

22 July 2025

Ref: OIAD-5360

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 24 June 2025, in which you asked for:

*“..a breakdown of all funding given to the Environmental Defence Society over the last ten years, with a breakdown of how much was given, when and for what purpose.”*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

### **Environmental Defence Society (EDS)**

EDS is a not-for-profit environmental organisation, based in New Zealand and established in 1971. It is comprised of lawyers, scientists and other professionals, who seek better environmental outcomes for New Zealand.

The Department typically engages the EDS for specific contracts for services, particularly where we seek an independent external review. External independent reviews are sought for various reasons – usually to ensure fairness and/or accountability; to improve performance and outcomes; and to provide an unbiased assessment of a decision, process or situation.

With others like the Ministry for the Environment and the New Zealand Law Foundation, we also choose to contribute funding toward independent EDS projects that encapsulate issues of importance to conservation and the Department, and which help facilitate discussion, often leading to policy and legislative reform.

For ease of reference, here is a link to the EDS’s website: <https://eds.org.nz/>

### **Funding**

Please note the Department’s financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June.

We also note that the spend detailed fluctuates due to the funding being unevenly distributed, depending on what each project requires and when; the duration of each project varying; and some projects concluding, with a corresponding decrease in funding.

The Department actively seeks value for money to provide the best conservation outcomes possible within available budgets, including for any contracts for services.

## Department's response

Following a review of the Department's records (to the extent information is available), the attached tables outline payments made to EDS since July 2015:

### Table 1:

- sponsorship payments/grants toward various EDS conferences/projects

### Table 2

- the contracted deliverables/reports, and
- the 'project' payment dates and amounts, including invoice numbers.

All figures are New Zealand dollars and GST exclusive.

The Department has not included payments for items, such as subscriptions for membership and attendance at conferences run by EDS, in our response.

There was some time lag experienced, due to lockdowns connected to COVID-19 (across 2020 and 2021), that impacted some early stages of research and the ability to undertake interviews connected to projects/reviews.

Also attached is a List of published reports from EDS (including links to the reports publicly available), related to the funding outlined in Table 2.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Angela Bell  
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Department of Conservation | *Te Papa Atawhai*

**Table 1:****Sponsorship payments toward various EDS conferences**

<b>Date paid</b>	<b>Invoice #</b>	<b>Nature of payment</b>	<b>Amount paid (excl GST)</b>
29 July 2015	00006263	Conference sponsorship	\$8,000
5 October 2015	00006723	Conference sponsorship	\$2,000
8 April 2016	00007018	Conference sponsorship: Wild Places	\$8,000
25 May 2016	00007149	Conference sponsorship: Wild Places	\$5,000
31 May 2016	00007152	Conference sponsorship: Wild Places	\$4,000
13 October 2016	00007309	Community Conservation Partnerships Fund: Grant	\$20,870
12 June 2017	00008315	Conference sponsorship: Tipping Points Conference	\$5,000
23 April 2018	0000815	Conference sponsorship: Green Light or Light Green Conference	\$8,000
13 May 2019	00009447	Sponsorship Event App	\$8,000
30 August 2021	00010594	Conference sponsorship	\$7,500
Total (excl GST)			<b>\$76,370</b>

**Table 2:**

**Funding provided to EDS by the Department since July 2015  
for or toward independent projects and/or external reviews**

<b>Deliverables/ Reports</b>	<b>Project reference</b>	<b>Invoice #</b>	<b>Amount paid (excl GST)</b>	<b>Payment dates</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisheries Management System in Auckland Region review (2018)</li> </ul>	Fisheries Management System review	00006857	\$26,087	29 February 2016
	Fisheries Management System review	00008813	\$5,217	17 August 2018
	Reforming Oceans	00010014	\$24,100	10 August 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserving Nature: Conservation Reform (July 2021)</li> </ul>	Conserving Nature	00009993	\$65,000	9 September 2020
	Reforming Oceans	00010328	\$24,100	25 February 2021
	Restoring Nature	00010480	\$90,000	24 May 2021
	Reforming Oceans	00010676	\$24,100	30 August 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reforming Oceans Management (May 2022)</li> </ul>	Restoring Nature	00010764	\$39,000	27 September 2021
	Management Planning System review	00010772	\$47,500	13 October 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation Management Planning System review (April 2023)</li> </ul>	Restoring Nature	00010971	\$39,000	17 December 2021
	Reforming Oceans	00010977	\$24,095	17 December 2021
	Reforming Oceans	00011094	\$39,000	22 March 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife Act review and report (June 2023)</li> </ul>	Management Planning System review	00011581	\$47,500	28 February 2023
	Wildlife Act review	00011778	\$39,000	25 July 2023
	Wildlife Act review	00011779	\$39,000	26 July 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoring Nature: Conservation Reform (August 2024)</li> </ul>	Biodiversity systems	00011795	\$10,000	16 October 2023
	Restoring Nature	00012641	\$40,000	13 August 2024
	Spatial Marine Frameworks	00008487	\$20,000	17 October 2017
		00008699	\$10,000	26 March 2018
		00008910	\$16,000	31 May 2018
		00009193	\$4,000	26 November 2018
		00009353	\$15,000	24 June 2019
		00009750	\$25,000	2 December 2019
	Total (excl GST)		<b>\$712,699</b>	

