Jobs for Nature Evaluation

Year Two Report

17 September 2024

ALLEN + CLARKE

About Allen + Clarke

Allen and Clarke Regulatory and Policy Specialists Ltd (*Allen + Clarke*) is a consultancy that specialises in research and evaluation; policy; business change and optimisation; and governance, secretariat and programme support services. Founded in 2001, the company is led by two Managing Partners, Matthew Allen and Paul Houliston, who share ownership with 12 senior staff. We have approximately 70 other personnel including evaluation and research practitioners, policy professionals, organisational change experts, administrative support and an in-house designer. We have offices in Wellington, New Zealand and Melbourne, Australia. *Allen + Clarke* has experience undertaking evaluations and reviews in a range of sectors. Our company also works extensively for a range of government and non-government agencies in New Zealand, Australia, as well as international organisations in the Pacific and Asia.

Document status:	Final
Version and date:	V2.0; 17/09/2024
Author(s):	Jessica Kereama, Brendan Stevenson
Peer / technical review:	Ned Hardie-Boys
Verification QA changes made:	Jessica Kereama
Proof read:	Marnie Carter
Formatting:	Marnie Carter
Final QA check & approved release:	Marnie Carter

ALLEN + CLARKE
+64 4 890 7300
office@allenandclarke.co.nz
www.allenandclarke.co.nz

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Abbreviations

Term	Definition
DOC	Department of Conservation
J4N	Jobs for Nature
LINZ	Land Information New Zealand
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MOP	Memorandum of Partnerships
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
OBT	One Billion Trees [programme]
PDU	Provincial Development Unit
PGF	Provincial Growth Fund
RDU	Kānoa – Regional Development & Investment Unit (previously PDU, a business unit of MBIE)
SLU	Sustainable Land Use

Terms used in this report

What we mean	The word we use	Words other people might use for something similar	What it means in Jobs for Nature
An individual activity, funded or otherwise, part of a programme. Not all projects are part of wider programmes – they may be standalone or pilot activities	**Project**	Action Initiative	The projects contracted and funded by the individual agencies under the umbrella of Jobs for Nature
The set of activities managed together over a period of time that aims to achieve some sort of positive change for a person or group of people	**Programme**	Project Initiative Intervention	The overall set of activities funded through Jobs for Nature, including projects and their implementation by agencies

What we mean	The word we use	Words other people might use for something similar	What it means in Jobs for Nature
The government agencies who are contributing funds to invest in the Jobs for Nature programme	**National Stakeholder**	The Crown Government	Ministry of the Environment (MfE), Department of Conservation (DOC), Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Kānoa
Partnerships refer to relationships between central government, local government, community and Iwi/hapū and Māori	**Partnerships**	Partners Agreements Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Memorandum of Partnerships (MOP) Treaty Partnership Treaty settlements	Collectives and groups that have joined to deliver the Jobs for Nature programme. These may be formal alliances or informal networks
Nation of Indigenous people. A collection of political units unified by an eponymous ancestor	**Iwi**	Tribe	Jobs for Nature is intended to build delivery partnerships between central government, local government and Iwi/hapū/whānau The programme is intended to create jobs that address existing employment disparities for rangatahi/youth and Māori (From Investment Framework - Employment Assessment 19/08/22)
Large kinship group and primary political unit of Māori society	**Hapū**	Subtribe Kinship group Clan	
Tangata whenua Indigenous people of Aotearoa	**Māori**	Tangata whenua Indigenous people of Aotearoa	

What we mean	The word we use	Words other people might use for something similar	What it means in Jobs for Nature
The changes that are likely or achieved through delivering the programme in the short, medium, and long term	**Outcome**	Result Impact	The achievements of the programme for people and places, reflecting the various stakeholders' priorities and needs
The intervention is doing the right things	**Relevance**	Alignment	The extent to which the programme is delivered in line with context and need, both nationally and regionally
The extent to which we have achieved the changes we set out to make for the people we work with and the places we work	**Effectiveness**	Success Efficacy	Whether the programme has achieved its overall objectives. Individual projects will have their own objectives and measures
How well the intervention fits with other strategies	**Coherence**	Alignment	Whether Jobs for Nature aligns with other regional and national employment and environmental strategies and interventions
Additional benefits the programme has created, that are over and above the original investment	**Additionality**	Added value	Whether Jobs for Nature added value beyond the investment of money
The extent to which the benefits are likely to last	**Sustainability**	Maintainable	Whether the employment and environmental initiatives are sustainable and ongoing

Main messages

This report presents the findings of the second year of a three-year evaluation of the Jobs for Nature (J4N) programme. It provides an 'on the ground' view of the J4N programme from the perspective of people involved in J4N project delivery. Main messages include:

- The J4N programme provided meaningful employment for individuals, communities and sectors that were impacted by a downturn in employment opportunities because of COVID-19. It also brought employment opportunities to rural communities which historically had limited work options.
- People employed on J4N projects gained training and qualifications, which will support them to secure further employment once the programme ends.
- There is some evidence of spillover economic benefits through increased spending at local businesses.
- Project delivery worked effectively when funding was provided to accelerate existing initiatives, such as objectives in regional catchment strategies or Iwi plans. In these situations, J4N projects were able to accelerate delivery without the 'lag time' needed to establish delivery infrastructure. Moreover, there is evidence that J4N advanced restoration plans for farms by bringing forward riparian fencing and planting.
- J4N project delivery was also effective when the programme built on and leveraged existing partnerships. Taking a 'landscape approach' to environmental restoration offers efficiencies by enabling organisations to pool resources and expertise and work together towards shared objectives. This partnership approach minimises the risk of duplicating work across multiple projects working in a similar area.
- The relationships and trust developed between central and local government organisations, Iwi, Māori and farming communities – by working together on activities such as management of freshwater systems – provide a foundation for future collaboration, beyond the timeframe of the J4N programme.
- Organisations, individuals and communities are concerned about the sustainability of the gains achieved through the programme. While some kaimahi have secured alternative employment, the current constrained fiscal environment and competition for funding and contract work means that for many kaimahi, employment will cease after the J4N programme finishes.
- Over the long term, J4N will contribute to efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change through supporting carbon sequestration and reducing the impact of flood and fire events. Projects are supporting this by planting of native species, restoring wetlands, changing land use practices, and developing community capacity to respond to climate change-related events. However, there is a need to maintain the substantial built and natural infrastructure that was developed through J4N to prolong these environmental impacts.

Executive summary

The evaluation of Jobs for Nature (J4N) seeks to understand how effectively the programme has been implemented and the extent to which it is on track to deliver its intended outcomes for participants and the environment.

This interim report covers the second year of the three-year evaluation. It presents an 'on the ground' view of the J4N programme from the perspective of those who are involved in J4N project delivery.

Methods

In its second year, the evaluation involved 22 visits to J4N projects and two online interviews. The projects were selected to cover three thematic case studies – on social impacts, freshwater restoration, and climate change resilience – and involved interviews with project managers and kaimahi, and with community partners. The thematic case studies are reported in accompanying reports.

The second year also involved analysis of J4N administrative data on the funding investment distribution, employment data (including employment starts, hours worked, people currently employed), and on environmental outputs relating to biodiversity, freshwater and pest control.

The data collection and analysis was framed by criteria covering effectiveness, relevance, coherence, additionality, sustainability, and learning and improvement. This summary follows this structure.

Is the programme achieving its objectives?

As part of the COVID-19 recovery package, J4N was established to create jobs and provide economic support for people and communities across Aotearoa, while ensuring environmental benefits.

J4N has created jobs. Administrative data shows J4N has provided employment opportunities for over 14,600 people and delivered 10.7 million hours of work. These opportunities have included support for industries and communities directly affected by COVID-19, such as for people impacted by the downturn in tourism. In some cases, J4N provided employment opportunities for a business' workforce, such as jet boat drivers, helping the business to survive the downturn. The opportunities have also benefited communities who have historically experienced disadvantage, including regional communities, Māori and rangatahi.

J4N provided people with skills, knowledge and capability. Kaimahi gained skills and experience on the job, and completed formal training and gaining certifications. Projects reported training in areas such as equipment use (e.g. chainsaw, 4WD/quadbike, construction tools), pest control (e.g. trapping, poison use), health and safety, and water skills (freshwater diving, boat safety and skipper licences). People also learnt about ecosystems and their importance for climate resilience, biodiversity, rongoā, and mahinga kai. Many of the skills and experiences gained through J4N are expected to be highly transferable.

J4N has also delivered many environmental benefits. For example, administrative data shows that J4N projects planted more than 11 million plants, restored over 13,000 hectares of land, treated 2 million hectares for wilding conifers and 700,000 hectares for other weeds, and treated over 3.7 million hectares for animal pests. There is evidence of emerging benefits from this work for healthy waterways, biodiversity, climate change resilience and cultural values. For example, projects reported improved water quality, increased observation of native species, and stronger connections to whenua and ngahere. There is also evidence to suggest J4N will strengthen resilience to climate change, for example through planting and wetland restoration helping to control erosion and reduce the impact of flooding. Changes in land use practices reported by J4N projects – including to the management of farmland and forestry blocks – is also helping to diversify land use and mitigate the loss of biodiversity.

J4N has a strong focus on partnerships. At a regional level, partnerships have facilitated the sharing of resources and expertise to deliver restoration projects on a large scale, such as for a catchment or region. There is evidence of synergies across J4N projects and of agencies coordinating funding to enable this large-scale mahi. J4N also leveraged off existing partnerships and strategies which provided funding agencies with a clear funding pathway for J4N investments.

At the project level, J4N helped to facilitate partnerships between government agencies, Iwi/Māori, farming communities, and scientific organisations. For example, projects have engaged with marae, Māori landowners and farmers, helping to protect and manage waterways in ways that align with Iwi values and support landowners with the costs of fencing and planting.

Partnerships have boosted the environmental capacity of Iwi. For example, there is evidence of partnerships between Iwi, environmental NGOs, DOC and regional and local councils that have increased the capacity of Iwi to participate in decision-making as well as to undertake environmental work such as fencing, nursey work, planting, pest control, building and harvesting. This increased capacity is helping Iwi to deliver on their Te Tiriti settlement aspirations. It is also enabling funding agencies' to meet their obligations for supporting **r**angatiratanga and kaitiakitanga.

Projects also reported factors that had hindered progress. Inadequate water infrastructure, including an absence of water reticulation and poor wastewater infrastructure, were reported as barriers, with projects noting that riparian planting and fencing were no substitute for proper sewerage treatment. Failure to engage early with Māori, particularly when this required engagement with multiple landowners of Māori land blocks, was also identified as a barrier.

Is the programme doing the right things?

The dual focus of J4N on creating jobs while ensuring environmental benefits was relevant in the context of the COVID-19 recovery and appears to still be relevant. The ability of J4N to pivot towards a greater focus on environmental outcomes when unemployment rates did not track as high as projected, is testimony to the programme's success in remaining relevant. This pivot required adjustments which were not always experienced positively by projects. For example, projects reported employing MSD jobseekers who required a higher level of pastoral care than they had anticipated. Several projects also reported disruption from delayed

variations to contracts that were required to shift towards the increased emphasis on environmental outputs.

How well does the programme fit with other strategies and interventions?

The capacity built through J4N and the on-the-ground environmental work delivered fits well with the capacity and capabilities need to implement other strategies, policies and agreements. For example, projects reported consistency in their J4N work with the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, catchment management plans and farm management plans. Consistent with the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, J4N projects also targeted actions to address threats to biodiversity and connections between nature and people.

In terms of coherency with other job creation measures, there is evidence that MSD and J4N projects worked well together, and evidence that some projects were able to leverage off capability developed through previous investments in regional development such as the Provincial Growth Fund. Perhaps more telling, J4N has provided workers with skills and experiences that complement skill requirements in the wider labour market. Additionally, the evaluation found no evidence that J4N had displaced or duplicated other employment support measures.

What added value does the programme provide beyond the individual funds?

J4N added value beyond the direct investment in job creation and delivery of environmental outputs. Projects provided examples of how employment opportunities had stimulated local economic activity, such as people having more money in their pockets to spend at local businesses, and J4N projects purchasing equipment and services from local suppliers. In addition, projects have supported the establishment and growth of businesses, for example through establishing plant nurseries and fencing and planting services that have securing work beyond the J4N project.

The programme has helped to establish some innovative methods that may bring additional benefits. For example, the release of dung beetles, development of lake weed mats from harakeke and the development of collaborative models of governance have trialled new ways of doing things, adding experience and evidence on how to restore ecosystems.

One of the most direct and significant benefits of J4N, beyond the direct investment in nature-based jobs, was the value of the J4N workforce in helping communities to respond to major flooding events, especially after Cyclone Gabrielle. This benefit was consistently reported by projects. The skills developed in the J4N nature-based work lent itself to civil defence, from driving to clearing trees, outdoor first aid, chainsaw and scrub bar use, and construction.

Will the benefits of the programme last?

There is mixed evidence on the extent to which the results of J4N projects are likely to continue beyond the end of the programme.

