

## 1 Community Environmental Funding Strategy Outline (2025)

### Immediate Key Steps for Board Members:

- **Secure Strategic Commitments:** Each board member to engage their key contacts within two weeks – **Ngahuia** with iwi leaders and Te Puni Kōkiri, **Sam** with funding programme managers (e.g. in DoC, MfE), and **Priya** with urban council officials – to introduce our projects and signal our funding intentions.
- **Align and Prioritise Funding Bids:** Within one month, finalise a list of target government funding programmes (e.g. DoC Community Fund, MfE, Kānoa, MPI/Te Uru Rākau, DIA's Community Matters and Lottery grants) and match each to specific projects. Ensure each proposal draft explicitly aligns with **Te Mana o te Taiao**, climate goals, the Urban Growth Agenda, and Treaty partnership commitments.
- **Develop Compelling Proposals:** **Sam** to lead preparation of robust multi-year budgets and impact metrics demonstrating value for money, **Ngahuia** to weave in Māori partnership elements and endorsements, **Priya** to highlight urban regeneration benefits. First proposal drafts ready for Board review in 6–8 weeks.
- **Engage and Refine with Stakeholders:** Before submission, circulate proposal summaries to key stakeholders for feedback – e.g. share biodiversity project plans with DoC advisors and iwi partners (via Ngahuia), and urban greening plans with MfE urban policy contacts and city council partners (via Priya). Incorporate their input to strengthen credibility and relevance.
- **Formalise Meetings and Protocols:** Schedule formal proposal pitch meetings or hui with senior funders by end of next quarter. Adhere to proper protocol – open iwi meetings with karakia and mihi (Ngahuia to lead cultural protocol), and provide concise briefing papers in advance for government officials (Sam to ensure fiscal details included). Aim to secure letters of support from iwi and local councils to accompany applications.

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## 2 1. Executive Summary

This document outlines a **strategic plan to secure multi-year government funding in 2025** for our community-based environmental protection group's nationwide initiatives in **native biodiversity restoration and urban green spaces**. It identifies priority funding targets across central government agencies and programs, including specific funds in the Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, Ministry for Primary Industries (Te Uru Rākau), Kānoa – Regional Economic Development Unit, and the Department of Internal Affairs' community and lottery grant schemes. We present a tailored **stakeholder engagement plan leveraging our Board's strengths** – Ngahuia's iwi and Māori development leadership, Sam's financial acumen, and Priya's urban regeneration expertise – to build strong relationships with funders and partners. We also provide guidance on aligning our project proposals with **current Government priorities and language** (e.g. *Te Mana o te Taiao* biodiversity strategy, climate

and urban development plans, and Māori partnership principles) to maximise relevance. Finally, clear next steps and timelines are laid out to move from planning to action, ensuring the Board can monitor progress. This strategy is action-oriented and designed for immediate implementation, positioning the organisation confidently to **secure sustainable funding** and scale up its environmental impact.

### 3 2. Key Funding Targets (Government 2025)

We have identified the most relevant government funding sources in 2025 for biodiversity protection, urban regeneration, and community-led sustainability projects. **Target agencies and programmes include:**

- **Ministry for the Environment (MfE):** *Key Opportunities:* While MfE's dedicated Community Environment Fund is currently closed, MfE remains crucial for policy alignment and may offer targeted funds under its initiatives (e.g. **Freshwater Improvement Fund** for waterway restoration, **Essential Freshwater Fund**, or climate adaptation funding). MfE's support often comes via contestable funds tied to government priorities like freshwater quality, climate change adaptation, and community resilience. **Why Target:** Position our proposals to complement MfE's agenda (e.g. implement aspects of the **Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy – Te Mana o te Taiao** and the Emissions Reduction Plan). Even if direct MfE grants are limited in 2025, endorsement or partnership with MfE (through its programmes or its involvement in **Jobs for Nature**) can strengthen our credibility. *Special Stream:* MfE sometimes partners with Māori entities on environment projects (ensure we highlight co-governance or co-design elements to tap into any MfE Māori partnership support).
- **Department of Conservation (DOC – Te Papa Atawhai):** *Key Opportunities:* DOC administers significant conservation funding programmes. The **DOC Community Fund ( Pūtea Tautiaki Hapori)** is a prime target – a contestable fund supporting community-led conservation projects on public and private land. In 2025, it invested NZ\$9.2 million in 20 community groups across Aotearoa (out of 291 applicants) for protecting threatened species and ecosystems. Our nationwide biodiversity restoration projects squarely fit this fund's scope. Additionally, as the lead agency for **Jobs for Nature**, DOC channeled \$485 million into 225+ projects, emphasising partnerships with iwi/hapū [doc.govt.nz](https://doc.govt.nz), which signals strong government preference for initiatives with community and Māori involvement. **Why Target:** We should prepare a standout DOC Community Fund application, highlighting how our project delivers high-impact biodiversity outcomes in partnership with local communities and mana whenua (meeting DOC's criteria of working with iwi/hapū). *Special Streams:* For **iwi-led projects on Māori land**, note DOC's **Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund**, a contestable fund dedicated to protecting indigenous biodiversity on Māori-owned land [nzpcn.org.nz](https://nzpcn.org.nz). Partnering with iwi on relevant projects could allow access to Ngā Whenua Rāhui (administered by a committee advising the Conservation Minister). We should also stay alert for any **"Jobs for Nature" transition funding** or successor programmes beyond June 2025 – while JfN is ending, the government may allocate residual funds or new funding for sustaining successful projects.

