

Hawke's Bay Nature Fund – Guide for applicants

About this guide

This guide is for individuals or groups who are requesting grant funding from the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund.

It outlines the fund's eligibility and assessment criteria, provides an overview of the application and funding processes, and describes the information you will be asked to supply.

Purpose of the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund

The Hawke's Bay Nature Fund takes an integrated landscape approach realising the vision of reforesting areas of Hawke's Bay. This means the Fund will support projects that protect and enhance our key ecosystems and reduce the negative effects of pests on new plantings, native wildlife and existing tree cover, irrespective of who the landowner is.

The Geographic Area the Fund Covers

An exact map of the area that the Hawke's Bay Conservation Fund covers is shown on the ECCT Hawke's Bay Nature Fund webpage. Please refer to this to ensure your project is within the region. Projects that have a contiguous border with this map will be considered for funding.

Priority Area for 2025 – 2028

For funding purposes, the Bay has been divided into three geographic areas. Funding will be allocated to each priority area for three years on a rolling basis (see the map on the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund page for the three priority areas).

The Fund Advisors have determined that the priority area of interest for the Fund for the first three years will be the northern most segment of the Hawke's Bay region. This is visually represented on the map of Hawke's Bay on the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund page website.

Specifically, the area covers: the eastern coastline from the Esk River mouth north to the Waikari River mouth, then follows the Waikari River inland until the confluence with the Mohaka River. The boundary then follows the Mohaka River southwest until it hits the northern end of the Kaweka Forest Park and then follows the Kaweka Forest Park boundary to the Ōamaru River. The boundary then cuts across the Kaweka Forest Park following the Ōamaru River southwest to its confluence with the Ngaruroro River. The boundary then follows the Ngaruroro River south to Rocks Ahead Hut, along the ridge track to Back Ridge Bivouac and Kaweka J, across Makahu Spur to Makahu Saddle Hut, and out of the Forest Park along Whittle Road. The boundary then follows Puketitiri Road to Patoka, and then Huiarangi Road to the end. From the road end the boundary follows the Merriwa Forest fence line to the Mangaone River. The boundary continues, following the Mangaone River downstream to the Parakohi Stream, then follow the Parakohi stream to its end. The boundary

heads north until it intersects with Glengarry Road and follows the road up to join Highway 5. The boundary then follows Highway 5 and the Esk River out to the river mouth. The area inside the boundary is considered the Priority Area of Interest.

The Lower North Island Regional Strategy & Hawke's Bay Multiyear Plan

Te Papa Atawhai / The Department of Conservation, provided the funding to ECCT to establish the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund. The funding can be accessed by all eligible landowners to achieve the vision of recloaking critical river catchments and landscape ecosystems in Hawke's Bay.

Nature Fund priorities will be guided by the Department's Lower North Island Regional Strategy and Plan and the Hawke's Bay Multi-Year Plan. The Strategy and Plans outline the key conservation outcomes sought for Hawke's Bay.

You can find a link to the Lower North Island Regional Strategy and Plan and the Hawke's Bay Multi-Year Plan on the ECCT Hawke's Bay Nature Fund page.

Am I eligible to apply for a grant?

Applications to the Fund will be open to individuals, agencies, organisations, trusts, iwi and hapū, community groups and charity groups. You can apply to the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund if:

1. Your project is within the priority area specified for this financial year
2. Your project supports the achievement of the outcomes for Hawke's Bay as defined in the Department of Conservation's Lower North Island Regional Strategy and Plan and the Hawke's Bay Multi-Year Plan
3. Your project focusses on pest control and/or revegetation
4. You are seeking funding to boost a project that will be sustained by you / your group once funding has concluded
5. You are seeking funding for one, two or three years.
6. You have a Health & Safety plan for your project (and owner consent if on the land of another agency, or approval in principle to develop a Community Agreement if on Public Conservation Land)

You must meet all of the above criteria in order to submit an application.

Note: The individual or group applying to the Fund must be the same individual or group who will run the project.

How much can I apply for?