On the one hand, there is evidence of J4N kaimahi securing further employment, contracts and income that will providing lasting benefits. This includes, for example, staff gaining employment in the private sector, or with regional and local councils, and DOC. Other projects have generated income through contract work such as in fencing, planting, pest control and environmental monitoring that has enabled them to keep staff employed. On the environmental side, J4N projects have invested in some building blocks for nature-based restoration work, such as capacity building, connecting people with nature, establishing partnerships and collaborations, and delivering environmental capital and infrastructure like fencing and planting. These achievements should continue to bring benefits beyond the J4N programme.

On the other hand, projects report considerable barriers to sustaining employment outcomes and considered the retention of workers was unlikely. One of the main challenges was the current constrained fiscal environment and the competition for funding, particularly in regional and rural areas, meaning projects would be unable to continue to pay wages. On the environmental side, while many projects had begun to plan for activities post-J4N, they remained concerned about how they would resource the maintenance of infrastructure and continuation of activities.

Projects reported that the short-term employment focus of the J4N programme conflicted with the time it takes to establish partnerships and build and sustain capacity for holistic catchment scale work in regional communities. They reported having built the know-how and taiao knowledge, but required additional funding to embed these benefits.

Learning and improvement

Projects reported on what they had learnt through implementing J4N and what should be done differently. Key lessons and improvements identified include:

- A need for simplified project reporting and contracts that are responsive to changes in context.
- The need for adequate funding, including to enable projects to pay reasonable wages commensurate to the growing skills and experience of kaimahi, and the provision of timely funding.
- The benefits in aligning projects with Iwi and hapū values, from the outset.
- The benefits of structured approaches to training and capacity building that utilise experience educators and enable training to be tailored to kaimahi needs and interests.
- The benefits from having dedicated project management resources, from the outset, and with a focus on efficiency and sustainability.

In the final year of the evaluation, lessons and improvements will be further analysed, including the implications for the design and delivery of future initiatives.

Background

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the second year of the three-year independent evaluation of the Jobs for Nature (J4N) programme. The first year of the evaluation reported on three place-based case studies. In this second year, the evaluation reports findings from three thematic case studies – social impact, climate resilience, and freshwater restoration. A companion report presents evaluation findings from projects with a Te Ao Māori focus. The third year of the evaluation will provide a synthesis of the findings across the data collection cycles with a summative lens, identifying what worked, for whom, and in what circumstances.

1.1 The Jobs for Nature programme

Jobs for Nature is a $1.2 billion programme that manages funding across multiple government agencies to benefit the environment, people, and the regions. It is part of the COVID-19 recovery package. The objectives of the Jobs for Nature programme are to:

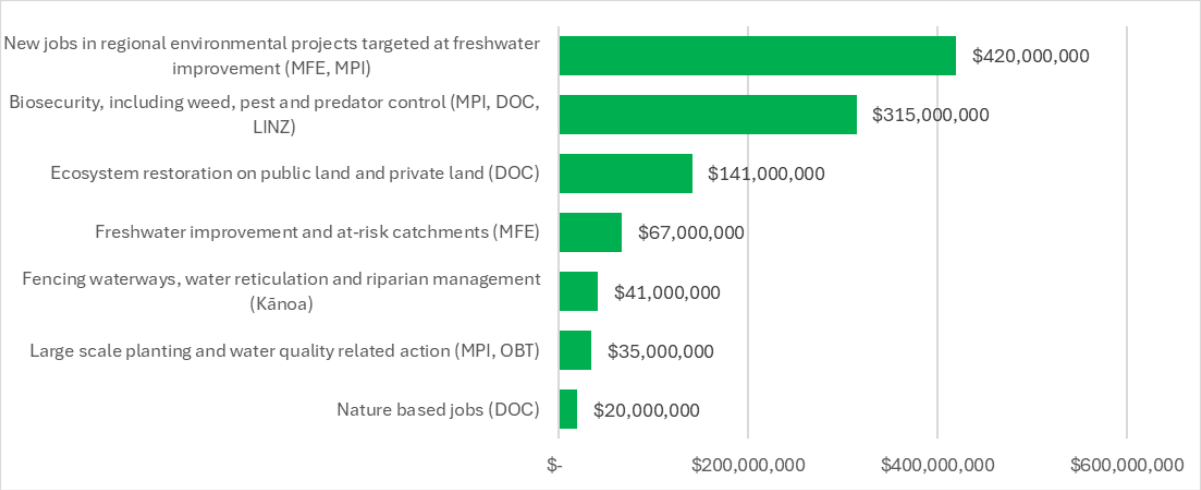
1. create nature-related employment opportunities for people, at pace, in regions that need work the most
2. realise enduring benefits for freshwater ecosystems and water quality, biodiversity, climate change and cultural values
3. support sustainable land use and the implementation of new regulatory requirements, including for freshwater, biodiversity and climate change.

The initial focus of the programme was on job creation, in line with Treasury's April 2020 forecasts that unemployment would peak between 13% and 26%. After an initial increase, the national unemployment rate peaked at 5.3% in the September 2020 quarter. In response to lower than anticipated unemployment, in May 2021, the Sustainable Land Use (SLU) Ministers overseeing the programme agreed that agencies should place greater weight on environmental outcomes relative to employment outcomes.

The programme is delivered through 25 separate funds across the Department of Conservation (DOC), Ministry for the Environment (MfE), Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Kānoa Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit (Kānoa), and Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). Each agency has control over its area of the programme, with implementation design and decisions made within individual departments and ministries. A Secretariat has a coordinating function across the programme, supporting Ministers, providing consolidated reporting and programme-level insights, and acting as a conduit between the delivery agencies.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of J4N funding across the investment package. This includes the $1.2 billion and additional funding reallocated from other programmes.

Figure 1. Jobs for Nature investments



Source: https://www.jobsfornature.govt.nz/about-jobs-for-nature/funding-allocation/

Almost $0.5 billion was allocated to quick-start projects or was tagged to existing programmes with established governance and decision-making structures. This included $100 million for the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme, the reallocation of $100 million of Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) funding to riparian fencing, reticulated stock water systems, and riparian planting, and $35 million for environmental projects such as on highly erodible land or riparian areas under the One Billion Trees (OBT) programme.

The remaining funding of around $0.7 billion was made available for projects that were still developing, and had yet to fully establish decision-making, governance and delivery processes. Some of the funding was intended for quick-start projects, and some was intended to be allocated in a second phase of funding from July 2020, and over a third phase in 2021 and beyond. For this funding for developing projects, SLU Ministers adopted an investment statement that set principles, priorities, and overall phasing. The principles for investment are included in Appendix A.

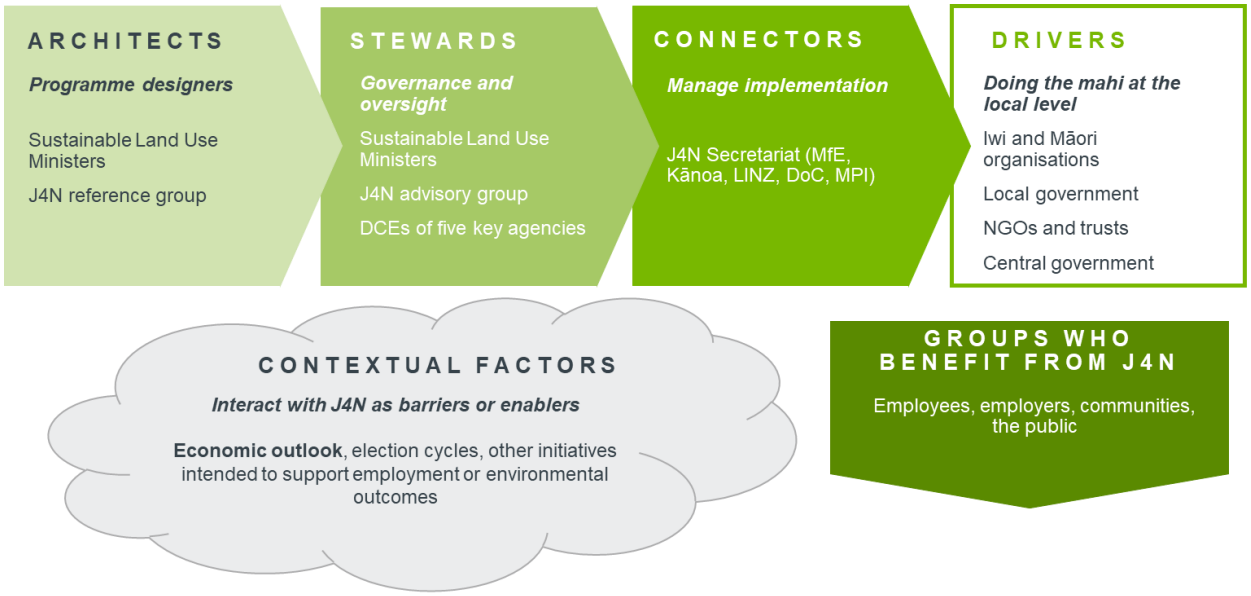
Projects funded through Jobs for Nature range from large scale regional or national initiatives to small community projects. The funding supports people into nature-based work. Specific activities include vegetation planting for freshwater and biodiversity restoration; fencing waterways; pest control (including predators, wilding pines and other pest plants); fish passage remediation; and skills training to support people into environmental careers. Organisations that have received funding include local government, Iwi, community groups, and private companies.

1.2 The Jobs for Nature system ecology

The Jobs for Nature programme has a range of stakeholder groups that play various implementation roles. The *Allen + Clarke* evaluation team developed a system ecology map (Figure 2) which provides an overview of:

- the key stakeholder groups in the Jobs for Nature programme
- the roles of the stakeholder groups
- the organisations, individuals, and groups within each category
- contextual factors that may shape implementation of the programme and the achievement of its expected outcomes.

Figure 2. Jobs for Nature system ecology



The system ecology map provided a framework for selecting evaluation participants.

1.3 The evaluation

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to understand how effectively the programme has been implemented and the extent to which it is on track to deliver its intended outcomes for participants and the environment. Specifically, the purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Learn from the set-up, implementation, and results of the programme to inform future cross-government initiatives.
- Assess the extent to which the potential future outcomes for the participants and the environment are likely to be achieved.

1.3.2 Evaluation design

The evaluation was designed through a collaborative process with the Jobs for Nature Secretariat. The evaluation team conducted a review of contextual documents, then conducted two engagements to test and refine the evaluation design:

- **An evaluation design workshop** with key stakeholders from the five Jobs for Nature government agencies and members of the *Allen + Clarke* evaluation team to review evaluation questions and draft measures of success.
- **A co-design wānanga** with Māori stakeholders to get an understanding of Māori values and aspirations for, and understanding and experience of, the programme. Findings from this wānanga were then incorporated into the development of a Te Ao Māori evaluation plan. We also incorporated questions into the data collection tools (e.g., interview guides) to explore the extent that programme delivery reflects Māori values and aspirations.

The outputs of these engagements were used to develop an evaluation plan, including key evaluation questions, criteria, and data collection methods, which are presented below.

The evaluation includes three cycles of data collection:

- Year one – three place-based case studies focusing on exploring the delivery of the Jobs for Nature programme in specific locations.
- Year two – three 'thematic' case studies which explored the delivery of the Jobs for Nature programme in relation to a specific theme or investment focus.
- Te Ao Māori evaluation – this was conducted during year two, in parallel with the full evaluation. It reviewed the programme through a Māori lens, based on the criteria of rangatiratanga, kawanatanga, ōritetanga, and wairuatanga. The findings have been provided in a separate report.
- Year three – a final round of summative data collection and a synthesis of the evaluation findings across all data collection cycles.

The findings in this report pertain to the second cycle of data collection.

1.3.3 Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions (KEQs) that have framed the evaluation are listed in Table 1.The KEQs were initially identified by the Secretariat and refined in collaboration with *Allen + Clarke* through the evaluation design workshop held in September 2022.

Table 1. Key evaluation questions and themes

Theme	Questions
Effectiveness	To what extent have the anticipated medium-term outcomes of the J4N programme been achieved? To what extent and in what ways is the programme working for regional communities, Māori and the environment? What factors may have supported or hindered successful implementation? To what extent is the programme on track to achieve its expected long-term outcomes? What unintended results have been generated (positive/negative)?
Relevance	How well does the design and implementation of J4N align with the policy intent and objectives of the programme? To what extent are the initial objectives and scope still relevant and has the programme been able to adjust to changing circumstances over its lifetime?
Coherence	To what extent was the J4N project selection approach coherent with regional/catchment and national needs? To what extent are there synergy effects between J4N projects? To what extent has the job creation element of the programme been coherent with other support measures?
Additionality	To what extent has J4N as a programme added value beyond the individual funds? How much of what has happened would have happened anyway or been funded through other mechanisms? What additional funding/resourcing has the J4N programme attracted towards reaching its objectives?
Sustainability	To what extent are the results of the projects likely to continue after the end of the programme? What factors influence the sustainability of the projects? What, if anything, has the programme contributed to structuring effects and how agencies work together?
Learning and improvement	What can be learnt from implementation and what might we do differently in future? Did the projects generate approaches that can be implemented elsewhere? Has the programme trialled innovative approaches and if so, what has been learned from them?