- **Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit (MBIE):** *Key Opportunities:* Kānoa (formerly the Provincial Growth Fund unit) manages government investments to stimulate regional economies, including environmental and infrastructure projects. **Kānoa funds** (such as the Regional Strategic Partnerships Fund and Regional Infrastructure Fund) have supported projects that create jobs and resilience, including climate resilience initiatives like flood protection and landscape restoration [beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz). Environmental projects with a strong regional development angle (e.g. eco-tourism infrastructure, large-scale restoration creating employment, or green skills training programmes) are good candidates. **Why Target:** Frame our biodiversity and urban greening projects as “green regional development” – for example, restoring native forests that bolster sustainable tourism and local jobs, or creating urban green corridors that improve city liveability and attract investment. Kānoa’s mandate is broad; it has previously partnered with agencies like DOC on projects delivering both environmental and economic benefits (e.g. river restoration for flood control and biodiversity, co-funded by Kānoa and regional councils). Emphasise job creation, upskilling, and economic resilience in funding applications to Kānoa. *Special Streams:* Kānoa also coordinates with Māori development funding (it has a focus on Māori and Pasifika economic outcomes [beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz)). If our projects involve Māori land or enterprises (e.g. an iwi-owned eco-sanctuary or nursery), we can highlight those to tap into Kānoa’s Māori economic development investment pool [beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz).
- **Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI):** *Key Opportunities:* MPI offers funding for sustainable land management and community-driven environmental improvements in the primary sector. Key programmes include **Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures (SFF Futures)** – a fund for innovative projects in agriculture/forestry with environmental benefits – and **community planting or erosion control initiatives**. For instance, MPI’s **Hill Country Erosion Programme** (through regional councils) supports large-scale planting to prevent erosion, and while it’s aimed at councils, we could partner with a council on a bid. Our projects that restore native vegetation on marginal land or improve soil and water health could attract MPI co-funding. **Why Target:** Frame relevant projects as supporting sustainable land use or climate action. Example: a biodiversity restoration project on farmland could be pitched as improving soil carbon and farm resilience, aligning with MPI’s climate and environment goals [mpi.govt.nz](https://www.mpi.govt.nz). MPI is also one of the agencies in Jobs for Nature, meaning they have experience funding community conservation jobs alongside productive land goals. *Special Streams: Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service (MPI’s forestry arm):* Though the flagship One Billion Trees programme has closed, Te Uru Rākau still supports native afforestation and urban forestry. Look at any upcoming **community forestry grants** or partnerships (for example, if a new **Matariki Tu Rākau**-like initiative emerges for community tree planting). Te Uru Rākau’s current focus includes enabling indigenous forestry and planting for carbon sequestration, so proposals to create urban forests or restore native bush could be compelling. We should monitor MPI/Te Uru Rākau announcements for 2025 – even modest grants (e.g. for planting materials or technical support) can augment our projects.
- **Department of Internal Affairs (DIA – Community Matters):** *Key Opportunities:* DIA administers community and voluntary sector funds that can support environmental

