

# Actions for ... community conservation groups & projects

Key shifts to  
improve  
funding and  
support

1

## Join forces and leverage cooperation

- Join a local hub or collective to be stronger together.
- Align goals with regional and national strategies and biodiversity plans.
- Demonstrate local cooperation, ensure landscape scale efforts are joined up.
- Build staff and collaboration costs into project proposals and articulate their value.

2

## Maximise chances of funding success

- Have a clear plan and goals, source support strategically to meet those goals.
- Review funding eligibility criteria carefully before applying.
- Join up efforts with others where possible.
- Use best practice, efficient tools and methods to maximise outcomes.

3

## Demonstrate your impact

- Seek advice on appropriate metrics and methods from local experts or agencies.
- Show change by monitoring outcomes from the start and build consistent and repeatable monitoring into your work.
- Consider technology that supports effective information recording eg. apps, cameras.
- Find effective ways to tell your story and share your impact.
- Acknowledge the support and involvement of others, including agencies.

4

## Explore alternative funding options

- Find efficiencies in project expenses to reduce the need for funding applications.
- When exploring alternatives to grants (such as endowments or contracts for services), consider:
  - How a new source of funding may impact existing relationships
  - Whether there are legal or financial implications
  - How members and volunteers may feel about the new funding source
  - How a new funding source may impact future eligibility for other types.

# Actions for ... agencies

Key shifts to  
improve  
funding and  
support

1

## Recognise efforts and help align work

- Ensure staff have the right skills, resources and autonomy to engage effectively with communities and build lasting relationships.
- Limit staff turnover at this interface to reduce disruption for communities.
- Acknowledge community efforts, particularly where they contribute to statutory outcomes.
- Simplify and streamline legal requirements for groups in your jurisdiction.
- Ensure strategic planning processes take account of community-led efforts.
- Continue to provide coordination and technical expertise to empower groups.
- Align funding decisions with conservation priorities and clearly link funding to outcomes.

2

## Improve funding models and guidance

- Make application processes simpler and more consistent between funders (eg. central govt and local govt) and avoid continual changes.
- Provide clear strategic and technical leadership that provides context for group efforts, supporting decision-making across the sector.
- Find innovative ways to support groups in their work, alleviating administration burden.
- Ensure the mix of contestable and non-contestable funding is appropriate for your jurisdiction, with clear decision-making.
- Ensure transparency to avoid confusion between functions (funder vs regulator, system steward vs contract management).

These actions are based on the report 'Empowering Action: improving funding and support for community conservation in Aotearoa', released July 2024.

See the [full report](#) for context and considerations.

3

**Help to  
demonstrate  
impact**

- Demonstrate best practice outcome monitoring with clear metrics to measure impact, and support other organisations to adopt them.
- Consider monitoring on behalf of groups to improve consistency.
- Maintain science and technical expertise internally to provide support.
- Develop shared platforms and databases to support groups to share the results of their mahi and demonstrate their contribution to wider goals.
- Address key scientific and technical knowledge gaps about effectiveness of different conservation interventions.

4

**Support  
alternative  
funding options**

- Support funding innovations through operational frameworks (eg. procurement policies that support not-for-profits to bid for contracts for services).
- Support groups to explore alternative funding sources where objectives are aligned (eg. letters of support).
- Ensure transparency across different functions (funder vs regulator, system steward vs contract management) when exploring funding options.

# Actions for ... funders

Key shifts to  
improve  
funding and  
support

1

## Improve relationships and leverage cooperation

- Fund hubs and collectives for long-term coordination and foundational assistance.
- Recognise the value of paid staff and operational funding for coordinating volunteers, developing strategy, administration and outcomes monitoring.
- Ensure expectations of cooperation and alignment are reasonable, proportional and measurable.
- Consider providing technical support or other in-kind contributions if financial support is harder to provide eg. for small businesses.
- Form networks with other funders to streamline and align, including co-funding arrangements.

2

## Improve your funding process

- Streamline application processes, and ensure the effort required is proportional to the level of funding and risk.
- Be mindful of applicants' scale and resources to contend with weighty application processes, including at a sector level.
- Make it easy for potential applicants to assess their eligibility, eg. light-touch EOIs, pre-application conversations.
- Ensure your criteria match the intent to fund, eg. don't profess to fund environmental matters unless you intend to.
- Promote engagement through funder visits or roundtables – over written reports.
- Favour longer-term funding over short bursts – each reapplication diverts effort.
- Don't ask for anything you don't need, eg. hard copies of applications.

3

### **Fund people power and monitoring**

- Recognise the value of people and operational costs for coordinating, developing strategy, and outcomes monitoring. Groups don't just need materials.
- Ensure any required monitoring has a genuine purpose and gets used.
- Consider innovative ways to support groups to demonstrate their impact.
- Support innovation for monitoring and demonstrating value eg. smarter use of emerging technologies, round table monitoring etc.
- Align reporting requirements with other funders.

4

### **Consider novel funding options**

- Consider novel ways to fund groups outside traditional grant cycles (endowments, contracts for services).
- Work with other organisations to coordinate funding opportunities.
- Support feasibility studies and seed funding for novel funding options for groups wanting independence.