1.3.4 Year two data collection methods

The evaluation team collected a mix of qualitative and quantitative data through document review, case study fieldwork based around three themes, and analysis of J4N administrative data. Data was collected between February and May 2024. The qualitative data collection was undertaken with project personnel and stakeholders from a sample of funded J4N projects, and as such provides an 'on the ground' view of the J4N programme from the perspective of those who are involved in J4N project delivery. Direct quotes are used throughout this report to illustrate the perspectives of those 'on the ground'. Engagement with key informants at the regional and national levels was not part of the year two data collection.

1.3.4.1 Contextual document review

The Jobs for Nature Secretariat provided a range of documents for the contextual document review. These included Parliamentary Commissioner of the Environment reports, the Jobs for Nature investment framework, the Advisory Group terms of reference and meeting minutes, programme dashboard reporting, Jobs for Nature annual reviews, and other relevant files. These documents were reviewed and summarised by the evaluators and shared across the evaluation team. The main purpose of this review was for the evaluation team to establish sufficient background on the Jobs for Nature programme to appropriately design the evaluation.

The document review has also been drawn on to contextualise the findings from the theme - based case studies. The information about Jobs for Nature policy and investment was also used to fact check information where relevant.

1.3.4.2 Theme-based case studies

A key data collection method for year two of the evaluation was three thematic case studies. The themes were:

1. **Social impact.** We define social impact as the effect of an action or inaction, an activity, project, programme or policy on people and communities. Social impact projects in this case study were selected because they applied for funding under the following categories: recreation enhancement; historical and cultural heritage restoration; skills and training; employment; and capability development. The J4FN projects in the social impact case study included projects working with estuaries and lakes, a mainland island sanctuary, and the restoration of Māori land blocks.

2. **Freshwater Restoration.** This case study included J4N projects that had a focus on freshwater rehabilitation, improving fish passage, wetland, stream and lake riparian planting, and aquatic weed control. We looked for three elements outlined in the J4N investment strategy which guided decision making for the environment:
    - Projects and other aligned initiatives that target a holistic system view of catchments and ecosystems
    - Projects that target interventions known to have a broad and strong influence on environmental outcomes within an ecosystem or catchment.
    - Projects that fit within a regional/catchment strategy.

3. **Climate change resilience.** This refers to changes in processes, practices and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change. In simple terms, it means developing solutions and implementing actions to respond to current and future climate change impacts. This definition is derived from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for adaption and resilience. J4N projects in this case study undertook climate change resilience activities such as planting trees, erosion control, riparian planting, and developing farm and environmental management plans.

The evaluators selected a sample of 24 J4N projects which were included in the thematic case studies, with eight projects selected under each theme. The projects were delivered in Te Tai Tokerau, Waikato, the Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, the Wellington region and Te Tau Ihu. The selected projects were undertaking a range of environmental restoration activities, and the fund holders include Iwi, NGOs, and councils. The sample of projects which were included in the three case studies is provided in Appendix B, with project descriptions in Appendix C.

The engagement was mostly undertaken through in-person site visits to the projects, with online engagement used where site visits were not feasible. Teams of two evaluators completed interviews with a total of 84 participants. Interviewees included Iwi governance board members; regional stakeholders from environmental NGOs and local government; organisation CEOs; project managers; and project kaimahi.

The evaluation team conducted a desk-based review of available documentation related to the case study themes and the projects included in the sample. This included regional or national strategy documents and plans, project monitoring data (where available), and project planning and delivery documents.

1.3.4.3 Quantitative data

An administrative dataset combining the project reporting data from all five participating agencies as at 31 March 2024 was supplied to *Allen + Clarke*. After removing project codes allocated to the administration of the J4N funds, the dataset described 529 projects in total with quarterly metrics beginning December 2019 through to March 2024 comprising 18 data points for each project.

The dataset included metrics related to the funding investment distribution, employment statistics (including employment starts, hours worked, people currently employed) and environmental outputs related to biodiversity, freshwater and pest control.

This report has included these data where relevant. Appendix D discusses some of the quality issues with this dataset and how these were managed.

1.3.5 Analysis of data

Qualitative data were sorted and analysed by case study theme, participant group (e.g., Jobs for Nature project personnel, J4N kaimahi); and by the organisation or sector they represent (e.g., local government, NGO, Iwi/hapū). These data were analysed against a coding frame, based on the KEQs, criteria and standards of performance framework, to identify emerging themes and sub-themes.

The evaluation team reviewed the contextual and project documents against the coding frame used for the analysis of interview data. This enabled cross-referencing, integration, and synthesis of information from both the documents and the interviews to inform the development of findings.

Secondary data sources (i.e., monitoring data) were arranged under the KEQs and have been presented within the narrative as descriptive statistics.

1.3.6 Methodological strengths and limitations

Year two of the evaluation of the Jobs for Nature programme has several strengths:

1. The thematic case study method has provided context-rich qualitative information from stakeholders in various roles within the Jobs for Nature ecosystem, across a range of project types and fund holder organisations. The approach has enabled the evaluation team to explore how projects are delivered 'on the ground' and to tease out specific details related to the three themes of social impact, freshwater, and climate change resilience. .

2. The key strength of the evaluation approach is the opportunity to hear directly from those involved in the delivery of funded projects. The evaluation centres the voices of Jobs for Nature project personnel, including using direct quotes in this report to illustrate the evidence gathered.

Limitations of the evaluation methodology include:

1. The quantitative data has several limitations. The different funding streams and project outcomes required differing metrics to be recorded for reporting purposes. At times these metrics were overlapped or measured slightly different things. For example, hours worked and employment starts were well reported and common across all projects, whereas other metrics (such as hectares planted) were reported differently. There was also inconsistency in the extent to which projects metrics were entered by the funded projects. More details on administrative data quality are provided in Appendix D.
2. The evaluation team took a purposive sampling approach to select the projects sampled under each thematic case study. The team included a cross-section of projects and interview participants. The non-random sampling technique means that findings are not necessarily generalisable.

3. Most of the Jobs for Nature projects are still in delivery or are just coming to an end. While the delivery of environmental outputs is observable, the anticipated environmental outcomes are not likely to be realised until the medium-long term and may not be possible to capture within the timeframe of this evaluation.

1.3.7 Evaluative judgements

This is the second interim report of the three-year evaluation. This document reports on findings from the second year of data collection, reporting qualitative data from the three thematic case studies and analysis of quantitative administrative data. Given there is still a final year of data collection activities to be undertaken, this interim report does not attempt to make summative judgements.

In the third year of this evaluation, when all data collection activities have been completed, the evaluation will assess the data against the rubric below to assign a rating for each evaluation theme (i.e., effectiveness, relevance, coherence, additionality, sustainability). The accompanying narrative for each performance criterion will profile the key areas of success and identify areas for change or further development.

Table 2. Rubric for the evaluation of the Jobs for Nature programme

Emerging	Enabled	Established	Embedded
Evidence of emerging performance. Evidence is patchy or not clear overall. This may be because it cannot be seen yet (that is, has not yet had time to emerge) rather than the performance being unsatisfactory	Evidence of fair performance. Some positive achievements and some weaknesses but these are not 'deal breakers'. Heading in the right direction	Evidence of good performance overall. May have some weaknesses which are easily rectified	Evidence of very good to excellent performance on this aspect, which is embedded as business as usual. No weaknesses of any consequence. Some examples of exemplary performance

Findings

2 Effectiveness – is the programme achieving its objectives?

This section reports interim findings on the extent to which Jobs for Nature has achieved the changes it set out to make for people and places. It considers whether the programme has achieved its overall objectives. This section addresses five evaluation questions:

1. To what extent have the anticipated medium-term outcomes of the J4N programme been achieved?
2. To what extent and in what ways is the programme working for regional communities, Māori and the environment?
3. To what extent are there synergy effects between projects?
4. What factors may have supported or hindered successful implementation?
5. What unintended results have been generated (positive/negative)?

2.1 Employment outcomes

2.1.1 J4N created jobs and helped sustain businesses through COVID-19

Keeping people in the community employed and/or in training over the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery period was an important intended outcome of the J4N programme. All J4N projects had a focus on creating jobs.

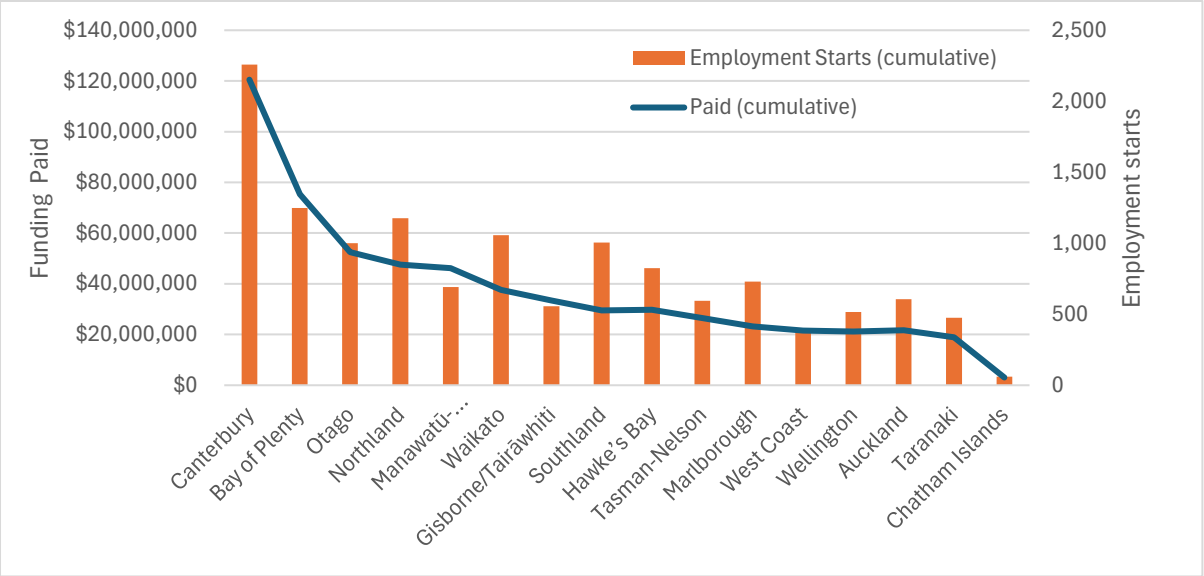
Two metrics are of use in understanding the direct impact of J4N on employment: employment starts and hours worked.[1] The employment starts metric is a relatively crude measure that does not distinguish between full and part-time work and may double count employees who are part-time across multiple related projects. However, it is a well reported metric and has a consistent definition across J4N funding agencies and funding streams.

Jobs for Nature has had an impact on employment. J4N provided 14,600 people with employment opportunities, against a target of 11,000 to 13,000, and delivered 10.7 million hours of work.

[1] Employment starts is defined as "the number of employees working on a Jobs for Nature funded project who have started employment with an employer since the previous reference date i.e., since the previous month or quarter. An employment start is an employer-employee match, regardless of whether it is on full time or part-time basis, and it includes all employment types, including self-employed people and contractors. A job filled by a person employed on a casual contract is counted when the employment relationship begins, not each time the employee does some work under the casual contract." (Jobs for Nature Data Template Guidance, April 2024).

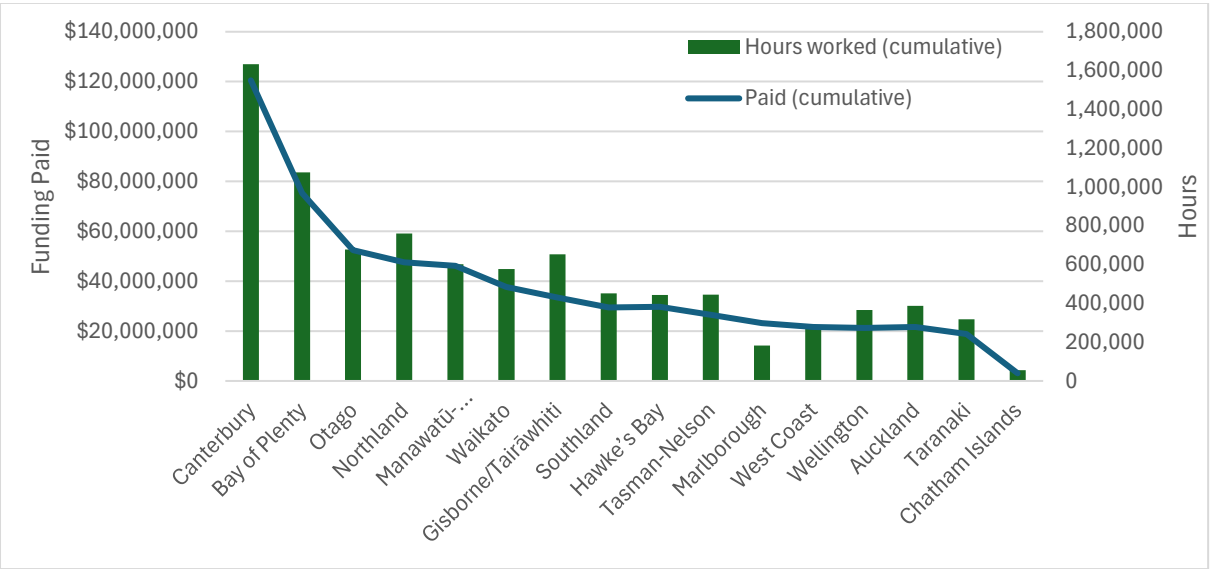
Employment starts by region (Figure 3) varied from over 2,300 in Canterbury to 60 for the Chatham Islands. The trend generally matched the J4N investment into the region and the variations are likely a function of differing funding priorities, agency reporting requirements, and inconsistent reporting.

