

In confidence

Office of the Minister of Conservation

Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

Implementation of *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020*

Proposal

- 1 This paper reports back and seeks agreement on the implementation plan to deliver *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020* (ANZBS).

Relation to government priorities

- 2 The proposal supports the Government's manifesto commitment to protect, preserve, and restore our natural heritage and biodiversity, and promote the recovery of threatened species. Working to achieve the outcomes of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* is also an agreed area of cooperation in the Labour Party and Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand Cooperation Agreement.

Executive Summary

- 3 Cabinet approved *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* in August 2020 and requested a report back with an implementation plan to support its delivery [DEV-20-MIN-0148, CAB-20-MIN-0364 refers]. The implementation plan will inform how progress towards the strategy's goals is reported to Cabinet and under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- 4 The implementation plan (Appendix 1) outlines the baseline for achieving the outcomes of the strategy over the next 30 years. It outlines priority areas to drive step changes in the biodiversity system, identifies central and local government actions to achieve the 2025 goals, and specifies who will be leading on each of the actions.
- 5 The implementation plan is intended to be a living document. It will be regularly reviewed, updated, and refined, including to respond to new knowledge, evolution of the Māori–Crown partnership, modern conservation tools and methods, and international commitments (including the new global biodiversity framework).
- 6 Actions taken in certain priority areas will accelerate future work to ensure the strategy's 30-year outcomes can be achieved. These priorities will support a coordinated approach between central and local government, Māori, and key stakeholders.

- 7 To achieve the 30-year outcomes, the first steps are to establish well-functioning systems and processes and to align on-the-ground work to protect and restore biodiversity.

Background / Context

- 8 Cabinet approved *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* on 3 August 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0364 refers], noting that a national biodiversity strategy is a requirement for Aotearoa New Zealand to meet its obligations under the CBD.
- 9 The CBD requires each country to have a national biodiversity strategy and action plan. Parties to the CBD are currently negotiating new global biodiversity goals and targets. The development of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* took into account the emerging draft global goals.
- 10 The strategy sets out a 30-year framework and agenda to address the complex issues causing biodiversity loss. It adopts the He Awa Whiria approach as a way to recognise the Treaty partnership between Māori and the Crown and to draw from multiple scientific disciplines and ways of understanding the world, including mātauranga Māori. It is intended to guide all of the participants in the biodiversity system.¹
- 11 The strategy and accompanying report, *Biodiversity in Aotearoa: An overview of state, trends, and pressures 2020*, drew on key national datasets and published scientific research. Although the currently available data does not present a complete picture and there is variability across domains, ecosystems, and species, it is clear that biodiversity is declining. Biodiversity is directly under threat from pressures, including: changes in land, freshwater, and sea use; introduced invasive species; unsustainable use of species and resources; and pollution.² The urgency to act is widely understood.
- 12 Climate change is amplifying pressures on biodiversity. Biodiversity loss and climate change are linked and scientists are urging that the two be tackled together. Manifesto initiatives related to climate change, such as Just Transitions³ and One Billion Trees⁴ will support a positive feedback loop with work driven by *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*.
- 13 Direct pressures impacting biodiversity are compounded by a disjointed biodiversity system. The current system lacks overarching governance, coordination, and accountability (e.g., a process or body to actively monitor the system and direct investment towards agreed priorities). Policy, planning, and

¹ The biodiversity system includes all those who work with or have an impact on biodiversity, including tangata whenua: whānau, hapū, and iwi, central and local government, industry, non-government organisations, scientists, landowners, communities, and individuals. *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* describes the people, organisations and agencies involved in the system on page 22.

² *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* describes the pressures and their impacts on biodiversity on page 19, including impacts of invasive species, changes in land and sea use, unsustainable use of species, climate change, and pollution.

³ The Just Transitions Unit (within the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment) helps share and coordinate the work of transitioning New Zealand to a low emissions economy. A just transition is about making sure that the Government works in partnership with iwi, communities, regions and sectors to manage the impacts and maximise the opportunities of the changes brought about by the transition to a low emissions economy.

⁴ To achieve the goal to plant one billion trees by 2028, the Government (led by the Ministry of Primary Industries) is supporting landowners, organisations, and communities who want to plant trees or revert land to native forest. Review of the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry is underway.

implementation are often carried out in isolation from other participants in the system.

- 14 Key to achieving *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* goals will be national direction that provides guidance to local government on their responsibilities for protecting and maintaining indigenous biodiversity. We will be well-placed to deliver national direction given the work already undertaken to develop a National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity and its related draft implementation plan.

Implementation plan to achieve the outcomes of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*

- 15 The implementation plan (Appendix 1) flows directly from *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*. It outlines priority areas to drive step changes in the biodiversity system, identifies actions to achieve the 2025 goals, and specifies who will be leading each action.
- 16 The implementation plan is intended to be a living document focused on 5-year increments on the path toward achieving the outcomes over the next 30 years. In addition to regularly updating the actions, there will be 5-yearly reviews of the implementation plan (publicly reported) to assess progress towards the goals and outcomes. Assessment of delivery (as tracked in the progress reports) combined with general biodiversity outcome monitoring data will inform the next priorities and the development of new actions to be added to the implementation plan.
- 17 The implementation plan currently focuses on the specific activities that central and local government have initiated and are planning to undertake during the first 5-year timeframe. It will be refined and then updated regularly by central and regional government; as it evolves, others will be able to identify their actions and report back on progress.
- 18 The emphasis on central and local government during the initial phase of implementation is because of government's responsibility to establish and steward the systems and processes that set the foundation for biodiversity protection and restoration work (as defined under the *Tūāpapa pou*). Frameworks and programmes that exist or are being created across agencies support the implementation of *Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*, which reflects the complex and cross-cutting nature of biodiversity challenges.

Adaptive approach to implementation

- 19 As a living document, the implementation plan allows for adaptability within *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*'s framework of *pou* and objectives. While the long-term outcomes and objectives are not likely to change, the approach allows the implementation to respond to new knowledge, evolution of the Māori–Crown partnership, modern conservation tools and methods, and international commitments.
- 20 While many pressures on biodiversity are already known, climate change and other emerging threats or events may require a change in approach or prioritisation over the 30-year life of the strategy.

- 21 Ongoing engagement throughout planning and implementation of projects and the regular updates of the implementation plan will ensure Māori needs and aspirations are reflected without creating an undue burden on their time and resources.
- 22 There will also be a need to review and, if necessary, further strengthen the alignment of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* or its implementation plan with the new global biodiversity framework under the CBD once it has been agreed. Parties to the CBD are currently negotiating new global biodiversity goals and targets, likely to be adopted in May 2022. International reporting and review requirements are also expected to be further strengthened under the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and will continue to require New Zealand to report on both domestic and international biodiversity spend.

Priority areas to achieve Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS outcomes

- 23 *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* is ambitious because the biodiversity system is large and complex, and scale of the work to manage and restore biodiversity is large. While there is significant work planned to be delivered in the near term (as shown in the implementation plan), there is a lot to do and we cannot do everything at once. Prioritising areas of focus will guide coordination of effort between central and local government, Māori, and key stakeholders to achieve the outcomes of the strategy.
- 24 Priority areas (Appendix 1: Implementation Plan figure 1) flow from *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* and the *Biodiversity in Aotearoa: An overview of state, trends, and pressures 2020* report. By focusing on the drivers of biodiversity loss and opportunities to drive step changes in the biodiversity system, it may be possible to accelerate future actions.
- 25 The priority areas emphasise the need to directly address the drivers of biodiversity loss, including:
 - 25.1 Joined-up efforts that tackle biodiversity loss and climate change together will be critical to our ability to restore and manage ecosystems and species.
 - 25.2 In addition to addressing the ongoing threat of introduced pest species and weeds, we also need to prepare for the increasing range of new biosecurity threats driven by changing climate.
 - 25.3 Achieving biodiversity outcomes on private land to help address impacts of land-use changes on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems where they extend beyond public conservation lands and waters.
 - 25.4 There is urgency to address the increasing cumulative pressures on the marine environment—particularly related to climate change, freshwater, sediments, plastic pollution, and fishing—which are compounding and accelerating biodiversity loss.
- 26 The priority areas also concentrate efforts on opportunities to drive step changes in the biodiversity system, including:

- 26.1 Increasing integration of te ao Māori and elevation of mātauranga Māori in biodiversity decision-making, management, and funding.
- 26.2 Larger scale and more integrated approaches to biodiversity protection, such as integrated statutes for land use, development, and environmental protection (e.g., the proposed Natural and Built Environments Act and the Strategic Planning Act), landscape-scale Predator Free projects developed alongside private and Māori landowners, the regenerative approach to tourism (e.g., the Milford Opportunities Project).
- 26.3 Emerging tools and technologies that have the potential to offer breakthrough opportunities for biodiversity protection.
- 26.4 System-level design of governance (including monitoring and reporting, decision making, institutions, and polices), and cross-agency integration and coordination.