initiatives. The **Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS)** provides small grants for community-led projects across regions (including environmental education or local restoration events). More significantly, the **Lottery Grants Board** (through DIA) has dedicated environment-related funds. The **Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund** offers grants for projects protecting and promoting natural heritage – this is directly relevant to our biodiversity work. We should target the Lottery Environment and Heritage Committee’s 2025 funding round with a strong application (they fund one-off projects, restoration plans, heritage site improvements, etc., often in the ~\$10k–\$100k range for community groups). Additionally, **Lottery Community Fund** could potentially support our urban green space initiatives, especially if we emphasise community wellbeing outcomes. **Why Target:** These funds are often less restrictive and community-focused, which suits our organisation’s profile. A successful Lottery grant can also be a good endorsement of our capability. *Special Streams: Iwi-led initiatives* might also access DIA’s **Marae or hapū development funds** (for example, **Oranga Marae** or Māori Communities funds, if our projects intersect with marae reserves or Māori community development). While our primary aim is environmental, if we collaborate with an iwi on (for instance) marae-based planting or cultural heritage restoration, we could pursue those avenues with Ngahuia’s guidance. Note that the Lottery Grants Board has a **Significant Projects Fund** (for large capital projects) which is closed for 2024/25 [communitymatters.govt.nz](https://communitymatters.govt.nz), so we focus on the active community and environment funds.

**(Special note:** *Many of these funding streams prioritise or **require partnership with Māori** or local communities. Wherever possible, we will position our proposals to be **community/iwi-led** – for example, having an iwi entity as a co-applicant for an iwi land restoration project – to access these targeted streams.***)**

#### 4 3. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Our stakeholder engagement strategy assigns clear roles to each advisory board member to leverage their strengths and networks. The aim is to build strong relationships with both **government funders** and **community/iwi partners**, enhancing our credibility and ensuring our proposals resonate with decision-makers. Below are engagement roles and strategies for Ngahuia, Sam, and Priya, along with protocols for high-level engagement:

- **Ngahuia – Lead for Iwi and Māori Partnerships:** Ngahuia will spearhead engagement with iwi authorities, Māori leaders, and relevant Māori development agencies:
  - **Iwi Engagement:** Leverage Ngahuia’s whakapapa connections and standing in Māori communities to open doors with iwi and hapū in the regions of our projects. She will organise **hui (meetings)** or visits with iwi environmental kaitiaki (guardians) and trust boards to present our projects kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face). Early engagement is key – seeking iwi input and partnership from the start demonstrates respect. *Strategy:* Position our projects as supporting iwi environmental aspirations (e.g. restoring mana of local ecosystems, enabling kaitiakitanga). Offer genuine partnership, such as co-

designing project plans or sharing governance of project activities with hapū representatives.

- **Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) and Māori Agency Outreach:** As our Māori engagement lead, Ngahuia will also interface with **Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry of Māori Development)** and related entities (e.g. Te Arawhiti – the Office for Māori Crown Relations) to align our initiatives with Māori development priorities. For example, she might consult TPK’s regional office for guidance on accessing the **Hapū Development Fund**, which supports environmental and cultural projects with sustainable outcomes [tpko01w3-staging.azurewebsites.net](https://tpko01w3-staging.azurewebsites.net). By keeping TPK informed and seeking their advice or endorsement, we strengthen our case that our work uplifts whānau and hapū, not just the environment.
- **Leveraging Background:** Ngahuia’s background (e.g. iwi leadership or Māori community development experience) will enhance credibility. When engaging senior Māori leaders or Ministers, her fluency in te reo Māori and tikanga knowledge will help build trust. She can speak to our kaupapa (purpose) in a way that resonates with Māori values. For instance, referencing how our work contributes to *Te Mana o te Taiao* and enables rangatira and kaitiaki roles for tangata whenua [environmentguide.org.nz](https://environmentguide.org.nz) shows cultural alignment.
- **Cultural Protocols:** Ngahuia will ensure proper **protocols (tikanga)** are observed when engaging iwi and Māori stakeholders. This includes arranging **pōwhiri** (formal welcome) if we visit a marae, starting meetings with a **karakia** (prayer) or mihimihi (introductions) in te reo Māori, and observing correct etiquette (e.g. giving a **koha** gift to hosts, acknowledging local mana whenua). She will guide our team on respectful engagement, such as taking time to whakawhanaungatanga (build personal connections) before business. These steps demonstrate respect and build the strong relationships that Māori leaders expect for any enduring partnership.
- **Sam – Lead for Funding Agencies (Finance Focus):** Sam will be our primary liaison with government agency officials on the operational and financial aspects of our proposals:
  - **Agency Engagement (Operational Leads):** Sam will identify and engage the **operational or programme managers** in each target funding agency. For example, he might connect with the manager of the DOC Community Fund, senior analysts at MfE’s funding unit, or project leads in Kānoa who oversee climate resilience investments. The goal is to understand their priorities and **speak their language of accountability and impact**. Sam will request meetings or calls to discuss what agencies look for in multi-year funding proposals and to introduce how our projects align with their outcomes.
  - **Finance & Accountability Emphasis:** In all engagements, Sam will stress our organisation’s commitment to **fiscal responsibility, transparency, and measurable impact**. He will highlight our robust financial systems (e.g. audited accounts, experienced financial management) and propose clear **reporting**

