

21 April 2022

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

15 Stout Street

Wellington 6140

Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways Green Paper – Te Papa Atawhai DOC submission

Tēnā koutou

Te Papa Atawhai Department of Conservation (DOC) welcomes the opportunity to provide our thoughts on the Green Paper and share our vision for a future Science System that will serve Aotearoa New Zealand for generations to come.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the effort that has gone into the engagement and consultation process during these trying COVID times and thank the Te Ara Paerangi team for an inclusive approach in working with fellow Government agencies.

DOC is the agency that looks after 1/3 of Aotearoa's whenua and marine reserves and other protected areas, manages the conservation of the unique biodiversity of our country. We are a very operationally focussed organisation, and across our management responsibilities we face enormous challenges. Science, Research & Innovation (RS&I) is an important part of our kaupapa, and evidence-based knowledge informs our day-to-day mahi, decisions and policies. Within the Government Agencies, we are in a unique position of undertaking significant research ourselves, we are a 'customer' of the RS&I system and are an active collaborator with research providers.

To achieve the vision of "Te Mauri Hikahika o te Taiao" (the life force of nature is vibrant and vigorous) set out in the whole of government Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy, we need an RS&I system that can address and solve our 'wicked problems' and give us solutions that make a difference at place, i.e., on the ground and applied.

To help achieve this, we welcome the outline of thinking presented in Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways and especially support the proposed mechanism of "National Priorities" when appropriately linked to funding and delivery mechanisms.

We see the “National Priorities” as an opportunity for agencies to work closer together and would like to explore with the Ministry about how our experience of working at the ‘operational’ end can inform the building of a system that will grow science and research solutions that are outcome-focussed and delivered across the pipeline from basic research to applied.

We consider the following three areas are needed to achieve this:

- The why and what: we need sound justification and prioritisation of research, based on well-developed strategies. Investment should be transparent, have clear accountability for achieving a mission and a mechanism for monitoring, evaluation, and pivoting, when required.
- The pipeline to impact (a circular knowledge system): we need to build processes and incentives for the system to deliver the pipeline to impact and on the ground applied tools that make the difference needed.
- The mechanisms to achieve ‘the why’ and ‘pipeline to impact’: we need to simplify the currently complex institutional system and develop an integrated approach to research management and the management of collections and databases.

Across all of this, we strongly support the need to develop a system that embeds Te Tiriti o te Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori and gives the space and time for Māori-led research.

We would like to build on our work together and the collaborative approach MBIE took in the development of the Green Paper and meet with MBIE kanohi ki te kanohi with relevant representatives. We have experience with examples of what ‘good’ looks like and would like to explore with MBIE about what we see as the key pivot points for a future system for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nāku noa, nā

Bruce Parkes
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