Figure 3. Cumulative J4N funding paid and employment starts, March 2024



Hours worked more closely mirrored the J4N investment into each region (Figure 4), ranging from 1.6 million hours worked over 4 years in Canterbury to 54,000 hours worked in Chatham Islands. There were some differences between regions in the hours worked and employment starts relative to the funding paid. For example, Northland and Gisborne/Tairāwhiti reported more hours worked relative to funding compared to other regions.

Figure 4. Cumulative J4N funding paid and hours worked, March 2024



Combined, the employment starts and hours worked (FTEs) will have had a significant impact on provincial economies through direct economic stimulation via wages, equipment/capital expenditure, and services.

The employment impacts are particularly significant given the impacts of COVID-19. J4N employed people whose jobs were displaced by COVID-19. In particular, J4N personnel noted that the programme helped to sustain nature tourism operators who were impacted by COVID restrictions.

> *"J4N helped through COVID as we had no people coming to our region. It provided meaningful employment for our young people. Our next generation has come through. J4N has placed us in a good place for business with our nature tourism aspirations. It has accelerated progress, in a time when we might have floundered with the impact of COVID on this region." Project Manager*

> "*I think it was a time where COVID had just hit, and so people were losing jobs and there was no job security…We got a supervisor and we sort of more targeted those that I guess need a redeployment or employment in general." Iwi member*

2.1.2 J4N provided people with skills, knowledge and capability to improve the environment

J4N provided people with formal education and training opportunities. J4N work can be hard, and readiness for employment took training and skill development. Those projects that thrived invested in training.

> *"I think it's given them such a breadth of experience as well and that was one of the beauties of the programme; it wasn't just, you know, cuts and tracks to maintain the fence. It was pest management, species, infrastructure, a whole range. And so, you know, they could actually go and apply for a range of different jobs." Project Manager*

Over 1,100 people completed formal training (Table 3). This is likely a large underestimate as only 9% of the J4N projects filled out this metric and across the J4N projects interviewed all reported multiple training initiatives. Similarly, the 512 NZQA credits reportedly earned as part of the J4N programme is likely a significant under-report. Taken together, however, it does suggest that some regions were more active than others in supporting kaimahi through training and education (or at least more active in reporting on training), with Bay of Plenty the most active, alongside Gisborne/Tairāwhiti, and West Coast. No projects in Southland or Marlborough reported on the training or NZQA credit metrics.

Table 3. Headcount of formal training and NZQA credits earned, March 2024

Region	Cumulative as at March 2024	
	Number of people who completed formal training	Number of NZQA credits earned
Auckland	48	
Bay of Plenty	323	199
Canterbury	53	35
Chatham Islands	10	
Gisborne/Tairāwhiti	167	33
Hawke's Bay	53	
Manawatū-Whanganui	52	51
Northland	98	30
Otago	9	78
Southland		
Taranaki	7	30
Tasman-Nelson	42	
Marlborough		
West Coast	177	
Waikato	28	56
Wellington	61	
Total	**1,128**	**512**

Common training for kaimahi included equipment use (e.g. chainsaw, 4WD/Quadbike, construction tools), pest control (e.g. trapping, poison use), health and safety, and water skills (freshwater diving, boat safety and skipper licences).

> "*The team has learnt so many additional skills. These include bush skills, offroad driving, heavy machinery (for example, weed harvesting). They also do all of the scientific monitoring, plants, fish, pests. They have also learnt about firearms and poisons, water safety, diving...One of our people gained a Masters in environment based on Uwhi. We have international indigenous rangers." Operations Manager*

J4N also enabled people to learn about ecosystems and their importance for climate resilience, biodiversity, rongoā, and mahinga kai.

> *"I looked at wetlands before as just a hole with water, I didn't see the whole web of life. I just saw a hole and a puddle…I didn't see it was everything going on inside it…it is its own world." Kaimahi*

> *"We see thousands of dotterel birds…I knew nothing about them…we learnt about the birds through monitoring. We caught the chicks and got to catch and tag them, and are now qualified to do the work." Kaimahi*

One project focused on developing the technical capacity of their Iwi team. They wanted to train and upskill their people to deliver the range of services required to maintain their lakes, including scientific monitoring, licensing, biosecurity management, weed and pest control, planting and restoration. Through the J4N project, kaimahi learned how to dive and do lake monitoring. People gained their boating license, and now operate across the lake on all activities to maintain lake health, including killing lake weeds, monitoring the health of native species, and educating schools and the public. The project worked with the regional and local councils, delivering services that were cost effective and of high quality. Both councils eventually recognised the value of maintaining all their contracts for the lakes with the J4N Iwi project team because of the professionalism of the delivered services.

2.1.3 It is difficult to determine the extent to which the distribution of J4N funding across regions matched needs

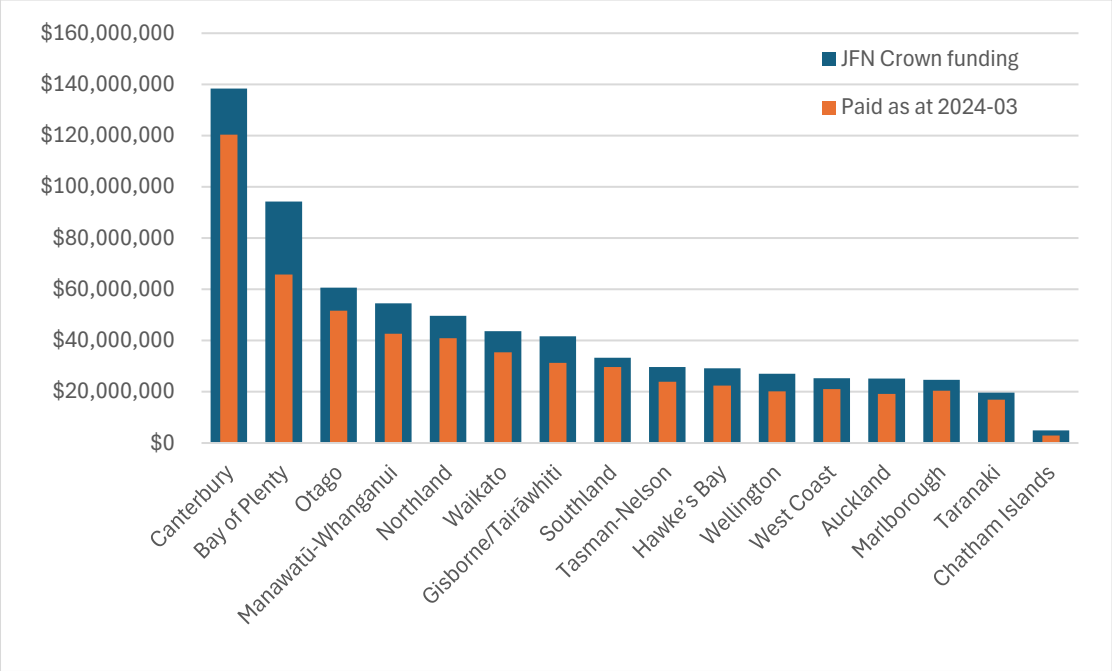
Jobs for Nature placed importance on reaching populations who have historically experienced disadvantage, including regional communities, Māori and young people. J4N projects engaged diverse groups in environmental restoration work, including tangata whenua, rangatahi and school children, the disability sector, primary sector forestry and farming communities, and the scientific community.

> *"We're a diverse community and every one of those people have had access to the fund. So we've upskilled and became connected. We are closer, more connected." Project Manager*

Figure 5 shows the total investment into the 77% of projects indicating a social impact component to their work (this was typically alongside environmental impacts). Of the total of $702 million allocated, projects in Canterbury had the largest proportion of funding ($139 million allocated and $120 million paid), with the Bay of Plenty next ($94 million allocated and $66 million paid). Projects across the remaining regions were allocated between $61 million and $20 million, with between $52 million and $17 million paid. Projects in the Chatham Islands had $4.9 million allocated and $3 million paid. Through supporting job creation and the purchase of goods and services, this investment into regional economies will have had multiple synergistic benefits to regional communities.

> *"The local economy benefitted here in Wainuiomata. We buy fuel, we invest in the community who can afford to buy kai and we all do our bit to restore the environment and invest locally." Project Manager*

Figure 5. Funding allocated and paid for projects reporting social impact metrics by region, March 2024



It is difficult to determine the extent to which the distribution of J4N funding across regions matched needs. In addition to social needs, the funding was allocated to meet environmental priorities which may not mirror social needs. An additional complicating factor is that over the course of the J4N programme, COVID-19 had differential impacts across regions.

Table 4 shows regions ranked by the number of J4N jobs created (FTEs) with each region's corresponding J4N employment starts, level of deprivation ranking (1=most deprived), and Māori unemployment rate ranking for the five regions with the highest rates (1=highest unemployment rate). The number of jobs created does not generally map to the areas with the greatest socio-economic needs. While comparing cumulative hours and employment starts over the time J4N has been operating to 'point in time' deprivation and unemployment data is not perfect, it does give a sense of the relative social impact and better allows a regional comparison.

Canterbury and Otago stand out as regions that achieved a high number of employment FTEs but have relatively low levels of socio-economic deprivation. In terms of funding, it is notable that over $50 million of the $120.5 million of J4N funding paid to projects in Canterbury was for two projects: the 'National wilding conifer control programme to boost regional economies and employment' ($40 million) and Te Manahuna Aoraki Jobs for Nature Project ($10 million). The West Coast had lower FTEs and employment starts relative to the high levels of community deprivation.

Table 4. Total project FTE and deprivation ranking by region, March 2024

Region	Project employment		IMD rank (2018)[a]	Māori unemployment rate rank (March 2024)[b]
	FTE	Employment starts		
Canterbury	1046	2,257	12	
Bay of Plenty	689	1,249	6	4
Northland	487	1,175	2	2
Otago	434	1,001	15	
Gisborne/Tairāwhiti	418	555	1	
Manawatū-Whanganui	385	690	3	5
Waikato	370	1,057	5	1
Hawke's Bay	290	1,005	7	
Tasman-Nelson	285	594	14	
Southland	284	824	10	
West Coast	248	606	4	
Auckland	235	517	9	3
Taranaki	203	475	8	
Wellington	177	394	11	
Marlborough	117	730	13	
Chatham Islands	35	60		

[a] Index of Multiple Deprivation across multiple indices (employment, income, crime, housing, health, education, and access to services): https://imdmap.auckland.ac.nz/. Higher rank = higher deprivation.

[b] Household Labour Force Survey: Labour Force Status by Ethnic Group by Regional Council (Annual-Mar) March 2024: https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz. Higher rank = higher unemployment rate.

Northland and Bay of Plenty projects reported high employment starts, which, with the high deprivation and Māori unemployment rates, will have been highly beneficial. Gisborne/Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay, and Manawatū-Whanganui had average reported numbers of FTEs and employment starts, but all three regions experiencing relatively high deprivation. The Waikato region saw a marginal social impact with moderate FTEs and high employment starts relative to a high Māori unemployment rate and high deprivation ranking.

2.2 Environmental outcomes

J4N projects are delivering substantial environmental restoration activities. The outcomes of these activities in terms of natural environmental improvements will take time to realise. However, there is evidence of emerging benefits for healthy waterways, biodiversity, climate change resilience and cultural values.

2.2.1 J4N has invested in freshwater restoration and climate resilience activities

A total of $391 million was allocated to projects engaged in freshwater restoration (typically in addition to other nature-related work) with $299 million (76%) of this was paid to projects as at March 2024 (Table 5). Projects in Manawatū-Whanganui and Canterbury received the most funding for projects indicating freshwater restoration.

A total of $706 million was allocated to projects with a climate resilience element (Ecosystem Restoration, Freshwater Restoration, Pest Control of Animals, and Pest Control of Plants) with $568 million (80%) of this paid to projects as at March 2024 (Table 5). Projects in Canterbury and Bay of Plenty received the most funding for projects indicating climate resilience.

Table 5. Total J4N funding and amount paid by region, March 2024[(a)]

Region	Total J4N funding		Total paid	
	Freshwater restoration	Climate resilience	Freshwater restoration	Climate resilience
Auckland	$19,838,110	$25,201,844	$15,422,183	$19,161,686
Bay of Plenty	$27,694,079	$94,273,555	$21,849,844	$65,752,153
Canterbury	$44,266,027	$138,447,928	$30,943,718	$120,351,257
Chatham Islands	$1,736,635	$3,915,811	$1,183,153	$2,656,269
Gisborne/Tairāwhiti	$34,448,427	$41,696,816	$26,968,119	$31,237,625
Hawke's Bay	$22,587,251	$32,741,354	$18,273,278	$25,055,649
Manawatū-Whanganui	$44,422,643	$55,621,510	$33,563,903	$43,766,440
Marlborough	$9,939,000	$24,686,559	$5,832,957	$20,475,516
Northland	$31,005,154	$49,684,850	$24,085,163	$40,938,285
Otago	$35,222,148	$60,612,701	$27,184,936	$51,647,325
Southland	$7,695,000	$33,256,390	$5,170,839	$29,663,549
Taranaki	$16,223,585	$19,772,311	$14,112,341	$16,973,605
Tasman-Nelson	$23,894,831	$29,657,691	$18,769,445	$23,892,305
Waikato	$33,550,961	$43,711,570	$26,559,623	$35,397,595
Wellington	$26,309,942	$27,082,182	$19,730,174	$20,141,174
West Coast	$12,371,282	$25,338,738	$9,460,171	$21,044,202
Total	**$391,205,074**	**$705,701,810**	**$299,109,847**	**$568,154,634**

[(a)] These are not mutually exclusive categories. Projects can have multiple outcomes (e.g. a single project can have social impact, freshwater restoration, and climate resilience outcomes).

