



Waiapu River Restoration

Project overview

Name of the project	Waiapu River Restoration Project
Region	Tairāwhiti
Applicant	Te Wiwi Nati Trust and Te Riu o Waiapu Trust Partnership
Total project value	\$5,030,000
Amount of funding sought from the PGF	\$5,030,000
Financial instrument recommended	Grant
PDU recommendation	Approve

152. Te Wiwi Nati Trust and Te Riu o Waiapu Trust Partnership have submitted four applications to the PGF of a total value of \$5.03 million, which as a programme of work seek to address the significant erosion and sediment issues facing the river, catchment and alluvial plains of the Waiapu River.

153. The four projects have been developed by the local hapū and whanau of the Trusts in collaboration with the consultant ^{Commercial Information} and MPI. The projects are:

- **Sediment and debris dam construction:** Addressing and limiting debris entering the river (\$^{Commercial Information})
- **People and capability building:** Building capability to ensure knowledge is developed and retained (\$^{Commercial Information})
- **Poplar and willow nursery establishment:** Limiting the ongoing damage via riparian planting (\$^{Commercial Information})
- **The river corridor design:** designing a better path for the river where possible (\$^{Commercial Info}).

154. There are significant erosion and sediment issues for the catchment and alluvial flats of the Waiapu River. ^{Commercial Information}

^{Commercial Information} The continual loss of productive land on the plains, accelerated during severe weather events, has negatively impacted investment. Much of the plains are currently used as grazing with investment that would require security of the land not feasible. When crops, including corn, have been planted the results have been positive. The applicant notes a yield of ^{Comme} tonnes per ha, against the average of ^{Comme} tonnes per ha. The applicant further notes that investment into high-value agriculture and horticulture has also suffered for the same reason. Opportunities to invest in kiwifruit and



avocado require significant associated infrastructure that cannot be committed to without a higher level of security in relation to erosion.

155. This issue has been acknowledged in the 2010 Ngāti Porou Treaty settlement, where a 100 year memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Gisborne District Council, MPI and Ngāti Porou to address the existing issues. The Crown acknowledged that Māori had been largely excluded from any decision-making processes in relation to the management of the catchment. Importantly, the MoU did not put in place a budget, or allocate funding for this work.
156. The applicants have been clear in their insistence that the restoration of the Waiapu must have a Māori framework and include Matauranga Māori. The programme must be holistic, catchment wide and long-term, and at the heart of it must be the community working together.

Agency comment

157. MPI supports this application and worked with the applicant to develop the work programme. MPI also note that assistance should be provided to help develop sustainable long-term skills for the governance structure.
158. While the NZTA has not been involved in this proposal, it is interested in being involved should PGF funding be approved. Waiapu River (Rotokautuku) bridge on State Highway 35 has significant embankment/abutment issues, which are currently being monitored on a 12 monthly basis. One of the embankments is located on an active fault line which is causing the abutment to move and rotate. Any up or down stream work needs to be carefully considered so that it does not accelerate or propagate the current issues on this structure. Improvements or maintenance to the bridge structure, if required, could be eligible for funding from the National Land Transport Fund.
159. DOC supports the Waiapu package, but notes the following:
- **Sediment and debris dam construction:**
 - DOC consider that sediment loss in the Waiapu River catchment is an internationally significant problem affecting its environmental values and the East Coast economy – the river has the highest amount of sediment loss in the entire country. DOC strongly support efforts to address it and believe this concept is a sensible approach, as long as fish passage and effects on existing habitats are considered.
 - Koaro or climbing galaxias (a native fish species) are present in the Waiapu catchment, and construction of sediment dams has the potential to cause some habitat loss and restrict fish passage. Fish passage should be assessed by appropriately skilled individuals prior to site selection, design and construction of the debris dams. Ongoing management of the sediment collected by the dams also needs to be thought through. While there are potential water quality and ecosystem benefits from reducing sediment, these other aspects would need to be addressed.
 - **Poplar and willow nursery establishment:**
 - While DOC supports this aspect of the application, they would encourage broader consideration of tree species to be grown. DOC feels that this application's focus on willow and poplar poles is a lost opportunity. Restoration of the Waiapu catchment will require large amounts of native species too, and some, particularly



manuka, have been shown to have superior soil retention properties to introduced species. DOC would encourage the Trust to broaden the species under consideration for this project.

- **The river corridor design:**

- DOC consider the concept is good and support the intention to take a whole-of-river approach to works, but the bid has underestimated the amount of funding needed to deliver on its objectives. The amount requested – just \$ [redacted] – suggests they already have an engineering approach in mind, but DOC would encourage them to look at a full range of options – from the traditional hard engineering approaches to also catchment focused or green engineering solutions which may involve more of a catchment land use approach instead of relying on within-river training options.

Local support

160. Gisborne District Council (GDC) Ngāti Porou and the Regional Economic Action Plan Governance Group support the application. The PDU has sought additional information from GDC as to regional work being undertaken.
161. The East Coast Erosion Control Fund (ECECF), established by MPI, has to date heavily focussed on the rivers and catchments around Gisborne. A next step has been to begin a draft programme plan for the Waiapu catchment (The Waiapu Catchment Plan). This is a Joint Management Agreement (JMA) between Ngāti Porou and Gisborne District Council (GDC), and will seek to address both water quality and land issues. The plan is due to be completed in 2020.
162. Ngāti Porou under a subsidiary Te Runanganui o Ngāti Porou, and Gisborne District Council are the mandated parties under the signed JMA working to develop the Waiapu Catchment Plan (due in 2020). As such, it can be argued this application could be ahead of an established planning process. In response to this, the PDU has spoken with GDC. If successful, this application will be rolled into the Waiapu Catchment Plan, meaning the PGF application will not have to wait for the delivery of the Plan. GDC have further noted the 2020 delivery might be ambitious. Furthermore, the applicant notes the significant time it has already taken to address the acknowledged issues facing the Waiapu to date.