The Hawke's Bay Nature Fund will fund projects of \$25,000 and over. There is approximately \$500,000 (excl. GST) available annually to fund projects. When deciding how much to apply for make sure that your budget is accurate, sufficient, and realistic.

When can I apply?

The Fund opens for applications on **8th June 2026** and closes at 5pm on **20th July 2026**. Applications must be received within these dates to be considered for funding.

How will my application be assessed?

All eligible applications are assessed by a Grant Committee against the fund's assessment criteria and based on their merit compared with other applications.

Applications will be assessed solely on the information provided in the application form and supporting information. The Committee will look to approve a mix of single and multi-year projects to ensure funding is available each year for new projects. Except in exceptional circumstances, only 20% of the available funding in any given year will be allocated to multiyear projects.

The Fund intends to allocate 70% of grant funding to pest control in 2025 -2028. This will ensure that the whenua will sustain revegetation.

While each criterion must be addressed in your application, some have greater weightings than others and will be considered accordingly by the Grant Committee.

Assessment Criteria	
Criteria	Weighting
The extent to which the proposed project specifically addresses biodiversity enhancement through protection, enhancement and or / restoration, revegetation or pest control.	60%
The extent to which the application supports the strategic intent of the Department of Conservation and the aspirations of tangata whenua, as specified in the LNI Regional Strategy and Plan, and the Hawke's Bay Multi-Year Plan.	15%
The extent to which the applicants can demonstrate a track record of relevant skills, experience, and equipment to support the successful delivery of the proposed project.	25%
The extent to which the proposed project is feasible and has long term sustainability once the grant funding ceases.	Pass / Fail

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Biodiversity

Your project should specifically address biodiversity enhancement through protection, enhancement and / or restoration, revegetation or pest control. Your project should lay out detailed plans of what issue you are trying to address and how you plan to address it.

The Hawke's Bay Nature Fund will give higher consideration to predator control activities in the 2025-2028 funding years. It is anticipated that 70% of the grant funding will go to predator control. This is to ensure that the whenua can sustain revegetation activities.

Pest control includes the control of mustelids, cats, rats, possums, deer and any other species that may arise and be deemed a pest by a national body. Control elements will be those deemed most suitable for the pest species and could include predator proof fencing, bait and traps, or the development of new predator control solutions. The Fund does not cover weed control.

Conservation Impact

Your project will be assessed on whether it will deliver measurable outcomes. Can you demonstrate a track record of relevant skills, experience and equipment to support the successful delivery of the project? Does your project address urgent / important areas of habitat? Does your project promote the involvement of local communities / stakeholders in a meaningful way?

Feasibility and Sustainability

Does your project have realistic objectives, budget and timeframes? Is your project supported with technical expertise? How ready you are to deliver your project and how likely are you to achieve your projects goals?

Your project objectives need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) and able to be completed within the funding period. You will need to ensure your proposed methods will result in the desired outcomes. You will need to include a project timeline in your application.

Sustainability beyond funding

A key requirement of any project funded by the Hawke's Bay Nature fund is that it will be enduring and contribute significantly to long-term biodiversity recovery objectives. You must provide a comprehensive sustainability plan with your application. You will need to detail how your project will run after the funding has finished. If your project requires maintenance after the funding period, detail how and by whom that will be achieved. Also consider how you can sustainably fund the ongoing work. The Grant Committee will need assurance that the project will be enduring and sustained once funding has concluded.

Finally, make sure you have a fully costed budget that is reasonable and appropriate for what you are proposing to do. You will need to include your planned activities and costs. Consider if your proposal provides value for money.

Track record

Your capability to deliver the project will be influenced by the people and skills you have involved, along with your past experience on projects. Making sure that you have the necessary permissions in place or are at least aware of what you require will help get the project underway quicker.

General guidance about applying for a grant

What can the grant be used for?

Grants can be used towards activities that are focused on pest control and revegetation of the priority area. This could include costs associated with training (including health and safety) where it is a component of a project that includes on-ground activities.