2.2.2 J4N is delivering significant planting, pest and weed control

Planting, pest control, weed control, and fencing have contributed to large areas of vegetation being established and restored.

The metrics for these outputs within the J4N administration data provide an indication of the level of activity. Data quality was variable, with some projects inconsistently reporting metrics over the lifetime of their project. This was compounded by changing/tuning of metrics, especially in the first year of the J4N programme, funding agencies requiring variations in reporting of similar metrics (e.g. metrics broken down by pest species versus a single combined metric), and the need to re-treat or maintain areas meaning area was either counted multiple times or erroneously just the once.

Plantings

Nearly 11 million plants were reported as being planted as at March 2024. Figure 6 shows the areas restored by plantings which include 5,562 hectares of freshwater land under restoration and 8,112 hectares of other land being restored. J4N project personnel described changes that they had observed through these planting activities.

> *"I love the trees, growing them and filling the spaces with our taonga. Looking back at the thousands we have planted, that provides kai for the manu, bringing back the insects, helping clean the water." Hapū member*

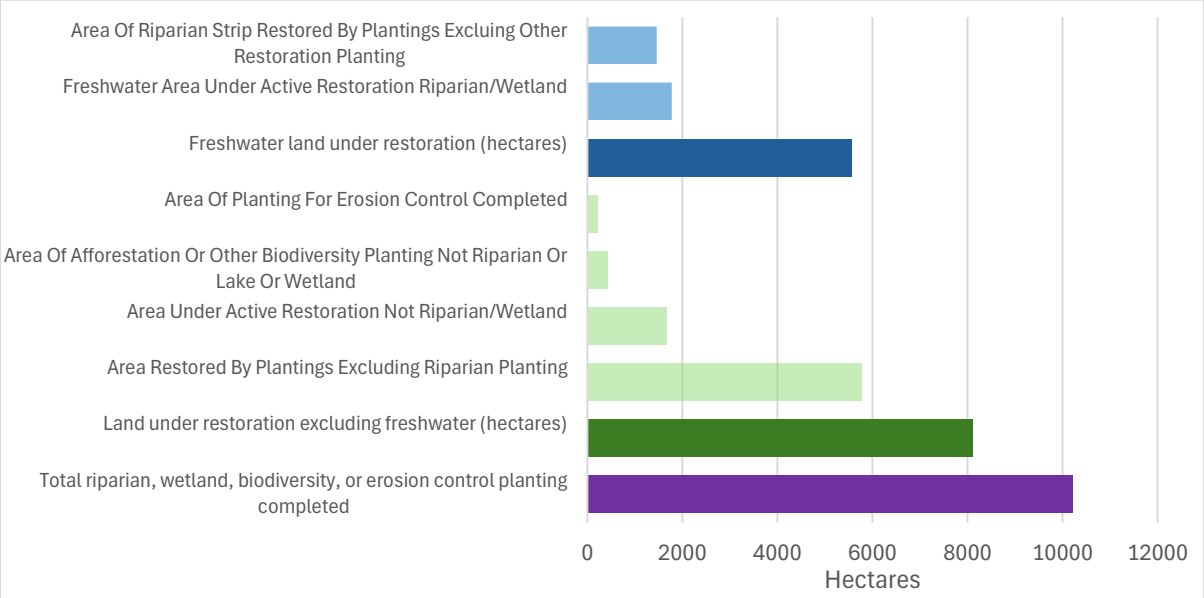
> *"There were no seedlings, no birds, no pigeons...the logging, when we smashed the trees down the birds left...that was 40 years ago...now natives are coming back...you can see the canopies." Operations Manager*

The individual metrics for completed plantings ranged from 225 hectares reported for erosion control, 438 hectares for afforestation or other biodiversity planting (excluding riparian or lake or wetland), 1,457 hectares for riparian strip restored (excluding other restoration planting), 2,327 hectares for riparian, lake, or wetlands (a combined metric) and 5,277 hectares restored by plantings excluding riparian planting. Through these activities, J4N project personnel discussed how they had learned to manage freshwater planting, which in turn offered wider cultural benefits for Iwi and hapū.

> "*We learnt to plant closer together in wetlands to shade out weeds. This started as restoring the mauri of Moawhitu, to restore the pātaka kai, tuna. It is so much more." Hapū member*

Projects reported either the last two metrics (riparian, lake, or wetlands and plantings excluding riparian planting) or the previous three metrics (erosion control, afforestation or other biodiversity planting and riparian strip restored), so these were combined into total riparian, wetland, biodiversity, or erosion control planting completed, showing at least 10,224 hectares were planted.

Figure 6. Freshwater, natives, and erosion control plantings, March 2024

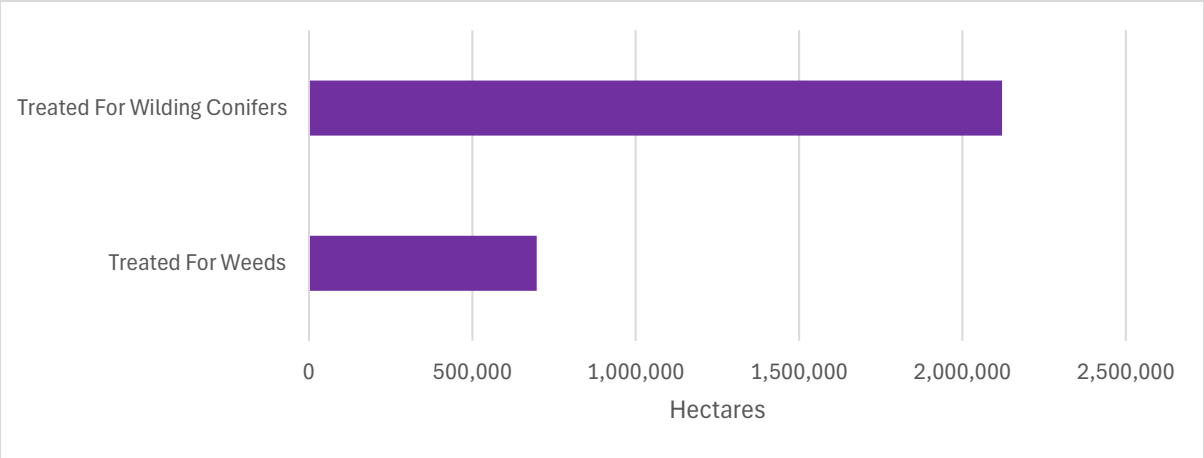


Weed and wilding conifer control

Figure 7 shows that over 2,000,000 hectares were treated for wildling conifers and nearly 700,000 hectares were treated for weeds. Given that the plantings and weeds/wildlings plant areas would overlap, these were not combined. However, they show the significant area being treated and restored to improve the natural environment. An example of a J4N project that was restoring lakes highlights the hard work put into clearing wildings.

> *"We had to revert to old school ways of tackling pest trees because conservation volunteers are not allowed to use chainsaws and poisons. We ringbarked the wildlings, used handsaws and we were effective." Project Manager*

Figure 7. Area treated for weeds and wildling conifers, March 2024



Pest control

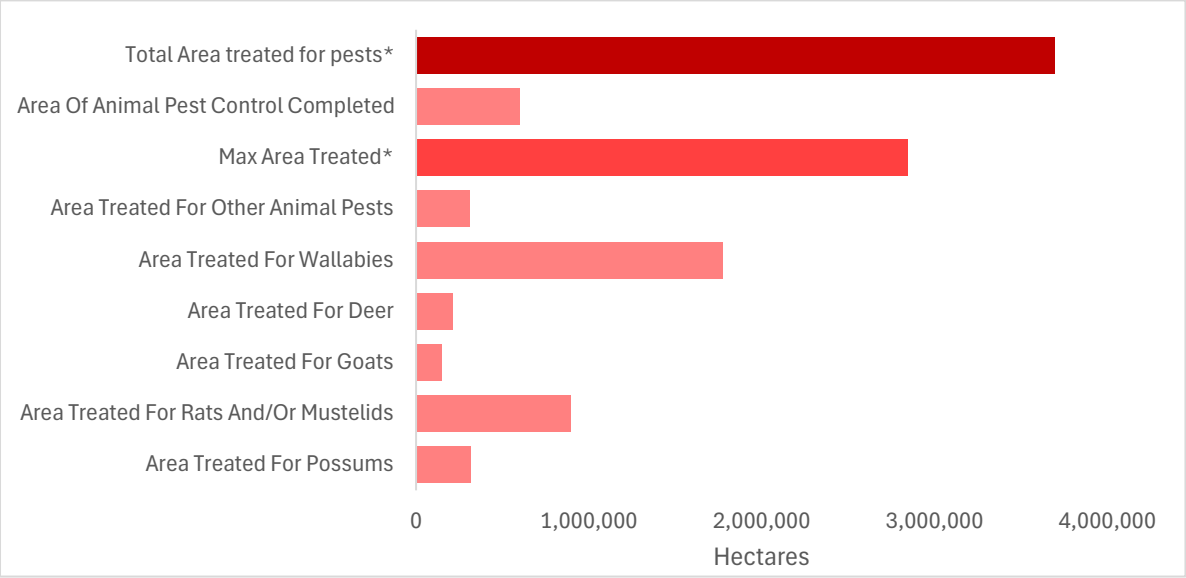
Figure 8 shows the total area of land treated for pests over time as at March 2024. Care must be taken in the interpretation of this metric as this is not a 'one and done' scenario as blocks of land typically need to be continuously monitored and treated as pest numbers increase over time.

> *"The annual monitoring of matuku hūrepo (australasian bittern) in the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands, shows the effectiveness of the predator control network in protecting this critically threatened species. It is now showing signs of increase after 11 years of continued monitoring, one of very few populations worldwide on the increase." Project Manager*

Continued pest management has seen an increase in banded dotterel chick survival. For example, a J4N project is supporting an established network of volunteers that service traps and bait stations, undertaking more intense monitoring during bird breeding season. There is a reported increase of annual hatching success from only 3% of nests to a high of 57%[2]

In total, over 3.7 million hectares had been treated for pests, of which a significant proportion was land that was treated multiple times. These metrics reflects the work or resource put into pest treatment rather than the absolute area treated.

Figure 8. Individual and combined metrics for pest control, March 2024



*Calculated metrics. Max Area treated is the maximum of area treated for possums, rats and/or mustelids, goats, deer, wallabies, and other animal pests. Total area treated is the maximum of Max Area treated and Area of Animal Pest Control Completed. This was done as it appears that providers tended to report one or the other (i.e. broken down by different pest species) or as a combined total. Significant planting occurred in wetlands but only covered a small proportion of wetland areas

[2] https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/news/greater-wellington-supports-banded-dotterels-increasing-hatching-stats-with-new-strategy/

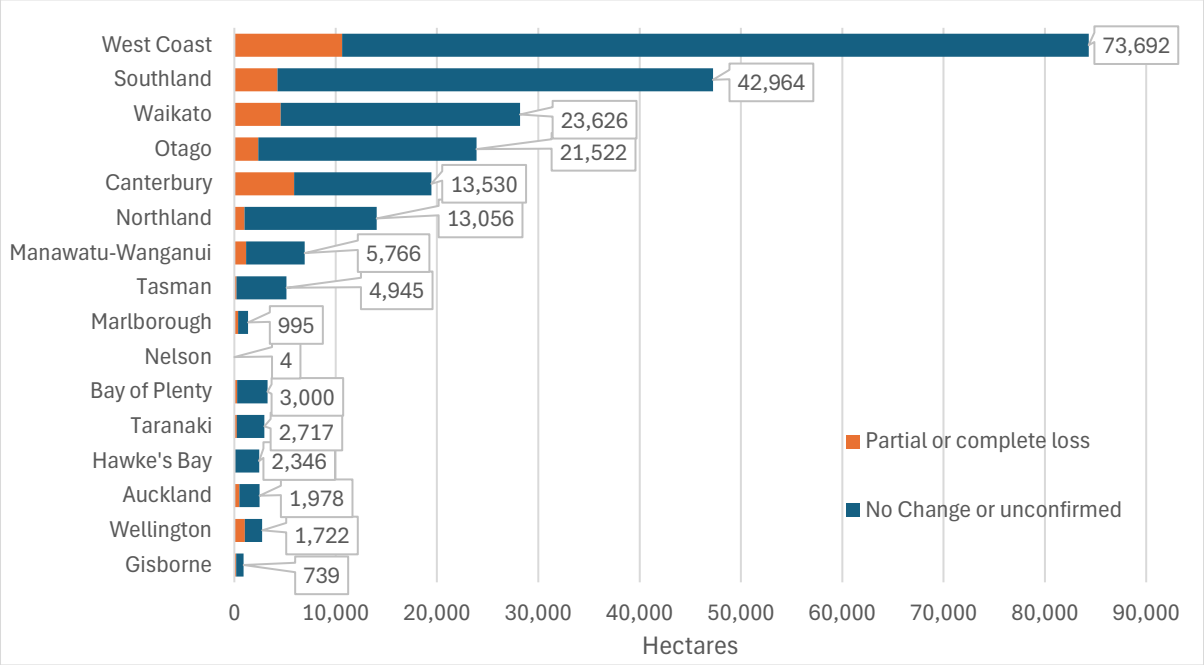
2.2.3 Substantial planting occurred in wetlands but only covered a small proportion of wetland areas

Jobs for Nature's focus on the freshwater restoration reflects the significant loss of wetlands. By 2008, wetlands had declined to 10.1% of the estimated pre-human area of 2.5 million hectares.[3] This has impacted tangata whenua ability to engage in activities that were traditionally undertaken in wetlands, such as gathering kai.