**frameworks for outcomes.** For instance, he might outline how we will report on biodiversity gains or community participation metrics annually to the funder, giving them confidence in our stewardship of public funds. By underscoring that we plan to **deliver “high value” initiatives with great outcomes per dollar spent**, Sam appeals to agencies’ need to justify funding allocations.

- **Leveraging Background:** With Sam’s background in finance and perhaps public sector funding experience, he will communicate as a peer to government finance teams. He can credibly discuss cost-benefit analysis, multi-year budgeting, and risk management. This credibility will be crucial when negotiating funding terms or co-funding expectations. Sam should prepare data on our past successes (e.g. “for \$X investment, we trapped Y predators and increased native bird counts by Z%”) to demonstrate our ROI – a language that resonates with Treasury-minded officials.
- **Professional Protocols:** In engaging senior public sector officials (e.g. a Director at MPI or a Minister’s advisor), Sam will follow formal **professional protocols**. This means scheduling meetings via official channels (through their office/assistant), providing an **agenda or brief** ahead of time, and addressing them with appropriate titles. During meetings, he will be concise, well-prepared with facts and figures, and action-oriented. Post-meeting, Sam will send prompt follow-up emails summarising commitments and next steps, as is expected in public service culture. This level of professionalism and clarity will make agencies comfortable dealing with us.
- **Priya – Lead for Urban Regeneration & Strategic Partnerships:** Priya will drive engagement with stakeholders in urban development and environmental strategy, notably MfE’s urban teams and city councils:
  - **Ministry for the Environment (Urban/Community teams):** Priya will connect with MfE officials working on urban sustainability or community partnerships. She could reach out to the directors of MfE’s Urban Policy or Resource Management teams to discuss how our **urban green spaces projects** support the Government’s Urban Growth Agenda goals (e.g. creating liveable, climate-resilient cities). By aligning our work with MfE’s objectives (such as enhancing urban wellbeing while “functioning within environmental constraints” [hud.govt.nz](https://www.hud.govt.nz)), Priya can position our group as a useful partner. She may seek MfE’s guidance on shaping our proposals to fit upcoming policy frameworks (for instance, any 2025 refresh of the **Urban Growth Agenda** or new national direction on urban biodiversity).
  - **Urban Councils and Local Government:** Many of our urban greening projects will involve city or regional councils (e.g. Auckland Council, Wellington City Council). Priya will leverage her relationships or expertise in urban planning to engage key local stakeholders – city council environment or parks managers, sustainability officers, and urban Māori groups in cities. The aim is to form **strategic partnerships**: for example, getting a council to co-fund a community garden or green corridor project, or obtaining formal letters of support from



councils citing how our project helps implement their Urban Growth strategies or climate adaptation plans. Priya can propose MOUs with councils for collaboration, thereby strengthening our government funding bids (central agencies appreciate local buy-in).

- **Leveraging Background:** Priya's background in urban regeneration (perhaps as a planner or environmental strategist) gives her **credibility with planners and policy-makers**. She can talk about green infrastructure, ecosystem services in cities, and community placemaking in professional terms. When meeting MfE or council officials, she should highlight her prior projects or research in urban sustainability, which will instill confidence that our organisation understands the complexities of urban environmental projects. This expertise helps **frame our group as experts/innovators** in blending biodiversity with urban development.
- **Engagement Protocols:** Priya will observe both professional courtesy and cultural awareness when engaging senior officials and local iwi in urban areas. For public sector and council meetings, she will prepare **brief concept papers** showing how our project aligns with government priorities like the **National Policy Statement on Urban Development** or local city plans, which officials will expect. She'll invite relevant stakeholders to project sites (e.g. invite council staff and mana whenua representatives to see a proposed restoration area in the city) – an on-site discussion can build enthusiasm and trust. Culturally, in cities we still acknowledge Māori protocol: e.g. involve the council's Māori liaison officers or local iwi resource managers in discussions from the outset (Ngahuia can support here). Always acknowledge traditional owners of the area and ensure any event or big meeting in an urban context respects Māori protocol (such as including a mihi whakatau – informal welcome).

