

WWF-NEW ZEALAND COMMUNITY CONSERVATION FUND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Purpose

This is a guide for organisations who wish to apply to the WWF-New Zealand Community Conservation Fund for financial assistance for projects. It outlines the process for applying to the Fund, the criteria used to assess applications, and our priorities for projects.

About the WWF-New Zealand Community Conservation Fund

WWF-New Zealand (WWF) believes that aiding communities and schools to take conservation action is vital to conserving biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand. At WWF, we know that people learn the value of protecting the environment when they take action themselves. By cleaning up and restoring their local stream or contributing directly to native species protection, people get a first-hand learning experience – one that can inspire a lifetime of sustainable living.

The Community Conservation Fund provides funds for a range of activities that help to protect or restore biodiversity and ecosystems in Aotearoa. It is targeted at established community groups with a proven track record of delivering conservation and restoration projects.

WWF is the Environmental Donation Manager for the [Tindall Foundation](#) and has delivered community conservation and educational funding support in partnership with them since 2000.

The Community Conservation Fund aims to:

- Empower local communities and young people to protect and restore Aotearoa's native habitats and species through hands-on conservation, education, and matauranga Māori.
- Contribute to nature positive climate action to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.
- Increase native plant and animal species, improve the health of habitats and ecosystems, and increase biodiversity.
- Raise awareness about the importance of the environment and conservation in the wider community.
- Encourage communities to become guardians of their environment, becoming active partners in protecting, sustaining, and restoring our biodiversity for present and future generations.
- Promote connectivity and coordination across landscapes to increase the scale and effectiveness of community-led conservation action.
- Support the role of Māori as kaitiaki and promote traditional Māori practices of caring for the environment.

Eligible Organisations

The Community Conservation Fund awards donations to the following organisations

- Small community groups employing less than 5 staff (full-time equivalent [FTE]). If more than 5 FTE staff, you may still apply if you are able to demonstrate in your application that your project has high engagement with the broader community outside of staff members.
- Locally constituted branches of national organisations with their own constitution, management committee and set of accounts.
- Environmental education providers and educational institutions (not for core education).

Your organisation must

- Be based and operating in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Be a not-for-profit entity; either an incorporated society, charitable trust, educational facility, company limited by guarantee (non-profit only) or a trust set up under legislation covering Māori organisations.
- Have technical expertise and experience needed to deliver the project or have guaranteed ongoing support from a competent source (Department of Conservation, regional councils, field experts, etc.).
- Have relevant HR policies and procedures in place if you employ staff.
- Have appropriate health and safety procedures and policies in place, with suitable child safeguarding policies and/or procedures in place if children are participating.
- Have your own bank account; be solvent and financially sustainable; demonstrate sound financial management; and maintain a clear separation between different sources of funding and expenditures.

The following are not eligible to apply for funding

- National or umbrella environmental or conservation organisations employing more than 5 (FTE) staff.
- Individuals or family/whānau groups.
- Trading companies or businesses (for-profit organisations).
- Crown entities and Government agencies or authorities - local, territorial or unitary authorities and regional councils.
- Overseas organisations.
- Animal charities - except where the project to be funded is directly benefiting threatened native species.
- Internal research projects for universities.

Project Criteria

The project must

- Be located in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Demonstrate that funds will be directly applied to eligible activities or costs (see below).
- Demonstrate that the project meets at least one of the Community Conservation Fund priorities (see below).
- Demonstrate effectiveness and value for money.
- Demonstrate robust project design, including a project plan with a clear vision and goals, and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate project outcomes.
- Clearly demonstrate how the budgeted activities will contribute to the defined project outcomes.
- Have support from a cross section of the community, including iwi/hapū in the project area.
- Have support from the wider community in the form of voluntary labour, donations, effective partnerships, letters of support, etc.
- Have support from DOC or local or regional councils.
- Demonstrate a good understanding of risk management, health and safety requirements and other legislative or regulatory frameworks that may impact on the project.
- Have permission from the landowner to carry out the proposed work.
- Have a guarantee that any investment in the area will be protected in the long-term, preventing changes that will undermine the project's goals.

Land Tenure

The Community Conservation Fund will support projects on land in a range of tenures including; privately owned, multiple-owned Māori land, local authority land and public conservation lands and waters. In relation to projects on the Department of Conservation (DOC) estate, the Fund will only support community groups and will not fund activities that DOC is responsible for undertaking as part of its functions under the Conservation Act 1987.

The Community Conservation Fund will support projects irrespective of the protection status of the land. However, for projects involving the planting of native species or fencing, proof will be needed that there is a binding commitment from the landowner to protect these areas in perpetuity (e.g. a covenant). WWF encourages private landowners to protect valuable habitats and remaining remnants of natural vegetation with covenants through the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, local authorities or with Kāwenata through the Ngā Whenua Rāhui scheme for Māori-owned land.