> *"We haven't been able to gather kai because of water quality issues. " Hapū member*

More recently, over the period 2001–2016 just under 33,000 hectares of wetland was partially or completely lost, leaving only 212,000 hectares unchanged or unconfirmed (Figure 9). The West Coast and Southland together held over half (55%) of New Zealand's wetlands in 2016.

Figure 9. Area of wetland lost by region, 2001–2016

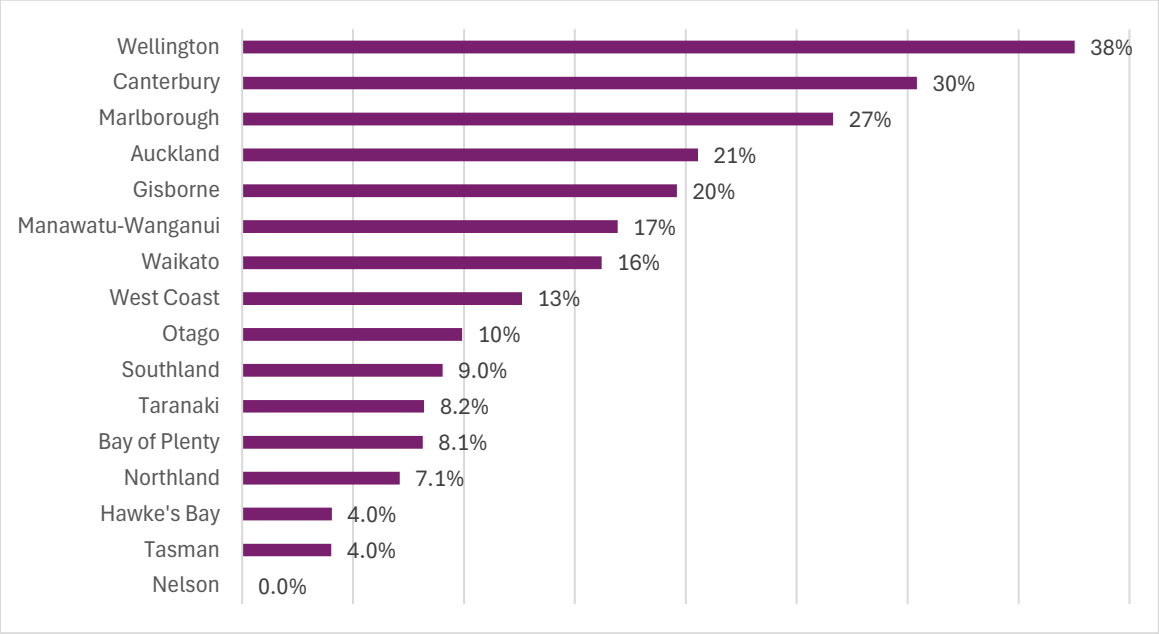


Source: https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/wetland-extent

Figure 10 shows how the regions differ in terms of the area of freshwater wetland partially or completely lost as a percentage of the total freshwater wetland in the region over 2001–2016. Wellington, Canterbury and Marlborough lost the highest proportion of their wetland over this period.

[3] Source: https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/wetland-extent

Figure 10. Proportion of freshwater wetland area partially or completely lost, 2001–2016



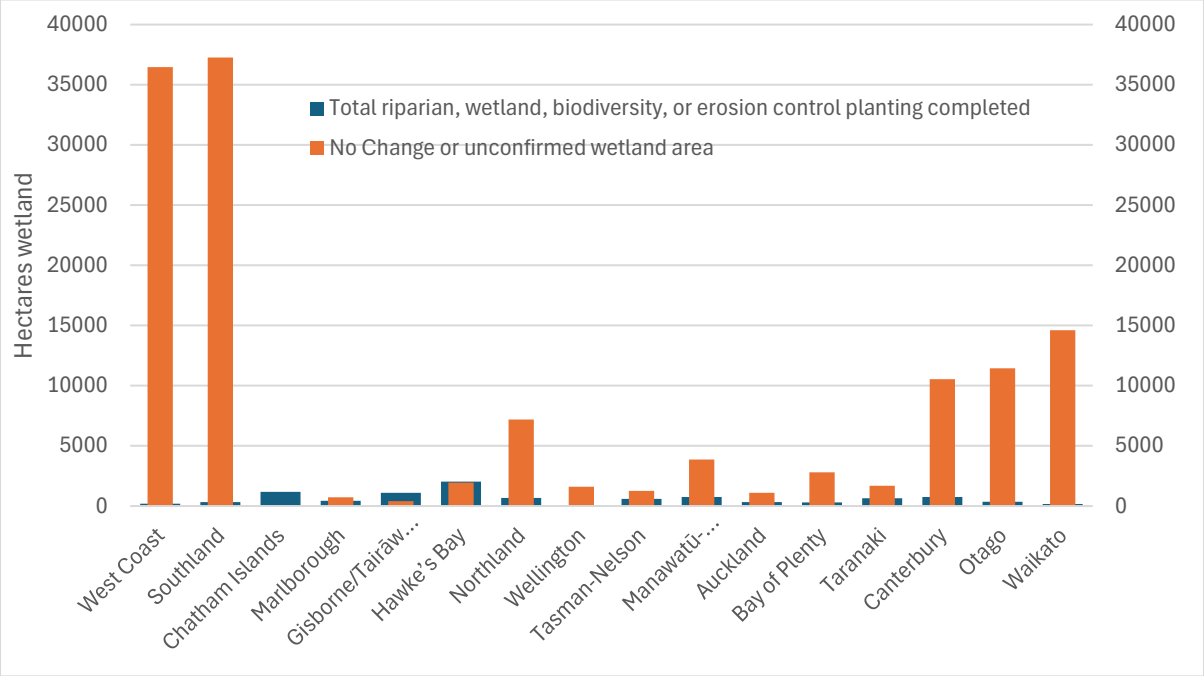
Source: **https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/wetland-extent**

Figure 11 shows the 9,901 hectares of J4N freshwater and erosion related planting as at March 2024 against the area of wetland remaining in 2016. The area planted did not match the distribution of wetlands across the regions. For example, the reported plantings in Hawke's Bay (2,206 hectares) matched the number of freshwater wetlands in the region. On the other hand, the West Coast and Southland which had by far the largest wetland areas, reported very small areas had been planted out (200 and 334 hectares respectively).

An example of freshwater management restoration is the Iwi-led landscape scale restoration projects of six lakes. This involves wetland restoration, pest eradication, beehive placement, and water monitoring. The J4N project has enabled kaitiakitanga and supported Iwi aspirations to improve the wellbeing of their taonga tuku iho. The J4N programme has enabled investment in the creation of new resources and tools to support freshwater restoration, such as the use of harakeke woven mates to smother weed.

> *"What we are learning from the lake is plants that need to be there are already there, we just need to get rid of the other stuff…The lake tells us what plants are good for it…the weeds grow in thick mat, which the uwhi smothers…If you lift up the uwhi, there are heaps of kakahi and koura…it provides a good habitat for these taonga species and protects them from carp." Operational Manager*

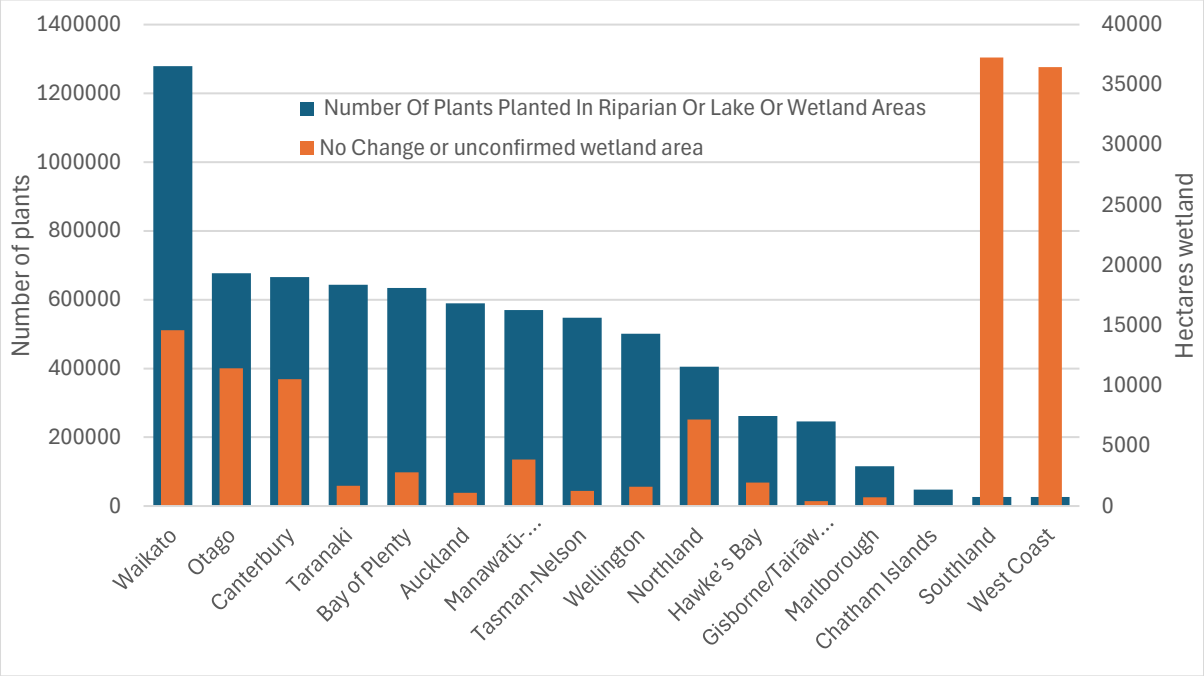
Figure 11. Total area of riparian, wetland, biodiversity, or erosion control planting completed and total unchanged wetland area by region, March 2024[(a)]



[(a)] This is a combined indicator from area restored by plantings excluding riparian planting; area of afforestation or other biodiversity planting not riparian or lake or wetland; area of land protected; area of riparian strip restored by plantings excluding other restoration planting; area of riparian or lake or wetlands planting completed.

While the area of J4N riparian, wetland, biodiversity, or erosion control planting reported as completed (Figure 11) did not map well to the regional wetland areas, the number of plants planted in riparian or lake or wetland areas (Figure 12) followed a different pattern. Excluding Southland and West Coast (which had few wetland planting projects), projects in the Waikato, Otago, and Canterbury reported the largest number of freshwater plantings mapping closely to the total extent of the wetlands in those regions. Northland had the largest number of plantings in riparian, lake, or wetland areas relative to the size of the wetland.