**Protocols for Senior Engagement (Summary):** All board members will uphold high standards when engaging **senior public sector leaders (Ministers, CEOs, senior managers)** and **iwi chairs/kuia/kaumātua**:

- For **Government Ministers or Chief Executives:** Prepare a concise brief and **value proposition** to respect their limited time. Dress professionally and arrive punctually. Address them formally (e.g. "Minister", "Sir/Madam" or appropriate title) and follow any meeting procedures set by their office. We will be clear on what we are asking for or offering (e.g. seeking support in principle, input, or simply informing them of our work). Maintain a solutions-focused, positive tone – emphasise how our initiative helps achieve *their* goals (public service delivery, community wellbeing) to create a win-win conversation. Always follow up with a thank-you note and any information promised.
- For **Iwi and Hapū Leaders:** Approach with humility and respect. Recognise that senior Māori leaders may prioritise building a relationship first. Allow time for **whakawhanaungatanga** (sharing connections) at the start of engagements. Use te reo Māori greetings and pronunciations correctly – Ngahuia can lead this. If visiting them, accept hospitality but also bring **manaakitanga** from our side (e.g. provide food if we host, or koha if we visit their marae/office). Acknowledge the mana of their role

as kaitiaki. When discussing proposals, frame them as a partnership and actively ask for their guidance and aspirations – listening is as important as presenting. Ensure we follow through on any commitments we make to iwi partners, as trust is built on actions over time.

By deploying our board members in these focused roles, we **maximize our organisation's credibility**: Ngahua ensures we are seen as a trusted partner by Māori, Sam assures funders we are fiscally sound and results-driven, and Priya positions us at the forefront of urban environmental innovation. Together, this engagement plan will cultivate the goodwill and confidence needed to secure funding and long-term support.

## 5 4. Proposal Alignment Recommendations

To improve our chances of securing funding, all proposals will be carefully aligned with **current New Zealand Government priorities (2025)** and written in a way that resonates with public sector objectives and language. Below are key alignment areas and writing strategies:

- **Align with *Te Mana o te Taiao* (Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy 2020–2050):** Frame every biodiversity restoration project as a direct contribution to this national strategy. *Te Mana o te Taiao* emphasizes **empowering all New Zealanders to protect and restore biodiversity, partnering with Māori, and addressing biodiversity loss at its roots**[environmentguide.org.nz](https://environmentguide.org.nz)<sup>\*</sup>. We will echo these themes. For example, proposals will note how our work helps achieve the strategy's **2025 goals** (the strategy sets specific interim goals for 2025[environmentguide.org.nz](https://environmentguide.org.nz)). If one goal is to have certain systems or partnerships in place by 2025, we'll reference that and show how our project accelerates progress. Use Government's own wording where suitable: terms like "thriving ecosystems," "mauri of nature," and "empowering kaitiakitanga" can appear in our text to demonstrate philosophic alignment. We will also highlight how our approach exemplifies the strategy's **three pillars** – getting systems right (we have governance and science advice in place), empowering action (mobilising communities/volunteers), and tackling direct pressures (predator control, habitat restoration)[environmentguide.org.nz](https://environmentguide.org.nz).
- **Highlight Climate Co-benefits & Emissions Reduction Plan:** The Government's **Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP)** and climate policies in 2025 stress the importance of nature-based solutions and carbon reduction. We will align by **emphasising climate benefits** of our projects. For instance, if a project involves planting native forests or urban trees, the proposal will quantify carbon sequestration or mention contributions to the **Net Zero 2050 goal**. We'll reference how our actions support the ERP's strategies (e.g. by enhancing natural carbon sinks or improving community resilience to climate change). Using phrases from climate policy, such as "nature-based solutions," "just transition," and "climate resilience," will signal that our projects help implement the Government's climate commitments[boffamiskell.co.nz](https://boffamiskell.co.nz). For urban projects, tie in the **National Adaptation Plan** objectives: e.g. creating green spaces to reduce heat in cities and manage stormwater aligns with adaptation goals. Essentially, frame our biodiversity and green space initiatives as **multi-benefit climate actions** – not only do they restore nature, they also cut emissions or build resilience, delivering on government priorities in climate and environment simultaneously.