Eligible Expenditure

The Community Conservation Fund will pay for the following costs and activities

- Administration and operational expenses; e.g. wages for positions that are directly applicable to programme delivery – subject to clear and transparent governance and management arrangements.
- Development of restoration or management plans (by consultants or staff).
- Project delivery expenses (materials/equipment/tools/contractors).
- Costs associated with species translocations or re-introductions including feasibility studies.
- Costs associated with the ongoing running of a nursery if this is the most effective method of securing eco-sourced native plants or can demonstrate increased community involvement or awareness raising.
- Costs associated with monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes.
- Volunteer expenses; travel costs, refreshments, training.
- Publicity and promotional materials (posters/leaflets/photos/video production/interpretation signs etc.) and other community outreach and engagement activities that help to raise public awareness of the project in the local community.
- Capital assets are supported, but the total request/purchase must not exceed \$3,000 per application.
- Skill training (facilitation/venue hire/equipment/materials).

Exclusions

What we do not fund

- Awareness raising without a call to action.
- Funding for the same or a similar project for more than 3 years consecutively.
- Public health or disabilities services.
- Core education, curriculum-related equipment, activities etc.
- Research or academic projects from outside a community without its direct involvement.
- Sports and recreation activities/projects.
- Drama, art or performing art projects.
- Projects outside the geographic borders of Aotearoa New Zealand, overseas travel and expenses, and exchange programmes.
- Building or land purchase and associated costs, including repair or construction, landscaping and ground maintenance.
- Capital assets or equipment costing more than \$3,000.
- Donations to support individuals including scholarships, international travel to conferences, events or for research.
- Personal loans.
- Endowment funds.
- Religious or political advocacy, advancement, lobbying or marketing.
- Venture capital initiatives.
- Urgent or retrospective applications.
- Sponsorships.
- Work that a landowner is required to do by law.
- Costs associated with applications or processes under the Resource Management Act 1991.
- Establishment costs of setting up incorporated societies, charities or other bodies.

Community Conservation Fund Priorities

Priorities for Community Conservation Fund for 2024/25

- New Zealand native species conservation projects, with a particular focus on threatened species.
- Environmental restoration projects in areas with high biodiversity.
- Projects that are addressing climate change issues and/or promoting positive biodiversity outcomes (and, ideally, meet the [IUCN](#) and [WWF](#) criteria for 'nature-based solutions', such as planting projects).
- Initiatives that are Māori-led or have relationships with hapū /iwi and promote mātauranga Māori and indigenous knowledge.
- Projects that are community-driven and bring people together around a shared conservation goal.
- Projects that engage children and young people, including environmental education initiatives.
- For education-focused projects/initiatives, educational learners would:
 - Participate in an **action-based project**
 - Learn through experience and participation
 - Make meaningful contributions to improving their local environment
 - Involve people in their community
 - Gain skills and are encouraged and/or supported to take future action for the environment as a result of participating
- WWF is particularly interested in supporting community-initiated **marine projects**, such as:
 - Projects focused on marine/coastal protection or restoration.
 - Projects promoting sustainable, environmentally friendly fisheries initiatives (e.g. projects aimed at preventing the accidental catch of threatened species when fishing).
 - New Zealand native marine species conservation projects.



Additional preference will be given to groups that

- Are working at a wider-scale and the project has ecological outcomes including:
 - Protecting the integrity of existing good quality habitats
 - Restoring connectivity between existing habitats
 - Providing buffers to remaining habitat remnants
 - Restoring ecological processes
 - Habitats of threatened indigenous species
 - Remaining remnants of high-quality habitat
- Innovation and technological-based solutions.
- Are working to meet priorities identified in local biodiversity strategies or action plans (if one exists).
- Create opportunities for local economic development, employment or social development.
- Are part of a cross-sector, multi-agency partnership supported by the local or regional council and/or the Department of Conservation.
- Are cooperating with or can provide support and advice to other community groups working in their area.

Application Process

Application submission

The Fund will be open from **15th of August till the 15th of September every year**. Applications can be made at any time during the open period. All applications must be submitted **before 11:59pm** on Monday, 15th of September using the application form on our website.

Please note that the Community Conservation Fund provides one-off grants of up to a **maximum of \$15,000**, for a funding period of **one year**. Previous recipients may re-apply to consecutive funding rounds up to three years, or in some circumstances five years, but repeat funding for recipients is not guaranteed and the Community Conservation Fund should not be considered an on-going source of funding. New applications will need to be made for each successive year.

Please check your records carefully to see if your organisation has already received up to five grants for this or similar projects from WWF. Contact WWF if you are unsure whether you are eligible for further funding.

Application assessment

In your application form you need to clearly demonstrate how you meet the Fund criteria and priorities.

You may be asked to supply additional information in support of your application. This may take the form of supporting letters, operational plans, copies of constitutions, accounts etc.

If you meet the eligibility criteria but the Fund is oversubscribed, we will prioritise applications that best meet Fund priorities. This decision is final, there is no right of appeal and WWF is not obliged to give reasons for the decision or enter into any correspondence. If your application is unsuccessful, we will notify you by email. You will be able to reapply to a future funding round.

Every effort will be made to complete the funding decision-making process and let all applicants know the outcome within two months of the closing date.

Successful recipients

Donations offered to successful applicants will be subject to a funding agreement between WWF-New Zealand and the recipient.

From time-to-time, WWF will evaluate the effectiveness of the Fund and an evaluator may contact and interview Fund recipients. Recipients will be required to participate in and cooperate with this process.

For more information

If you have any questions in relation to the Community Conservation Fund, please contact WWF-New Zealand at:
Email: community@wwf.org.nz