Figure 12. Total number of plants planted in riparian or lake or wetland areas and total unchanged wetland area by region, March 2024



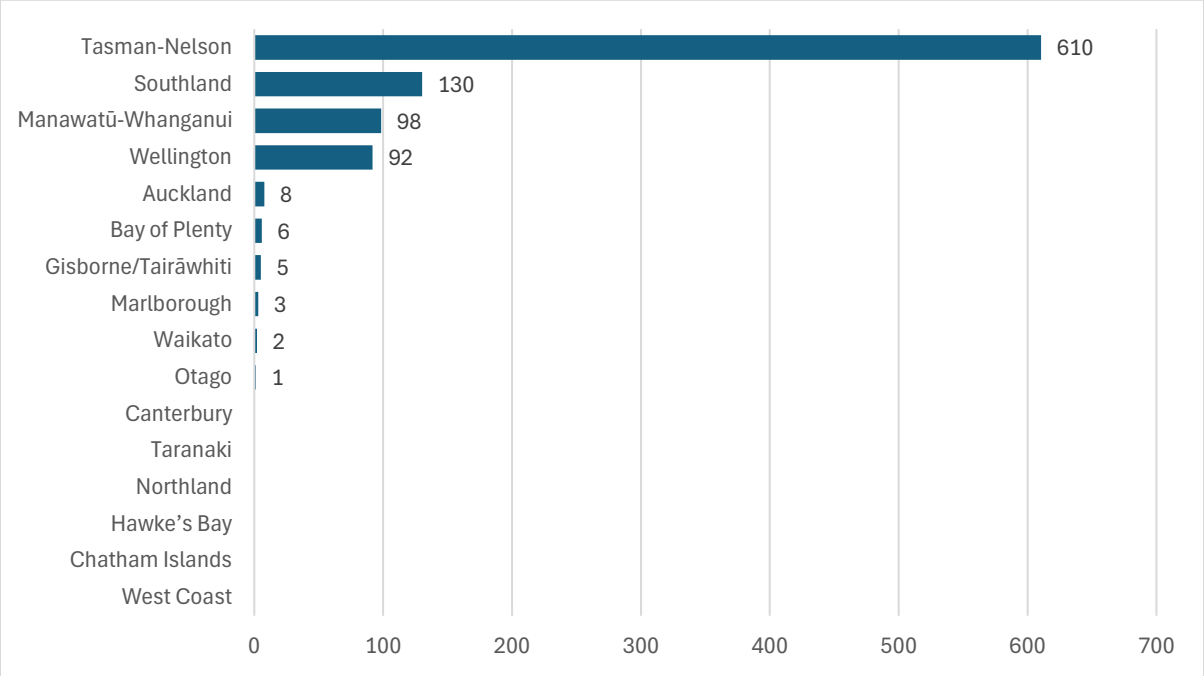
2.2.4 J4N contributed to restoring fish passage

Another metric that had large regional variations was the number of fish passage barriers modified or removed (Figure 13) under the J4N programme. Unlike freshwater wetlands, there was no simple regional summary of the water courses requiring fish passage remediation (e.g. rivers and streams), although wetland extent will be highly correlated with other watercourse length and volume. Tasman-Nelson reported the largest number of restored fish passages (610), followed by Southland (130), Manawatū-Whanganui (98), and Wellington (92). In total, 955 fish passage barriers were moved or modified. Six regions did not report data on fish passage remediation.

The Te Hoiere project is an example of J4N providing support to reduce barriers for the freshwater fish in the waterways to reach the sea. Catchment condition surveys and modelling work with NIWA were reported to inform priorities for the fish remediation programme.[4]

[4] https://www.tehoiere.org.nz/about/catchment-actions/fish-barriers

Figure 13. Number of fish passage barriers modified or removed, March 2024



2.2.5 There is evidence to suggest that J4N will strengthen resilience to climate change

Over the long term, J4N is expected to contribute to efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change through supporting carbon sequestration and reducing the impact of flood and fire events. While it is too soon to expect results against these long term outcomes, J4N projects are facilitating changes to more sustainable land use which should contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation over the long term. Examples of these changes include:

- The significant planting of native species, as discussed in Section 2.2.2, contributing to carbon sequestration, erosion control, and helping to control forest fires.
- The restoration of wetlands, as discussed in Section 2.2.3, contributing to a reduction in the impact of flooding through absorbing rain and releasing water gradually.
- Changes in land use practices, including to the management of farmland and forestry blocks, helping to diversify land use and mitigate loss of biodiversity.
- Contributing to environmental capability building to support communities with the capacity to develop local responses to climate change.

Project managers and kaimahi described many changes that they attributed to their J4N project which should contribute to climate change resilience.

> *"Farmers are motivated by the notion of legacy, and leaving the planet in a better state …across farms, forestry blocks, restoration projects, Jobs for Nature is being talked about." Regional Council*

2.2.6 J4N projects were impacted by extreme weather events

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of severe weather events. During the period of J4N, regions were impacted by two severe events, Cyclone Hale and Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023. These events impacted the delivery of J4N projects, with flooding and landslides affecting project infrastructure, road closures impacting access, and kaimahi facing their own losses to property and other assets. In addition, these events as well as droughts impacted incomes in farming communities. J4N projects undertaking catchment care work reported that famers were not always able to meet financial contributions to the subsidised fencing and planting offered as part of J4N freshwater improvement projects.

The importance of Jobs for Nature's contribution to climate change resilience was illustrated when some J4N projects were impacted by climate-related extreme weather events in early 2023. In particular, Cyclone Gabrielle impacted projects in Hawke's Bay.

For example, one J4N project which employs people from the intellectually disabled community had to evacuate 100 people from one of their worksites due to the cyclone. The project manager described Cyclone Gabrielle as a disruptive and traumatic climate event that increased the levels of anxiety and stress in their community.

> *"When the cyclone hit we just put our tools down and evacuated. The nursery was by the sea, and it flooded. The confluence of the Tukituki, Ngarororo and Clive [rivers] came together in that flood…There were mountains of silt." Project Manager*

Responding to the situation required care and planning from the management team, particularly due to the vulnerability of the J4N kaimahi. Being able to continue to work on the J4N project was described as an important part of their recovery.

> *"Structure and order are very important to our residents. They had been displaced from their homes, and no longer had work or workshops. J4N was meaningful, purposeful and so helpful." Project Manager*

> *"We were able to keep riparian planting in the tributary...we were lucky, we didn't lose as many plants as we thought we would. Our major thing was making sure the people were supported, so we have an amazing team of support workers." Project Manager*

Despite the enormous challenges presented by such weather events, J4N projects were able to deliver significant environmental work.

Landslides and flooding impacted on the J4N projects at Tangoio in Hawke's Bay. The cyclone had a devastating impacted on the marae, housing for whānau and the lands. This project was unavailable to meet for the evaluation, however despite the enormous challenges the community were facing, they still delivered J4N Manu Tāiko work in 2023/ 2024. The Whakatipu Kaitiaki J4N programme continued to be delivered after the extreme weather

events, with rangatahi taken to the ngahere to learn pūrakau and their connections to each other and their whenua.[5]

> *"The protection and restoration of the taiao that embraces and sustains the Hapū of Maungaharuru Tangitū Trust is of paramount importance."*[6]

Jobs for Nature continued to support the aspirations of the Iwi. The continuity of work on Jobs for Nature projects provided employment to the Tangoio community, whose taiao team proudly reported planting trees, stabilising riparian areas, and maintaining possum and weed control.

2.3 Partnerships

Jobs for Nature has a strong partnership focus. The programme is administered by five government agencies and relies on the existence or establishment of delivery partnerships between central government, local government, Iwi, voluntary sector organisations, and local communities. Partnerships were considered particularly important for the many projects expected to deliver on multiple sustainable land use objectives. Where partnerships did not exist, there was an assumption that they could be put together at pace.

2.3.1 Partnerships have enabled the pooling of resources and expertise to deliver on shared visions, at scale

A holistic approach to investment across Te Tau Ihu resulted in joined-up funding for restoration at a large scale. For the Te Hoiere/Pelorus River catchment, this approach has enabled funding of environmental work from mountains to sea, with pooling of resources and expertise to deliver on a shared vision and measurable targets.

Te Hoiere is one of the river catchments under the Ngā Awa strategy that provides partnership insights. The Te Hoiere / Pelorus catchment spans 110,108 hectares. Flowing through its nine sub-catchments is an abundance of freshwater streams and rivers. Together, these watercourses sustain the land and its diverse ecosystems, the Motuweka / Havelock and Māhakipaoa estuary receiving environments, and ultimately, the Te Hoiere / Pelorus sound.

The catchment falls within the Marlborough Region, and is bordered by the Mt Richmond Forest Park in the South – Southwest, and the Marlborough Sounds in the North – North East. Te Hoiere / Pelorus River is the largest river catchment that flows into the Marlborough Sounds. The regional council described the current environmental quality of Te Hoiere catchment is good but was deteriorating.

There is a holistic approach to the investment resulting in the five central agencies investing in the restoration of waterways across the whole of Te Tau Ihu and funding restoration at a very large scale. For the Te Hoiere catchment the landscape approach has enabled funding

[5] https://tangoio.maori.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/MTT_AnnualReport-compressed-1.pdf
[6] https://tangoio.maori.nz/panui/news-opportunities/

from mountains to sea to be well used, pooling resources and expertise with a shared vision and measurable shared targets across the region.

Te Hoiere has received J4N funding under multiple projects. This includes funding under the Freshwater Improvement Fund ($1 million) to kick-start the project and undertake a Catchment Condition Survey, funding under the Essential Freshwater Fund ($175,000) to undertake whole-of-catchment hydrographic modelling, and funding under the At Risks Catchments Fund ($6.4 million) and Ngā Awa programme ($7.6 million) for ongoing restoration work. Te Hoiere also receives support through the Te Mana o to Wai Fund which provides capability development support to the Te Tau Ihu Iwi Collective (eight Iwi at the top of the South Island).

Te Hoiere has also benefited from funding from Kānoa through the Provincial Growth Fund. This has included funding for trees (One Billion Trees Programme), erosion control, and to support Iwi aspirations for rongoā and processing kānuka. The catchment restoration project demonstrates benefits from synergies between J4N projects and across other government funding programmes to tackle whole-of-catchment level environmental challenges.

Kotahitanga mō te Taiao

Te Hoiere was one of the first on-the-ground initiatives delivered under the partnership foundations established through the 2019 Kotahitanga mō Te Taiao Strategy, a strategic alliance between councils, DOC and Iwi in Te Tau Ihu. The partnership role of DOC was key in developing the strategy and bringing together the many Iwi partners, local and regional government. Kotahitanga mō te Taiao provided the platform for J4N funding agencies to come together alongside the alliance partners to plan the delivery of a unified approach to J4N environmental and employment outcomes.

> *"The groundwork for the delivery begun back in 2011 so when J4N funding became available it was mapped on to projects that had been identified as significant culturally and ecologically." Government agency*

There was a lot of work done to produce the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy. The strategy focuses on landscape-scale conservation which also brings cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits.

In 2019 Kotahitanga mō te Taiao partnerships led by DOC and Iwi completed a strategy that had a focus on landscape-scale conservation which also brought cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits. Kotahitanga mō te Taiao began that journey in 2011.

Having Iwi co-lead enabled insights into how the landscape used to be, and a vision of how it might be restored, and shared values based on manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, mātauranga Māori, kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, mauri and aroha.

The strategy has a clear commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and identified organisations specific responsibilities to Iwi in their activities.

> *"This Strategy has been developed to foster good faith engagement at the highest level, collaborative relationships, and to create a platform for growing a shared vision into the future"*[7]

A MOU helped formalise the relationship between Iwi and the Crown and local and regional council organisations, and it set out a commitment to collaborating towards shared outcomes.

The strategy clearly set out what the Te Tau Ihu collaboration wanted to achieve, what success looks like and how to get there. There was technical advice and workshops help to assist the development of the strategy. In 2018 three technical reports were produced based on workshops on mātauranga Māori, science workshop and articulating the value workshop of the potential benefits of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance.

Identifying the rohe, and mapping out the work, the environmental challenges and solutions, provided a clear funding pathway for the five J4N agencies to invest in.

2.3.2 Partnerships are boosting environmental capacity of Iwi

Waikanae Waterways Restoration project

The Waikanae Waterways Restoration project received $8.5 million of J4N funding in 2021 as part of the Ngā Awa river restoration programme.

Prior to the project, the Iwi identified that they had no capability to undertake a J4N project, but that they wanted to build their taiao capacity. The J4N project was, therefore, initiated by the Iwi as partnership between Iwi, local and regional councils, DOC, and a local environmental NGO, with a focus on building Iwi taiao capacity through the project.

> *"The Iwi approached us and said we don't have the capacity and capability; we would like you to build it…and that is what we did. They were a pre-settlement Iwi, and needed some help to build their taiao capability." General Manager*

The Iwi management plan informed the heart of the J4N project, which implemented Iwi key kaupapa of Whakapapa, Wairua, Mana, Maramatanga, Te Ao Tūroa, and Mauri. The project utilises a 'Tiriti House Model' as a framework, setting out key principles to inform the partnership arrangement. The Tiriti House Model proposes a Tiriti approach to decision-making that provides for the equal recognition of, and input from, each house (Mana Whenua House and Kāwanatanga House). The model has been successful for guiding decision making, power sharing and resource distribution under the J4N project.

The Iwi see the J4N project as a stepping stone to activating kaitiakitanga within their rohe through developing teams that can help restore the awa, the ngahere, and ngā tamariki a tāne that reside within them. In early 2024, the project had achieved 77 FTEs and project managers were confident that the contracted 92.7 FTEs would be exceeded. Sixty percent of kaimahi

[7] https://www.doc.govt.nz/contentassets/cf2bf2f877544dc29594442365ca797c/kotahitanga-mo-te-taiao-strategy.pdf p11

referrals to the project have come from the Iwi. Graduates of the J4N project training programme are trained in a range of environmental skills that provide the Iwi with a team equipped to undertake work such as fencing, nursey work, planting, pest control, building and harvesting. Fifty-one people had achieved NZQA credits in environmental restoration.

The partnership model for the Waikanae Waterways Restoration project provides lessons that could be transferred to similar projects which aim to build Iwi capacity, while enabling Iwi to lead decision making roles alongside treaty partners. It demonstrates that it is not always necessary to hold off for a Crown process of Treaty Settlement to invest in Iwi capacity building.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust

J4N helped to connect the Te Arawa Lakes Trust with the five J4N funding agencies and the regional council, boosting their environmental capacity and providing them a seat at the decision-making table for the Lakes. Te Arawa Lakes Trust cares for 14 lakes across their rohe and, prior to J4N, had small amounts of funding for lake biosecurity and restoration. Their pathway into J4N was not easy. It involved turning up to a lakes event that they had not been invited to and raising some innovative ideas to control pest weeds in the lakes. This led to the trust being approached to trial these ideas and establishing partnerships with multiple J4N contracts from LINZ, DOC, MfE and the regional council.