- **Connect to the Urban Growth Agenda & Urban Development Priorities:** For projects in urban areas, we will show alignment with the Government’s urban development frameworks (e.g. the **Urban Growth Agenda** and the **National Policy Statement on Urban Development**). The Urban Growth Agenda seeks to make cities more livable and sustainable, balancing growth with environmental quality [hud.govt.nz](http://hud.govt.nz). Our proposals for urban green spaces will thus stress benefits like improving public space, community health, and urban ecology. We’ll use government language like “improving urban liveability,” “supporting active transport and green infrastructure,” and “placemaking.” If relevant, link to the **Urban Growth Agenda’s pillars**: for instance, when we create parks in new housing areas, we’re supporting infrastructure for growth; when we engage communities in greening, we’re improving social licence for urban development. We should also mention any alignment with local government strategies (since central government likes to see coordination) – e.g. “This project helps implement Auckland Council’s Urban Ngahere (Forest) strategy, complementing central government’s urban wellbeing objectives.” By demonstrating that our urban projects help solve urban challenges (stormwater management, heat island mitigation, providing recreation space), we speak to both central and local government priorities in one go.
- **Emphasise Treaty Partnership and Māori Outcomes:** It is crucial to reflect the Government’s commitment to **Partnership with Māori (Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles)** in all proposals. Practically, this means explicitly acknowledging Māori as partners and showing how our initiative gives effect to Māori rights and interests. We will incorporate language around **co-governance, co-design, and rangatiratanga**. For example: “The project is co-led with [local iwi], ensuring Māori exercise their role as kaitiaki (guardians) over ancestral lands, consistent with Treaty partnership principles.” We will reference relevant frameworks, such as the principles outlined in the **Māori/Crown partnership charters** or Maori strategies of the agencies (e.g. DOC’s iwi partnership policies). Citing *Te Mana o te Taiao* again: one of its high-level outcomes is that “Treaty partners and tangata whenua are exercising their full role as kaitiaki” [environmentguide.org.nz](http://environmentguide.org.nz) – we will explicitly state how our project enables that outcome (e.g. by supporting iwi conservation plans or incorporating mātauranga Māori knowledge). In terms of writing, use respectful capitalisation (e.g. Māori, Hapū) and include te reo Māori terms where appropriate, with English explanations if needed for clarity. The tone should be that we are **honouring Te Tiriti** and delivering benefits for Māori communities as well as environmental gains. This not only aligns with Government policy but also appeals to dedicated iwi/Māori funding streams.
- **Mirror Government Frameworks & Language:** Tailor each proposal to the specific priorities of the target funder and use the key words they use in their documentation. For instance:
  - If targeting the Ministry for the Environment, incorporate references to “**Te Oranga o te Taiao**” (the wellbeing of the environment) and concepts from the **Environmental Reporting or Wellbeing frameworks** that MfE uses. Show we understand **policy frameworks** like the **Essential Freshwater strategy** or **Waste Minimisation** if relevant, and subtly weave those in (even if our project is biodiversity, mentioning freshwater outcomes if any will catch attention).

- For DOC, use terms from the **Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy** and DOC's **Stretch Goals**. Highlight how our project contributes to outcomes like "predator-free by 2050" or "*thriving nature that benefits everyone*." Including such language (with evidence) demonstrates alignment with DOC's mission.
- For regional economic funding (Kānoa), use terms like "**regional resilience**," "**sustainable jobs**," "**whānau ora (family wellbeing)**," and reference the Government's **Regional Economic Development Plan** where applicable. They will be looking for economic and social returns, so describe outcomes such as job creation, training programmes, increased tourism, etc., in addition to environmental gains.
- For community-focused funds (DIA, Lottery), stress **community empowerment, volunteerism, and well-being**. Government rhetoric in this space often includes "building community capability," "strengthening social cohesion," and "local leadership." Our proposals should reflect how our community planting days, educational workshops, and volunteer programmes build social capital – aligning with the Lottery Grants Board's vision of benefiting communities.
- **Demonstrate Value Proposition Clearly:** Write proposals in plain, professional English (as we are doing now), **avoiding jargon** unless it's commonly used by the funder. Each proposal should have a compelling **value proposition in the executive summary**: a punchy explanation of what the project will achieve and why it's worth funding. We will tie our outcomes to Government goals. For example, "This project will restore 100 hectares of native forest and create 15 regional jobs, directly advancing the Government's biodiversity and regional economic objectives." Use **data and facts** to back up claims (e.g. biodiversity metrics, community engagement numbers from our past work). Where possible, include **economic justification**: e.g. "For an investment of \$X, the project delivers \$Y in long-term environmental services and community benefits," showing a strong cost-benefit ratio.
  - Tips: Lead with outcomes, not just activities. Government readers want to know *impact*: how many species protected, how many people engaged, etc. Use active, confident language ("will achieve" rather than "might achieve"). Be specific about multi-year scaling: e.g. "By Year 3, we will have established X urban green sites and handed over maintenance training to local groups, ensuring sustainability."
  - Also, **address the selection criteria explicitly**. If a funding program lists criteria (e.g. community participation, innovation, equity), structure our proposal to mirror those sections, using headings that match or echo the criteria wording. This makes it easy for officials to see we tick all their boxes.
  - **Incorporate Co-funding and Support:** Emphasise any other contributions – if we have volunteer hours, local sponsorships, or council in-kind support, highlight these to show we're bringing more to the table (government likes to see others investing too). It magnifies our value proposition that their funding leverages wider support.