**List:**

**Publicly available finalised reports from EDS  
(either paid for or contributed to by the Department)**

*Vanishing Nature facing New Zealand's biodiversity crisis*

Independent review of progress in implementation of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.

*Report published:* 2015

[Vanishing nature: Facing New Zealand's biodiversity crisis | EDS |](#)  
<https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/vanishing-nature-facing-new-zealands-biodiversity-crisis/>

*Voices from the Sea: managing NZ's fisheries*

*Engaged:* 2016

In-depth look at New Zealand's fisheries management system from those directly involved in its operation – including a comprehensive literature review and in-person interviews.

*Report published:* 2018

[Voices from the Sea: managing NZ's fisheries | EDS |](#)  
<https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/voices-from-the-sea-managing-nzs-fisheries/>

*Conserving Nature: Conservation Reform Issues Paper*

*Engaged:* May 2021

Identify and investigate challenges that the conservation system currently faces in New Zealand; highlight issues with its operation; and evaluate the legal, policy and institutional frameworks. ('Phase One')

*Report published:* July 2021

[Conserving Nature: Conservation Reform Issues Paper | EDS |](#)  
<https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/conserving-nature-conservation-reform-issues-paper/>

*The Breaking Wave: Oceans reform in Aotearoa New Zealand*

*Engaged:* 2020 (contribution toward project with other parties)

Conceptualise the (currently fragmented) ocean management system as an integrated whole; analyse both targeted and larger scale options for change to that system; and explore different starting points for what a future system as a whole could look like.

*Report, Summary Report & Appendices published:* May 2022

[The Breaking Wave: Oceans Reform in Aotearoa New Zealand | EDS |](#)  
<https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/the-breaking-wave-oceans-reform-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/>

[The Breaking Wave: Oceans Reform in Aotearoa New Zealand - Summary Report | EDS |  
https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/the-breaking-wave-oceans-reform-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-summary-report/](https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/the-breaking-wave-oceans-reform-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-summary-report/)

[The Breaking Wave: Oceans Reform in Aotearoa New Zealand – Appendices | EDS |  
https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/the-breaking-wave-oceans-reform-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-appendices/](https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/the-breaking-wave-oceans-reform-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-appendices/)

**Reform of the Wildlife Act 1953: An Opportunity for Transformational Change of Aotearoa New Zealand's Biodiversity Law**

**Engaged:** March 2022

Detailed review and report on the Wildlife Act 1953.

**Report published:** June 2023

[Reform of the Wildlife Act 1953: An Opportunity for Transformational Change of Aotearoa New Zealand's Biodiversity Law | EDS |  
https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/reform-of-the-wildlife-act-1953-an-opportunity-for-transformational-change-of-aotearoa-new-zealands-biodiversity-law-2/](https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/reform-of-the-wildlife-act-1953-an-opportunity-for-transformational-change-of-aotearoa-new-zealands-biodiversity-law-2/)

**Independent Review of the Conservation Management Planning System**

**Engaged:** September 2022

Undertake an independent external review of the conservation management planning system, with the purpose of complementing and informing the Department's own internal review and work.

**Report published:** April 2023

[Independent Review of the Conservation Management Planning System | EDS |  
https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/independent-review-of-the-conservation-management-planning-system/](https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/independent-review-of-the-conservation-management-planning-system/)

**Restoring Nature: Reform of the Conservation Management System**

**Engaged:** December 2021

Analyse the conservation system in more detail, taking a first principles approach, and propose solutions and options for reform. ('Phase Two' (builds on earlier three reports))

**Report published:** August 2024

[Restoring Nature: Reform of the Conservation Management System | EDS |  
https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/restoring-nature-reform-of-the-conservation-management-system/](https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/reports/restoring-nature-reform-of-the-conservation-management-system/)