Government steps to achieve the 30-year *Te Mana o te Taiao* – ANZBS outcomes

Setting the foundation to get the biodiversity system right

- 27 As the strategy envisioned, the first two years of implementation (2021-22) are focused on establishing the systems and processes needed to support the effective delivery of the strategy and align on-the-ground work to protect and restore biodiversity. The regular five-yearly cycles of implementation planning will build on the foundation established during this initial phase.
- 28 Establishing the interim oversight group (IOG) was an important step to begin to identify the requisite models for system-wide coordination and governance, which will ensure better monitoring and reporting on progress toward achieving the 30-year outcomes set out in the *Te Mana o te Taiao* – ANZBS.
 - 28.1 The IOG comprises 10 members who have been selected based on their skills and expertise across the biodiversity system. Members do not represent certain groups or sectors, but have knowledge of biodiversity (e.g., mātauranga Māori, freshwater, marine, species) and sectors (e.g., primary production, conservation, resource management, legal, governance, Māori rights and interests).
 - 28.2 The IOG will provide DOC with independent advice on what governance structure(s) could be adopted for oversight, coordination, and decision making in the delivery of *Te Mana o te Taiao* – ANZBS. DOC will then advise me on options. Long-term governance structure(s) will be considered by Cabinet.
 - 28.3 The IOG will make recommendations on options for mechanisms that elevate Treaty partnerships, increase recognition and integration of mātauranga Māori across the system, and connect to the wider biodiversity system to coordinate local and regional actions.
 - 28.4 Members of the IOG will also have line-of-sight across major initiatives under the *Te Mana o te Taiao* – ANZBS umbrella. The IOG will consider

these other initiatives as part of wider *Te Mana o Te Taiao – ANZBS* implementation.

- 29 DOC is developing a Biodiversity Monitoring and Reporting Strategic Plan (to be completed by the end of 2021) to improve its use of reporting data to inform investment decisions and management actions. The plan will feed into the development of the *Te Mana o Te Taiao – ANZBS* monitoring system to track progress and measure the effectiveness of implementation actions.
- 30 Reform of natural resource legislation across other agencies, including resource management, freshwater, and biosecurity is already underway; review and reform of conservation legislation is key to ensuring the appropriate tools exist for ongoing biodiversity protection. DOC is undertaking preparatory research, analysis, and planning for future decisions on comprehensive conservation legislation reform.
- 31 I would also like to acknowledge the work of other Ministers who are progressing initiatives that will help drive the biodiversity outcomes described in *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*, including:
 - 31.1 Progressing the Oceans and Fisheries work programme [ENV-21-MIN-0031 refers] – The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries is leading work to deliver this Government’s commitment to implement an ecosystem-based management approach to our oceans.
 - 31.2 The Associate Minister for the Environment (Biodiversity) is responsible for the development of national direction to achieve integrated biodiversity outcomes that extend onto private land, where many threatened ecosystems and species exist.
 - 31.3 Resource Management reforms – The resource management system is a core component of biodiversity governance, legislation, and resource allocation. Led by the Minister for the Environment, the resource management reform process will determine key levers (e.g., overall outcomes of the resource management system and limit setting) for shaping biodiversity outcomes.

Coordinating across central and local government to support implementation

- 32 Development of the implementation plan reflects significant input from central government agencies and regional councils. The actions included in the plan represent the wide array of work being led across government.
- 33 A comprehensive gaps analysis process is identifying and articulating the additional actions and resources needed to deliver on the 2025 goals. A separate, early assessment of work currently planned or underway (as outlined in the implementation plan) indicates that:
 - 33.1 The two priority areas that currently have the fewest associated actions are a.) joined-up efforts to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change together; and b.) emerging new tools and technologies for biodiversity protection. While there are not many actions addressing the climate priority, the actions themselves are significant.

- 33.2 Objectives that address the direct pressures on biodiversity have comparatively fewer current actions per goal than the other objectives, which likely reflects the need for better connection and coordination across the biodiversity system.
- 34 Modelled after the approach used during the development of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*, a system to coordinate across central and regional government will support future implementation planning and facilitate connections across the wider biodiversity system. To address the gap described above, DOC is in the planning stages to establish interagency connections to support planning, reporting, and delivery and to ensure alignment of initiatives related to *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*.
- 35 The Te Pae Tawhiti all-of-government response to the Wai 262 inquiry and the recommendations put forth in the *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei* report is strongly aligned with the systems-focused goals of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*. Te Pae Tawhiti is exploring systems that provide for both national interests and recognises and provides for the rights and interests of tangata whenua, as kaitiaki of their taonga and mātauranga Māori.
- 36 A robust biosecurity system (at the border and domestically) is a key part of protecting biodiversity in New Zealand, particularly in the context of climate change. Biosecurity New Zealand / Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) leads the management of this system and works closely with regional councils, DOC, industry groups, and others to protect New Zealand from the impacts of invasive species and diseases.
- 37 Environmental and social agencies are working together on Jobs for Nature – Mahi mō te Taiao to align resources and expertise to deliver better outcomes for the environment, individuals, and communities.
- 38 DOC is prioritising support of Predator Free 2050 to move from predator-free pockets to predator-free landscapes. Landscape-scale projects like Predator Free Rakiura deliver on several biodiversity goals. Investment in innovative tools and technologies will accelerate work to achieve the goals outlined in both the Predator Free 2050 Strategy and *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*.