- **Showcase Inter-agency and Cross-sector Collaboration:** Given current government approaches, proposals that break silos and demonstrate collaboration can stand out. We'll mention partnerships with NGOs, universities (for scientific monitoring perhaps), businesses (for sponsorship or volunteer programs), and of course iwi and councils. This aligns with the Government's emphasis on "**all-of-society**" **approach to environmental challenges**[environmentguide.org.nz](https://environmentguide.org.nz). Using phrases like "collective impact," "public-private partnership," or "whole-of-government approach" (if multiple agencies are involved) can subtly signal that our project contributes to a joined-up effort, which is attractive for funders looking for scalable, unifying initiatives.
- **Tone and Formality:** Follow a **confident and positive tone** throughout. We write as a capable organisation that is offering a solution, not as supplicants begging for money. At the same time, remain **fact-based and realistic** – we acknowledge risks and have mitigation plans (this instills confidence in reviewers that we are professional). Use British spelling and NZ English conventions, since our audience is NZ government. Ensure Māori terms are spelled correctly with macrons (e.g. Māori, hapū, whenua) and consider providing a glossary if proposals are lengthy. The overall style should reflect the **Allen + Clarke** plain English principles: clear headings, short informative sentences, and minimal fluff. For instance, rather than a verbose description, write "We will remove invasive weeds across 50 hectares, allowing native bush to regenerate and expanding habitat for indigenous birds." This is direct and effective, and even better if we tie it to a government priority ("...thus contributing to Predator Free 2050 goals").

By aligning with these policies and using the Government's own frameworks and language, our proposals will read as **immediately relevant and supportive of what Ministers and agencies are trying to achieve**. This alignment, combined with a compelling story of our project's benefits, will greatly enhance our value proposition. Each proposal will essentially position our organisation as an **implementing partner** helping the Government meet its targets – a perspective that can significantly boost our chances of funding success.

## 6 5. Next Steps

To move from planning to securing funding, we outline the following next steps with clear timelines and responsibilities. These steps ensure we capitalise on the strategy and maintain momentum:

- **May 2025 – Confirm Targets & Responsibilities:** In the immediate term (next 1–2 weeks), the Board will reconvene to finalise the list of target funds and assign proposal leads. For each funding programme identified (from Section 2), assign a primary author (lead) and supporters. *Deliverable:* A one-page **Funding Action Plan** mapping each target (e.g. DOC Fund, Lottery, Kānoa, etc.) to a responsible team (which board member oversees, who writes, who reviews). This plan will include key dates (application deadlines or expression of interest timings) if known, so we have a clear calendar of opportunities.
- **June 2025 – Stakeholder Outreach Begins:** Through June, execute the engagement as per Section 3:

