of the final ANZBS implementation plan and to submit it alongside the ANZBS to the Convention secretariat as New Zealand's national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

Rachel Clarke  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon David Seymour  
Hon Brooke van Velden  
Hon Chris Bishop (Chair)  
Hon Paul Goldsmith  
Hon Louise Upston  
Hon Mark Mitchell  
Hon Matt Doocey  
Hon Melissa Lee  
Hon Penny Simmonds  
Hon Chris Penk  
Hon Nicola Grigg  
Hon Mark Patterson

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ECO