Management and governance

163. Specific project manager roles are noted as being required. Additionally, a programme manager is noted as being costed, however, no names are placed next to the roles. This could be a 'subject to' clause, should you approve this application. MPI has noted governance support should be provided to the project to help its establishment.

Costs and funding sources

164. The applicant has requested [redacted] per cent funding via grant.
165. It can be argued that partners to the JMA could be co-funders for the Waiapu programme PGF application. This has occurred with previous river and catchment plans that have been developed for Tairāwhiti rivers.
166. MPI has advised the ECECF fund is heavily oversubscribed and will expire in 2020 meaning funding contributed going forward will likely be limited. To date it has funded \$ [redacted] for riparian planting.



167. Commercial Information



168. Forestry companies and government, as owners of many of the forestry blocks in the catchment responsible for much of the sediment, slash and erosion are also possible co-funders.

Benefits

169. The four projects seek to address the:

- Continued significant erosion of the catchment and alluvial flats
- Flooding restricting forward investment opportunities
- Damage to regional Infrastructure (SH35)
- Seabed and fisheries destruction due to sediment deposit.

170. These issues have been limiting the landowners' economic opportunity potential by restricting the activity that can be undertaken on the land. Sustainable forward investment into higher-value infrastructure, such as kiwifruit, avocado, and as a first step, crops including corn, cannot be committed to while the security of the land is problematic.

171. Professional services are to be contracted to the project as required, with the goal of imparting knowledge and upskilling hapū and whanau.

172. The projects also help to address the 2010 Ngāti Porou Treaty settlement MoU signed by Gisborne District Council, MPI and Ngāti Porou to address the existing issues.

PDU assessment of the project

173. This section provides an overview of PDU's assessment against the PGF eligibility and assessment criteria.

Assessment against PGF criteria

Criteria	Rating 1 - 5	Comment
Sustainable regional economic development	✓✓✓✓	One of the strongest aspects of these applications is the opportunity to offer development pathways for hapū and whanau. The stabilisation of the land will afford the ability to build stronger participation, which it can be argued, will generate better social, community and economic outcomes.



Criteria	Rating 1 - 5	Comment
Productivity and innovation	✓✓✓✓	The applicant has provided modelling of the increased value that can be realised if the erosion control measures can be successfully implemented.
Increased employment, training or work readiness for the sectors workforce	✓✓✓✓	<p>The programme of projects will provide employment opportunities for the Trusts' members, building capability in the district and providing the opportunity to reduce the number of people leaving the area. The applicant states <small>Commo</small> jobs will be created to undertake the work programme.</p> <p>Greater opportunities for long-term sustainable employment will be realised if the programme can achieve the results outlined in the applications. This will be achieved through establishing stable and secured land areas that can be developed with a level of certainty not currently afforded to the Waiapu alluvial flats.</p>
NZ's ability to meet climate change commitments	✓✓✓	The project will develop mechanisms to offset the effects of climate change (more frequent severe weather events).
Māori aspirations for utilising land and other resources and achieving cultural objectives	✓✓✓✓✓	This project is focused on gaining results for Maori and Maori land. This will in turn, aid in the development of the Maori economy in Tairāwhiti.
Additionality	✓✓✓	The opportunity to climb the value-chain is evidenced in this application. Equally important is the loss of opportunity associated with not establishing a solution to the acknowledged problems.



Criteria	Rating 1 - 5	Comment
Connections and alignment with regional priorities	✓✓✓✓	The programme seeks to develop the opportunity to establish secure lands on which high value crops and commercial activities can be undertaken. These goals closely align with the TEAP.
Environmental sustainability and/or productivity of natural assets	✓✓✓✓	The programme has a significant element of sustainability. The current situation sees increased erosion and loss of Māori asset base. Aspects of this plan seek to pro-actively address the causes of this problem by putting in place measures in the catchment to aid in reducing degradation on the alluvial flats and seabed.

Risk assessment

174. The applicant has provided a detailed risk/ mitigation register for a number of projects that require it. The PDU and MPI have assessed these and believe they are strong and project specific. The following risks have also been identified:

Type of risk	Mitigation
MPI has noted that risk is present in the governance structure.	MPI believes this could be mitigated via MPI working with the applicant in the establishment and initial programme development

Recommendations and next steps

175. The PDU recommends that you approve in principle up to \$5,030,000 from the PGF fund towards Te Wiwi Nati Trust and Te Rui o Waiapu Trust Partnership's restoration of the Waiapu river, subject to:

- The PDU and MPI working with the applicant to seek co-funding options
- The PDU and MPI working with the applicant to ensure that any resource consents are obtained (likely to be required for sediment dams but not riparian planting)
- The applicant working with MPI through the programme to ensure key performance indicators and milestones are met – noting the scale of this significant programme
- MPI sitting with the applicants at the governance table to offer support as required



PROVINCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
UNIT

- The PDU working with the applicant to better understand who might be appointed to the Project Manager and Programme Manager roles
- The PDU and MPI ensuring no double dipping with the ECECF, noting this funding is for riparian planting, as is part of this application.

PROACTIVELY RELEASED