Funding for salaries and contractors is also eligible, but applicants must demonstrate in the application why these are vital to the completion of the project and align with fair market rates.

The fund cannot support:

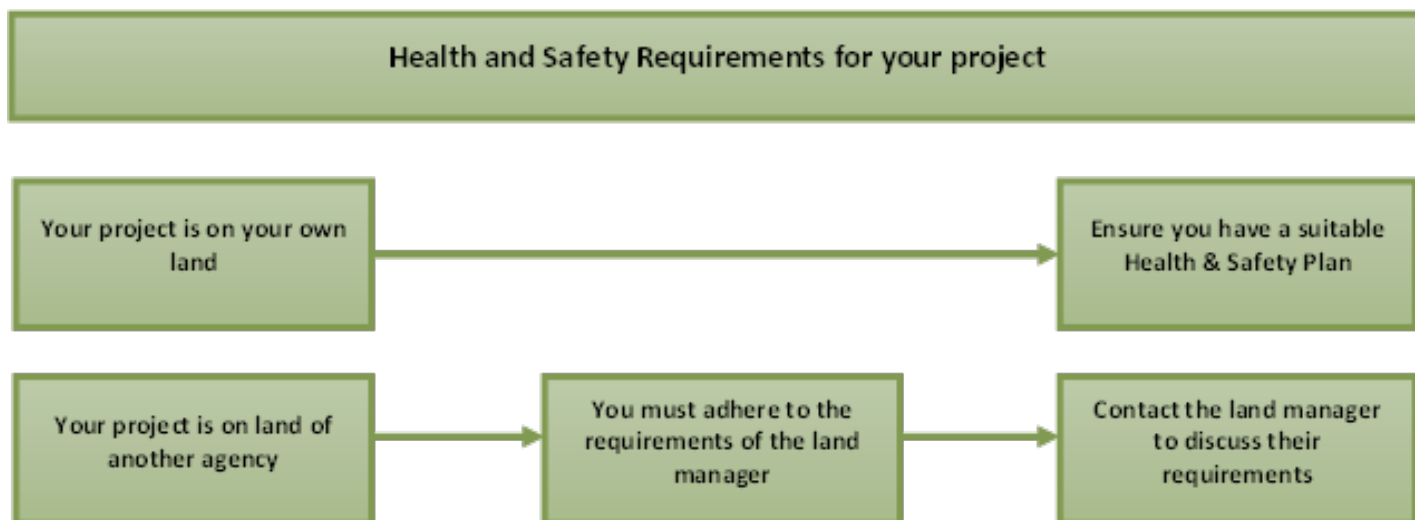
- retrospective costs (i.e. costs incurred prior to a Deed of Grant being signed)
- reimbursement of landowner time or voluntary labour
- activities that individuals, organisations or councils are required to do by law
- proposals that are designed to generate personal or commercial profit
- the development of an activity for which public use will be restricted by copyright or patent
- debt repayment or the refinancing of loans
- participation in statutory processes or litigation
- on-funding (i.e. using grant to issue grants to third parties)
- vehicle purchase
- venture capital
- land purchase
- academic scholarships
- local and central government fees and charges, with the exception of fees associated with applying for resource consent but excluding costs for the public notification of an application and other associated costs (e.g. related to hearings).

Health and Safety

It is important that you / your organisation has the necessary health and safety policies, resources and expertise to safely undertake and complete your project. You may include costs associated with health and safety as part of your application. For example, training and PPE.

All applicants will be required to submit a project-specific Health and Safety Plan as part of the application. The Health and Safety plan must be suitable to support the safe delivery of the project. If successful and you are working on public conservation land (PCL), your plan must be approved by the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Hawke's Bay office, and you will also require a Community Agreement before work commences. To discuss and organise your health & safety plan and community agreement for DOC land, contact DOC at hawkesbaynaturefund@doc.govt.nz.

Further guidance and resources to assist in the development of Health and Safety Plans, can be obtained from WorkSafe New Zealand.



Do I need to provide evidence of landowner support?

