

3 May 2023

[REDACTED]
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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 28 March 2023 in which you asked:

1. *How many years has your department been affiliated with Toitū?*
2. *How much does it cost your department to maintain certification, including fees from Toitū and costs related to meeting these requirements?*
 - a. *If different, what were the initial up-front costs to achieve compliance with certification standards and achieve certification in the first place?*
3. *Does the department plan to achieve CarbonZero/Carbon Positive certification, and if so, why, and under what timeframe?*
 - a. *If not, why?*
4. *Has the department considered other certification/auditors, or in-house auditing of their climate emissions as an alternative to Toitū?*

On 3 April 2023 you added the following to your request:

5. *Please provide copy of any contracts signed, any other applicable conditions or criteria your agency must abide by as part of accreditation.*

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *How many years has your department been affiliated with Toitū?*

The Department of Conservation (DOC) first signed a contract with Toitū Envirocare in March 2020.

2. *How much does it cost your department to maintain certification, including fees from Toitū and costs related to meeting these requirements?*
 - a. *If different, what were the initial up-front costs to achieve compliance with certification standards and achieve certification in the first place?*

We do not record costs in a way that delineates the amount spent to meet certification requirements. As we do not hold this information, we must refuse this part of the question under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act.

Fees from Toitū Envirocare can be found in the signed contracts attached to this OIA response. The invoice history from Toitū Envirocare for certification services are as follows:

Invoice date	Description	Amount invoiced including GST (\$)
08/04/2020	Annual membership fee	28,951.25
01/04/2021	Annual membership fee	28,951.25
30/11/2021	Audit and certification	9,770.40
01/04/2022	Annual membership fee	28,951.25
31/08/2022	Audit and certification	13,751.80
20/04/2023	Annual membership fee	30,399.10
	Total:	140,775.05

3. *Does the department plan to achieve CarbonZero/Carbon Positive certification, and if so, why, and under what timeframe?*
- a. *If not, why?*

At this stage, DOC does not intend to achieve Net CarbonZero or Climate Positive certification. Any change in focus of certification will be under the guidance of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme (CNGP) or ministerial direction. Currently, the CNGP requires us to:

- measure, verify and report emissions annually
- set gross emissions reduction targets and longer-term reduction plans
- introduce a plan to reduce the Department's emissions
- offset remaining gross emissions from 2025 to achieve carbon neutrality.

4. *Has the department considered other certification/auditors, or in-house auditing of their climate emissions as an alternative to Toitū?*

It is a CNGP requirement to have our emissions inventory verified by an independent third party, therefore we have not opted for in-house auditing.

DOC chose Toitū Envirocare for certification services as they were the only All-of-Government panel member that provided independent emissions verification. As a panel member, Toitū Envirocare offered preferential government pricing. There were no other providers of certification services that were on the All-of-Government panel. Therefore, DOC did not go through a tendering process for certification services.

Toitū Envirocare provides certification against international standard ISO14064-1, which is a high level of confidence on carbon claims in any market. Verification is conducted annually at minimum to ensure regular assurance on maintaining certification.

5. *Please provide copy of any contracts signed, any other applicable conditions or criteria your agency must abide by as part of accreditation*

Attached contracts signed with Toitū Envirocare for certification services are summarised in the table below. There are no other applicable conditions or criteria that DOC must abide by as a part of accreditation from Toitū Envirocare. We therefore must refuse this part of your question under Official Information Act section 18(e), as the information requested does not exist.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	9 March 2020	Contract for Services – Toitū Environmental Certification Services Agreement	Released in part
2	4 November 2022	AoG Consultancy Services Order	Released in part

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Kevin Martin
Chief Financial Officer
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai