


6 May 2025

File Ref: OIA 50408



Tēnā koe 

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your information request dated 10 April 2025. You asked for the following information:

“Under the Official Information Act, can you please provide me with the criteria and consideration details when applicants were applying for Te Ringa Hāpai Fund. If you could please include:

- If there was a cap on the funding amount per applicant.*
- If the fund covered the costs of planning consultants, consents, and Governance Training and Māori-land governance. If not, can you please advise if you have any other form of funding that would cover these costs or education.”*

Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

One document has been identified as in scope of your request, *Te Puni Kōkiri Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund*, and is being released to you in full. Please refer to Appendix A. This document answers your request for **“Criteria and consideration details when applicants were applying for Te Ringa Hāpai funding”**.

I have set out further information in response to the remaining parts of your request below.

“Cap on funding per applicant”

There was no set cap on the size of grant per applicant. The list of [funding recipients for 2023/24](#) shows the amounts Te Ringa Hāpai grant recipients received in that year.

“If the fund covered the costs of planning consultants, consents, and Governance Training and Māori-land governance”

These costs could be funded by Te Ringa Hāpai if these activities were part of a wider proposal that was aligned with the goals of Te Ringa Hāpai and met other applicable criteria (see Document 1 below). The Whenua Māori Fund could also fund these activities/costs.

“If not, can you please advise if you have any other form of funding that would cover these costs or education”.

In 2024/25, one of the investment priorities of the Māori Development Fund is the improved productivity of iwi or Māori assets. Costs of the kinds outlined in your letter have been able to be funded as part of wider initiatives aimed at improving the productivity of whenua or other iwi and Māori assets. The Māori Development Fund also has funding available for regional initiatives strengthening community resilience, for example strengthening marae governance and emergency preparedness. Funding is subject to eligibility and other criteria.

I trust my response satisfies your request.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that Te Puni Kōkiri publishes some of its OIA responses on its website, after the response is sent to the requester. The responses published are those that are considered to have a high level of public interest. We will not publish your name, address or contact details.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact us at uia@tpk.govt.nz. Ngā mihi



Grace Smit
Hautū, Te Puni Rohe | Deputy Secretary, Regions

Appendix A – Documents for OIA request from [REDACTED] dated 10 April 2025

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1.	2023/24	Te Puni Kōkiri Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund	<i>Extracted information in scope released in full (see below Document 1)</i>



Te Puni Kōkiri
MINISTRY OF MĀORI DEVELOPMENT

DOCUMENT 1



Te Puni Kōkiri

Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund



Version: 2023/2024 FY

1. The purpose of the fund and what we want for Māori communities | Te whāinga o te pūtea, me tō mātou hiahia mō ngā hapori Māori

The purpose of Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund is to boost work underway with Māori free hold landowners to realise their aspirations for their whenua. The fund will enable Māori landowners to undertake whenua-based economic, cultural, social and environmental projects.

The fund will do this by providing capital grants to support infrastructure development on Whenua Māori and to enable Māori landowners take the next steps in their whenua journeys, e.g. RSPF or financing options. The fund will be targeted to infrastructure that unlocks the potential of whenua Māori through supporting or establishing: roading, access to landlocked land, water storage, wastewater systems, climate change adaptation, renewable energy and consenting for development.

There are more than 27,000 blocks of Māori freehold land, comprising 1.4 million hectares which equates to approximately five percent of New Zealand's land area. It is estimated that large tracts of Māori land is under-performing for its owners. Improving the performance and productivity of Māori land will improve income for landowners, their whānau, their communities, and the regional and national New Zealand economy.

Infrastructure underpins our society by providing the services we depend on to live, work, learn and play. Infrastructure for the purposes of this fund includes the following areas*:

- energy
- telecommunications
- transport
- water
- waste

[*Adapted from National Adaptation Plan, Ministry for the Environment]

2. Investment outcomes | Ngā hua haumi

Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund supports applications that contribute to the following outcomes:

Māori free hold landowners are:

1. able to access their whenua Māori for development
2. able to unlock the potential of their whenua Māori through improved infrastructure
3. ready to move into the next stage of the development of their whenua Māori
4. have planned for climate change adaptation, reduced vulnerability and developed climate resilience

5. compliant with environmental regulations
6. realising the potential of their whenua through a whānau-centred community development approach working with whānau, hapū and iwi organisations.