Private and publicly managed land

If your project includes work on private or public land, you must include a Health & Safety plan that has been approved by the landowners. For example, this might be a farmer or the local council. You will need to provide written confirmation from the land manager / authorised representative that they are complying with their duties and obligations under the Health and Safety Work Act 2015 in respect of you working on the land they administer/manage. You must also provide evidence of support for your project by the relevant land manager.

Public conservation land

You will need to get written approval in the form of a Community Agreement from DOC Hawke's Bay. You must already have permission before applying to the Fund and must attach your Community Agreement to your application. You must also supply evidence that the DOC Hawke's Bay Operations Manager supports your application.

Projects on your own land

Please attach a copy of your Health & Safety plan to the application form. Further guidance and resources to assist in the development of Health and Safety Plans can be obtained from WorkSafe New Zealand

Do I need to provide a detailed budget?

Yes. The Grant Committee will use the budget information provided in your application to determine whether the proposed costs are reasonable and realistic for the proposed activities.

Your budget should provide a detailed breakdown of all estimated project-related costs (expenditure) for the full duration of the project. For materials and equipment, you need to specify the items and the individual costs. For labour costs, you need to specify the hours and the hourly rate. You should provide enough information for the Grant Committee to fully understand how the requested funding will be used. You will need to provide quotes for your project, including for materials, equipment and labour costs.

Do I need to be registered for GST?

Applicants do not need to be registered for GST to apply for funding. If your organisation is conducting a taxable activity and its annual income exceeds \$60,000 per annum, it **must** be registered for GST. ECCT is not GST registered, if you are registered for GST the grant is exempt.

For more information, see www.ird.govt.nz/gst or phone the Inland Revenue Department on 0800 377 776.

Does our project need co-funding?

Co-funding is not a requirement. However, for applicants who are requesting very large grants and/or proposing projects that involve multiple stakeholders, it is preferred that the project has additional co-funders. NOTE: The amount of funding a project receives is at the discretion of the committee and you may receive less than requested.

Volunteer contributions

Volunteer contributions are encouraged and will be considered favourably. In your budget you should outline the volunteer contributions along with an estimated number of volunteer hours.

Permits, licences or approvals

You must confirm the details of any consents, permits or licences that are needed to deliver your proposed project. This may include (but is not limited to):

- specialist certification (eg Growsafe certification)
- resource consents.

We recommend that you check what approvals you may need early in the process. Please discuss your application with your local or regional council or the DOC Hawke's Bay office if you are unsure what consents you may need.

Supporting Evidence (Optional)

You may include one item of supporting documentation. It must relate to your project, e.g.: a restoration plan, a pest management plan or a biodiversity strategy.

How do I submit my application?

All applications must be submitted electronically on the Eastern & Coastal Community Trust [FLUXX portal](#).

Upon submission, you should receive an automatic response from ECCT.

Applications must be submitted no later than 5pm 20th July 2026.

After you submit your application

The key dates for the 2026 funding round are provided in the table below. **These dates are indicative only and may change.**

Date	Event
20 th July 2026	Applications close at 5pm
August 2026	Grant Committee considers applications
September 2026	All applicants are notified of decisions in writing

Next steps for successful applications

If your application is successful, you will receive an offer of funding from ECCT.

When will I receive my funding?

Depending on the nature and complexity of your project you could access your first grant instalment within a month of being notified.

For multi-year projects, at least 10% of the funding approved for the final project year will be retained to be paid upon completion of the project once the final project report has been submitted and verified by our advisors.

Resources to support the delivery of your project

DOC Hawke's Bay are Eastern & Coastal Community Trust's advisors for the Hawke's Bay Nature Fund. Resources to support the delivery of your project including reporting templates can be obtained by emailing hawkesbaynaturefund@doc.govt.nz.

Contact us

You are welcome to contact us if you have any queries related to the fund. Please contact us via email info@ecct.org.nz.

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure that this guide is as clear and accurate as possible, the information it contains is general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. In the event of any uncertainty, the applicant should obtain independent legal advice.