- Ngahuaia will organise and attend at least **two hui with iwi** (one in North Island, one South if applicable to our project sites) to discuss partnership and gather support letters or MOUs. She will also meet with **TPK regional officers** to brief them on our plans and seek advice on cultural alignment.
- Sam will hold preliminary **calls/meetings with funding programme managers** (e.g. schedule a call with the DOC Community Fund coordinator to clarify any questions about scope, or meet an MfE official to discuss our alignment with their priorities). He will also start gathering all necessary financial documents and evidence of past success to include in proposals.
- Priya will meet with **urban council officials** (e.g. the Parks Manager at Auckland Council, the Climate Adaptation Lead at Wellington City) to propose collaboration on our urban greening projects. Aim to secure at least **one formal letter of support** from a major council by end of June. She will also liaise with MfE's urban policy team to remain informed of any upcoming funding or policy shifts (which we can leverage).
- *Output:* By late June, we should have **stakeholder input** that can be directly used in proposals: e.g. iwi endorsement statements, refined understanding of funders' expectations, and partner support letters. Also, any immediate quick-win funding (small grants that have close deadlines) should be submitted in June if ready – for example, COGS or a regional council grant that closes mid-year could be attempted with minimal effort as practice.
- **July 2025 – Drafting and Internal Review:** In July, the focus is on writing high-quality funding proposals:
  - Each proposal lead will develop at least a **first draft** by mid-July. We will utilize the alignment guidance from Section 4 – possibly even have an **editorial checklist** to ensure each draft cites relevant government strategies, includes all required sections, and uses the right tone.
  - Conduct an **internal peer review** process: Board members swap drafts for critique. Ngahuaia will review for Te Tiriti and Māori content (does the proposal appropriately include Māori aspects?), Sam will review budgets and value propositions (are numbers accurate and persuasive?), Priya will review for strategic alignment and clarity (is it written in compelling plain English and does it hit policy marks?). We may also involve an external advisor (if we have a contact with government experience) for an impartial review.
  - Revise drafts in response to feedback by end of July. Ensure **all supporting documents** are prepared: financial statements, project plans, letters of support, evidence of outcomes (e.g. photos from past work, testimonials). Early assembly of these attachments is important so we're not rushed by final deadlines.

- **August 2025 – Finalise and Submit Proposals:** Many major funding rounds likely close around August/September (for decisions before the end of 2025 or in early 2026). In August we will:
  - Finalise each proposal, double-checking compliance with application guidelines (word limits, required forms filled, endorsements attached).
  - **Board Approval:** Convene a board meeting (or at least a subcommittee including the Chair) in early August to formally approve the submission of each major proposal. This ensures board oversight and buy-in. We'll present each proposal's summary and get the green light.
  - **Submit applications** on or ahead of time. For electronic submissions, don't wait until the last minute – aim to submit a few days before deadlines in case of technical issues. For any funder that allows or expects a presentation or pitch (some larger grants might invite shortlisted candidates), be prepared to schedule those.
  - Track confirmation receipts from funders to ensure our applications are received and complete. Record reference numbers or contacts for follow-up.
- **September – October 2025 – Follow-Up and Continuous Engagement:** After submission, maintain engagement:
  - Send thank-you notes to any individuals who provided support (e.g. the council officer who gave a letter, the iwi authority that endorsed us, the agency managers who guided us). This keeps relationships warm.
  - If appropriate, **offer site visits** to funders while we await decisions. For example, invite the Conservation Minister's office or local MP to visit one of our restoration sites to see progress. Even if funding decisions are pending, this can positively influence perception and demonstrates our proactive, open approach.
  - Monitor any feedback or requests from funding agencies. Sometimes, agencies might come back with questions or a request to clarify aspects of the proposal. We should respond promptly, with Sam taking lead on financial queries and Ngahuia/Priya on operational ones.
  - Continue attending relevant network meetings (e.g. conservation network forums, council environment committee meetings) to remain visible and show our commitment regardless of funding – this signals we are dedicated to outcomes, not just funding, which funders appreciate.
- **End of 2025 – Evaluation and Adaptation:** By December 2025, we expect to hear back on many of our funding applications. At that stage:
  - **Review outcomes:** which proposals were successful, which were not. For successful ones, plan announcement and acknowledgement of the funder (press release thanking them, which funders always like to see). For

unsuccessful bids, seek feedback from the funder on why, to improve future attempts.

- **Secure multi-year agreements:** If funding offers come through, work with the agency to finalise funding agreements. Sam will scrutinise terms to ensure they meet our needs (e.g. payment schedules, reporting requirements are feasible). Ngahuia might be involved if any agreement requires a partnership agreement with an iwi entity.
- **Scale up organisation capacity** accordingly for 2026 and beyond if multi-year funding is obtained. Possibly initiate recruitment if new funded roles are created (keeping funders informed that we are moving swiftly to utilise the funds for impact).
- For any key targets not decided yet or second-round opportunities (some funds might have another round in early 2026), refine and plan resubmissions or new submissions. This strategy is iterative – use 2025's experience to strengthen our approach for 2026.

Throughout these steps, maintain board oversight with monthly updates on progress. The board should monitor risks (e.g. if an engagement isn't going well or a deadline might be missed, intervene early). By following this roadmap, we aim to have several substantial funding streams secured or in advanced consideration by the end of 2025, setting our organisation up with the resources and partnerships needed to expand our vital work in **restoring Aotearoa's biodiversity and greening our urban spaces** for years to come.