3. Our investment approach | Tō mātou ara haumi

Te Puni Kōkiri's Whenua Māori Service will support trustees and owners in their journey to realise economic, social and cultural outcomes from their whenua. The Whenua Māori Service will work alongside Māori Freehold landowners to help you to plan your project, develop funding applications, and provide agreed funding as your project is delivered.

To ensure that we support robust, achievable and sustainable projects we will invest in:

- infrastructure initiatives that take a whānau-and community development approach to their delivery and support sustainable change
- innovative approaches that can demonstrate the success of capital investment in whenua
- infrastructure initiatives that enable a greater connection of whānau Māori to their whenua, and their cultural and spiritual aspirations for the whenua
- projects that enable landowners to take the next steps in achieving their whenua aspirations and the expected benefit of doing so (whenua/whānau/community development outcomes)
- co-investment/partnership with the community and with other agencies to maximise outcomes
- targeted investment to where it can make the biggest difference and produce useful learnings, using regional knowledge and evidence.

There is no guarantee of funding and applications are prioritised based on regional priorities and available funds.

4. What we are seeking to fund | He aha tā mātou e rapu nei ki te tautoko ā-pūtea

Funding is available for applications for infrastructure that will contribute to achieving economic, social, cultural and climate resilience outcomes from whenua. In particular, we seek applications that focus on:

- Innovative approaches to whenua development through infrastructure
- Infrastructure to optimise the use of land

- Improving land use practices and productivity
- Infrastructure that enables or prepares for enabling commercial ventures
- Movement along the landowner maturity curve
- Overcoming impediments to more productive use of land use (such as land-locked land)
- Cost effective solutions with complementary community funding (co-investment with other funders)
- maximising value by accessing other Government programmes and services
- Delivering multiple outcomes (i.e. unlocking development potential, climate change adaptation, benefits to multiple blocks and whānau and wider community benefit).

Examples of the types of activities that we fund include:

- improving or establishing roading
- enabling access to landlocked land
- water storage
- wastewater systems
- climate change adaptation
- renewable energy
- some planning and consenting costs.

5. Funding restrictions | Ngā herenga pūtea

There are some restrictions on funding. We cannot fund applications which:

- relate predominantly to general-title land
- involve Māori freehold land without a formal governance structure (other than Māori land blocks with seven owners or less)
- are for retrospective projects or to pay existing debts
- are for organisational administrative support
- deliver commercial return
- are for services and support available via existing government programmes and services
- are for legal advocacy, arbitration/mediation or litigation costs, including associated court costs
- are for event management costs, international travel and accommodation or the formation of business ventures.

6. Who is eligible to apply for funding | Te hunga e hiahiatia ana e mātou kia tuku tonu mai

To be eligible for funding from Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund, applications must come from:

- trustees of Māori freehold land, including blocks for which the Māori Trustee is the responsible trustee, **OR**
- The committee of management of a Māori land incorporation; **OR**
- owners of a Māori freehold land block if there are seven owners or fewer.

Examples of the types of entities Te Puni Kōkiri contracts with are listed below:

- Incorporated Society registered with the Companies Office
- Trust registered with the Companies Office
- Limited Liability Company
- Statutory Entity, including a Māori Trust Board (Māori Trust Boards Act 1955) or Māori Association (Māori Community Development Act 1962)
- Entities established under the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 – e.g. Māori Land Incorporations, Ahu Whenua Trusts, Whānau Trusts, Māori Reservation Trust etc.
- Individuals where there are seven owners or fewer registered to a Māori freehold land block

Use of umbrella organisations

If you are a smaller organisation you may partner with an entity that has the skills, knowledge and resources required to support the delivery of your project. We call these entities 'umbrella organisations'. If taking this approach, you will need to work closely with the umbrella organisation and include their details in the application. They will be the organisation Te Puni Kōkiri formally enters into an agreement with and will have the responsibility for management of the funding and overall delivery of the project.

7. How to submit an application | Te tuku i tō tono

The Whenua Māori Service staff will work with you during the planning and development of your application. The application form attached **must be submitted as part of your application**.