Financial Implications

- 39 *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* goal 1.5 describes ‘sufficient ongoing resource and funding have been secured from multiple sources to implement the strategy.’
- 40 There are no immediate financial implications associated with this paper.
- 40.1 Current costs (e.g., collaborative development of implementation plans and delivery of immediate actions) are being funded from within agency baselines through to the end of 2021-22.

40.2 **Section 9(2)(f)(iv)**

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Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Legislative Implications

42 There are no legislative implications associated with this paper.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

43 The Regulatory Impact Analysis requirements do not apply for this paper.

Climate Implications

44 CIPA requirements do not apply to this proposal as there is no direct impact on emissions.

Population Implications

45 As systems and processes are developed so that others can contribute to and build on the plan, DOC will (as required under section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987) give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi.

46 The paper does not have implications for population groups.

Human Rights

47 There are no implications for human rights in this paper.

Consultation

48 The following government agencies have been consulted on this paper: Department of Internal Affairs, Environmental Protection Authority, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Education, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Primary Industries, Statistics New Zealand, Te Arawhiti, Te Puni Kōkiri, Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand, Treasury, Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has also been informed.

Communication

49 Subject to Cabinet's approval, I intend to release the *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS Implementation Plan* (Appendix 1) online via the DOC website at <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/biodiversity/aotearoa-new-zealand-biodiversity-strategy/>.

Proactive Release

50 I intend to proactively release the Cabinet paper in whole within 30 days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet.

Recommendations

- 1 **note** that Cabinet approved *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020* on 3 August 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0364 refers];
- 2 **note** that Cabinet requested the Minister of Conservation report back with an implementation plan to support the delivery of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*;
- 3 **note** that working to achieve the outcomes of *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* is a common goal and an area of cooperation in the Labour Party – Green Party Cooperation Agreement;
- 4 **note** that a national biodiversity action plan is a requirement for Aotearoa New Zealand to meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- 5 **note** that once the new CBD global goals and targets are adopted in 2022, it will be necessary to strengthen the alignment of the *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* implementation plan with the new global goals and targets under the CBD consistent with New Zealand’s national biodiversity priorities;
- 6 **note** the implementation plan is a living document and will be regularly reviewed, updated, and refined to respond to new knowledge, evolution of the Māori–Crown partnership, modern conservation tools and methods, and international commitments, including the new global biodiversity framework;
- 7 **note** the following priority areas where we can leverage existing government-led work to accelerate progress, including:
 - 7.1 joined-up efforts that tackle biodiversity loss and climate change together
 - 7.2 addressing the ongoing threat of introduced pest species and weeds
 - 7.3 achieving biodiversity outcomes on private land to help address landscape-scale impacts of land-use changes on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems
 - 7.4 national direction that provides guidance to local government on their responsibilities for protecting and maintaining indigenous biodiversity, supported by the work already undertaken to develop a National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity and its related draft implementation plan
 - 7.5 addressing the increasing pressures on the marine environment
 - 7.6 increasing integration of te ao Māori and elevation of mātauranga Māori in biodiversity decision-making, management, and funding
 - 7.7 larger scale and more integrated approaches to biodiversity protection
 - 7.8 emerging tools and technologies

- 7.9 system-level design of governance for monitoring, reporting, and allocating resources;
- 8 **note** the first steps toward achieving *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* 30-year outcomes are to establish the systems and processes for governance and coordination across the biodiversity system;
- 9 **agree** to the implementation plan as attached in Appendix 1 to deliver *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS*, subject to any minor technical and editorial amendments made by the Minister of Conservation; and
- 10 **authorise** the Minister of Conservation to release and regularly update the *Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS* Implementation Plan.

Authorised for lodgement.

Hon Kiritapu Allan

Minister of Conservation

Appendices

Appendix 1: *Te Mana o te Taiao* – ANZBS Implementation Plan