In developing your application, we recommend you:

- use existing networks, capability and/or other sources of funding to develop an application that is not completely reliant on Te Puni Kōkiri funding
- consider a co-operative development approach across Māori land blocks. This will provide economies of scale for our funding and support the sharing of information
- consider how your application supports existing Iwi, sector-led, or government programmes: including regional growth strategies
- develop a budget that represents value for money, demonstrates a realistic and justified basis for project completion, and adequately provides for all activities

- have all the delivery elements ready to go so the costs and logistics are clear in the application and there is no delay to implementation if approved.

8. What support and assistance is available | He aha te āwhina me te tautoko e wātea ana

For further information on Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Māori Fund and general contact details please go to <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/nga-putea-me-nga-ratonga/whenua-maori/te-ringa-hapai-whenua-fund>

Our regional and national contact details can be found at <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/whakapama>

Our regional teams will be happy to talk to you about your proposal and work with you.

9. How we will assess your application and make decisions | Pēhea tā mātou aromatawai i tō tono, me te whakarite whakatau hoki

Once you have completed your application, it must be signed by an appropriately authorised person in your organisation and submitted to the Regional Office closest to you with all the required documentation for assessment. Your application will then be assessed by the Whenua Māori Service team who will get back to you if they require additional information or detail about your application.

Please note that applications without all the relevant information will be classified as incomplete and may not be processed.

If your application meets the purpose and eligibility criteria of Te Ringa Hāpai Whenua Fund, it will go before an Investment Committee who will make the final decision on which applications to invest in. You may be contacted to confirm the details of your application.

If your application is approved, you will be advised and receive a Funding Agreement for you to sign (if you agree) that will outline a work plan based on your application. It will contain:

- project description
- key contacts
- agreed deliverables
- payment amounts and timing
- reporting requirements
- a set of generic terms and conditions.

10. How we manage agreements and monitor delivery and outcomes | Te whakahaere i ngā whakaaetanga, te aroturuki i te tuku mai me ōna hua

The regional teams in Te Puni Kōkiri will be the key contacts on the delivery and management of your project. The agreement will detail reporting and payment requirements and we expect a final report upon completion that includes full details about how the funds were spent and any information or reports that were produced. Your final report should provide the following details:

- outcomes achieved
- evidence that the funding has been used for the purposes for which it was given
- evidence and examples of the difference the project has made, or will make, for whānau, hapū and iwi

We may also require you to participate in our wider evaluation of the delivery of the fund outcomes and share case studies of your project. We will address this when we discuss our funding agreement with you.

11. Other considerations | Ētahi atu whakaaroaro

There are some further important considerations to note:

1. **Submitting an application does not guarantee you will receive funding.** It is important that you do not make any financial or other commitments until the application is approved.
2. **Privacy Act 2020** Te Puni Kōkiri is required to comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act 2020. Equally, organisations collecting personal information on behalf of Te Puni Kōkiri will comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act 2020. Te Puni Kōkiri requires the personal information requested in this document to process your funding application. We will use the information for this purpose only. You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong. For a copy of your information, or to have it corrected please contact us at Te Puni Kōkiri, PO Box 3943, Wellington.
3. **Conflicts of interest.** You will need to identify any conflicts of interest in your application. A conflict of interest can arise if the applicant, or people involved in the proposed project/initiative have personal or business interests that could conflict with the obligations under the funding agreement. For example, where a Trustee of the applicant group is also the person who will be paid to provide services or deliver the project there is a conflict of interest, because some of the funding will directly benefit that Trustee. Conflicts of interest could call into question independence, objectivity or impartiality and can be:
 - a. actual: where the conflict currently exists
 - b. potential: where the conflict is about to happen or could happen, or
 - c. perceived: where other people may reasonably think that a person is compromised.

You must do your best to avoid situations that may lead to a conflict of interest arising during the term of your agreement with Te Puni Kōkiri and inform us as soon as a conflict of interest arises. We can still fund a project where there is a conflict of interest; we just need to be satisfied that the conflict is being managed appropriately.

4. **Publishing information about funded projects.** From time to time, Te Puni Kōkiri may need to publish the names of organisations that were funded on our website, or in public communications. This could include:
 - a. the name of your organisation. **Note**, individuals receiving funding will never be named
 - b. a short summary that describes your project, the start date and completion date
 - c. a short description about the numbers and location of whānau who will benefit or have benefited from your project
 - d. Te Puni Kōkiri approved funding amounts.