As a result of this opportunity, Te Arawa Lakes Trust has increased their capacity from 2 staff to 17, plus 35 casual staff. They have used J4N funding to gain boat skipper licenses and diving qualifications to support the scientific monitoring. This capability, together with their knowledge of people and place that comes with living with the lakes, has helped the trust to secure ongoing contract work with the regional council for lake monitoring and restoration, replacing the previous environmental consultants who were more expensive and lacked the connections to the lakes.

2.3.3 J4N is facilitating new partnerships between governments, Iwi/Māori and farming communities

J4N is providing opportunities to develop new partnerships between central and local government organisations, Iwi, Māori and farming communities. In Northland, one project discussed how Te Mana o te Wai Fund had enabled them to work with the regional council, marae and farmers to improve the management of freshwater systems. The project had helped to ensure marae were engaged in setting a 30-year vision for water, gathering information, and in practical work to protect waterways. The project had helped to realise the role of tangata whenua in freshwater management, thereby provided an opportunity to enact the principles of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.

The project involved engaging with marae trustees at each of the 23 marae, Māori landowners and farmers. Wānanga were run with marae to identify waterways of significance and the mana of those waterways were mapped into an Iwi GIS system. As part of the planning, whānau at marae were asked to recall the state of waterways 30 years ago and then to consider the waterways presently.

> *"Good to connect with the people on the ground. They don't even realise how much mātauranga they hold. People of that place know the taiao." Kaimahi*

The J4N project team had an effective combination of people who whakapapa to all marae, and a leader within the farming community who could facilitate conversations about restoration.

Information was provided into the regional council systems to signify water values. Pūrakau and stories that marae wanted to retain for their people were protected in a marae database that only the marae could administer.

> *"When we go to our marae in the rohe and they share pūrakau at our wānanga we get to put faith to their kōrero especially because we whakapapa to these places." Manu Taki*

> *"In the whare that is another realm and space talked about inside the whare. I feel privileged to do this mahi, it helps me define who I am." Manu Taki*

Te Mana of te Wai Fund has supported the Iwi to:

- build capacity and capability of 10 new Manu Taiko positions to facilitate marae participation in decision making about freshwater management alongside councils
- support Māori to improve the health of freshwater bodies of importance to them
- create nature-based employment opportunities for Māori.

Interestingly, stakeholders at this project did not realise that it was part of Jobs for Nature; Te Mana o te Wai had its own mana.

As a result of this J4N project, the regional council are working in partnership with the Iwi to design funding processes for communities to apply to the council for funding to fence their lands and waterways. The Iwi will assist landowners with opportunities to fund fencing waterways and with planting. The Iwi acknowledged that the relationship with regional council is good, and it helps to facilitate co-investment in the landscape. The partnership has also brought about equity in terms of a power dynamic.

2.3.4 J4N enabled partnerships with the scientific community

Several J4N projects reported establishing partnerships with science organisations. For example, an Iwi organisation that received J4N funding partnered with an institute of technology and was supported by a number of partnerships to grow the scientific capacity of its teams.

Another J4N project example is the restoration of the mauri of Moawhitu, which partnered with researchers at the Cawthron Institute and Shadow Space, an animation company, to produce a virtual reality experience of Moawhitu over time and enable people to visually experience how the lake has changed over the last 1000 years and how it might look in 100 years.

A J4N project run by an Iwi forestry rental trust has a partnership with Scion to explore honey production, farming differently, planting natives and restoring the ngahere.

> *"We are trialling different ways of managing pine forests and farming in Northland. We are exploring carbon credits, planting natives, developing our nursery and exploring honey production. Jobs for Nature enabled us to do that." Operational Manager*

2.4 Implementation barriers and enablers

2.4.1 An absence of water reticulation can be a barrier to freshwater restoration

Several J4N projects identified that the absence of water reticulation disincentivised farmers from fencing off waterways, particularly in areas that had suffered from recent droughts. For example, a J4N project in Te Tai Tokerau sought to regenerate the Waitangi catchments through fencing, native planting, and pest control. However, the project had no budget for water reticulation, which was a major frustration for farmers and impacted the uptake of riparian fencing and planting.

> *"If they had known that they could have applied for water reticulation that would have made a huge difference especially in areas that experience drought like Northland. The uptake of 50/50 [funding] to fence off waterways, with no water reticulation was not attractive and has impacted on the success of the projects." Project Manager*

Another project had successfully addressed this barrier with farmers encouraging a J4N project run by an NGO to submit a second application for J4N funding to address the absence of water reticulation. This made a world of difference to the uptake of the offer of 50/50 co-funding of fencing and planting.

> *"The biggest contribution, which was then the biggest barrier…was the water reticulation. That project included no budget for water reticulation. The cost of that can be quite huge and but they can't fence the waterways off until there is water reticulation set up. So, one of our farms here, we did actually include water reticulation in our application this time" Project Manager*

2.4.2 J4N was not always responsive to community aspirations

An organisation initiated a large landscape initiative in Hokianga Harbor that they considered should have been a prime candidate for the five Jobs for Nature funding agencies to come together and invest in.

> *"We initiated the idea of what we call a tapere initiative, which is a large landscape initiative…We had some existing relationships in the Hokianga, that combined with the significant ecological value of the area was the basis for us to look at the creation of a landscape connectivity initiative in South Hokianga. Hokianga Harbour [is] the largest contiguous native forest in Northland as well, that being the Waipaoa or the Waimamaku, Wai Matarawa, Whirinaki, Otaua Matarawa Ngahere. It's all one, but it's kind of, you know, got different parts to it." Project Manager*

This was a community vision, inclusive of hapū vision, for those that have meaningful relationships to the place. The community started planning the initiative in 2017. Reconnecting Northland initially supported the process through facilitating a vision and planning session which was attended by over 40 groups in the in the area. At this workshop, the community set about planning their vision for 100 years.

> *"We said here's the vision, what's the plan to get there? And we looked at a connectivity plan…We allowed [all] priorities to be included. So obviously there are ecological targets, but they were also social and cultural and economic…[The plan] was used to invite investment into the region." Project Manager*

By 2020 there were 17 active groups working in Hokianga Harbour who pulled together to plan for the Jobs for Nature application under Kānoa. However, project personnel stated that the agency did not appear to be interested in the big picture of the Hokianga Harbour. Instead, the agency was perceived to have "cherry picked" two areas from the project, and did not fund all the organisations that had come together as a collective.

> *"[Kānoa said] thank you very much for that…but this is what our criteria and this is what we will fund so…I went from ten groups doing a variety of things and maybe 50 kilometres of fencing and 50 hectares of planting. To only [much less] planting and fencing." Project Manager*

> *"They created a significant challenge right at the start …it wasn't necessarily what the community had said they wanted*." *Project Manager*

Personnel from this project considered that the funding was not responsive to community need, and was tightly targeted to only one aspect of the broader vision. This created some distrust within the community, and undermined much of the hard work that had been undertaken to get all the various groups and people together. Only one group was given the funding, and they had 2 weeks to decide whether to accept the funding. They describe feeling highly pressured. This situation created a lot of tension within their community, especially with hapū and Iwi. It has taken about three years for this J4N project to rebuild those relationships with their community as a result of the funding of this contract.

The group felt that the project should have been a candidate for a joined-up agency approach, but Northland communities did not have the opportunity for these works to be undertaken as a whole and unified water and landscape.

2.4.3 Māori land blocks require different investment support

Māori land blocks often have multiple landowners, and agreement of projects that require contributions to fencing and riparian planting of a stream requires J4N projects to establish relationships with tangata whenua. In three projects that were not led by Māori, the projects were late in the engagement and this impacted on the achievement of milestones. More time and investment is required into providing for complex relationship with the land, and navigating land blocks that have been fragmented by earlier colonial processes that disrupted traditional land ownership. The investment is more successful when Māori receive funding for managing areas with Māori land blocks.

2.4.4 Poor wastewater infrastructure was a barrier

Several J4N projects, including in Northland and Hawke's Bay, discussed the negative impact of ageing wastewater infrastructure on their freshwater restoration outcomes. Key issues of drainage infrastructure, the management of stormwater discharges and Crown entity management of waste was identified by J4N projects as impacting on waterway work. For example, some projects reported that their freshwater restoration work is negatively impacted by poor waste treatment, including ageing infrastructure which led to the practice of discharging raw sewage in heavy rainfall events. Riparian planting and fencing were not a substitute for addressing poor quality sewage treatment. Iwi were particularly vocal in reporting these concerns.

> *"The wastewater overflows in Northland are a common problem during bad weather and Māori are fed up with the failure of local authorities to manage the problem." Kaumatua*

While J4N freshwater restoration projects built strong partnerships with governments, landowners and others, neighbouring landowner management of waste and lands were identified as impacting on projects' freshwater restoration work. This included management practices on adjacent state-owned Pāmu (Landcorp) farms.

> *"So that's all farmed. And that's under Landcorp, Pāmu [farm] … So we haven't been able to get in there. So, all the waterways run into the estuary … I think it was 70% of Napier's stormwater drains into the estuary … and so we can do all the plantings we like but until they fix that, nothing's going to change." Project Manager*

The success of J4N water restoration projects is, to some extent, dependent on the effective management of these wider and connected water systems.

3 Relevance – is the programme doing the right things?

This section reports emerging findings on whether Jobs for Nature is doing the right things. It considers the extent to which the programme is delivered in line with context and need. It addresses two evaluation questions:

1. How well does the design and implementation of J4N align with the policy intent and objectives of the programme?
2. To what extent are the initial objectives and scope still relevant and has the programme been able to adjust to changing circumstances over its lifetime?

3.1 Alignment with policy intent and programme objectives

The intent of Jobs for Nature was to create jobs and economic support for people and communities across Aotearoa, while ensuring environmental benefits. Funding and support were to be delivered as quickly as possible to assist the COVID-19 recovery. The programme's objectives were to:

1. create nature-related employment opportunities for people, at pace, in regions that need work the most
2. realise enduring benefits for freshwater ecosystems and water quality, biodiversity, climate change and cultural values
3. support sustainable land use and the implementation of new regulatory requirements, including for freshwater, biodiversity and climate change.

J4N provided an opportunity to support businesses, sectors and regions affected by COVID-19, build an enduring environmental workforce, respond to new regulatory developments, and to improve environmental outcomes.

3.1.1 Employment - J4N delivery was relevant to social impact aims

Jobs for Nature delivered nature-related employment opportunities. As at 31 March 2024, J4N had provided 14,600 people with employment opportunities and delivered 10.7 million hours of work. These opportunities were delivered by 507 funded projects, excluding 19 projects directly managed by the participating agencies,[8] and 388 named recipients.[9]

[8] Excluding recipients labelled as TBC (3 projects), National coordination and management (1 project), Ministry for the Environment (1 project), LINZ (1 project), DOC – Twizel (1 project), DOC – Geraldine (1 project), Department of Conservation (11 projects)
[9] Jobs for Nature administrtaion data as at 30 March 2024.

There is evidence that job creation targeted relevant groups. The people and communities that benefited from these employment opportunities included rangatahi, Iwi rūnanga, NGOs, regional and local councils, and other people and organisations impacted by unemployment. In line with its intent to support COVID-19 recovery efforts, the programme supported businesses and people affected by a downturn in tourism, as well as workers in primary industries, such as forestry, farming and fisheries.

> *"J4N helped through COVID as we had no people coming to our region. It provided meaningful employment for our young people. Our next generation has come through. J4N has placed us in a good place for business with our nature tourism aspirations. It has accelerated progress, in a time when we might have floundered with the impact of COVID on this region." Project Manager*

> *"J4N helped us save [tourism company's] maintenance team. We hired them to start the J4N work. We also employed some of the jet boat tour operators. Both those business survived because of J4N." Project Manager*

Thirty-five weavers impacted by the loss of tourism were employed by an innovative Iwi project to participate in trialling lake weed mats.

> "*Weavers worked at home. We were having to manage COVID lockdown, during this time. We trailed several weaving designs across several lakes. The best design was called "Kia Kotahi", the weave allows native plants to come through, while smothering invasive weeds." Operational Manager*

The opportunity presented by J4N was also considered highly relevant to Iwi aspirations of supporting and growing the next generation. Many J4N projects had a focus on supporting rangatahi and enabling the employment of Iwi members to undertake kaitiaki work on Iwi settlement lands.

> *"It has been valuable having these young people retained in our communities. Going to the big cities they get lost. Here we treasure them. Nurture them, teach them how to hold the paepae. They are the boys who dig our graves. Their hunting skills have served us well for pest control of the ngahere." Supervisor*

Projects also focused on upskilling people to support careers in nature-based employment, which was described as relevant in terms of future career opportunities.

> *"Some 60-70 kaimahi trained in level 4 certificate from NMIT in conservation…Some of our kaimahi went onto become team leaders, then project managers and now Trainers in Conservation…Some of the kaimahi have gone off throughout NZ getting jobs in nature-based employment." Partnerships DOC*

3.1.2 J4N freshwater restoration activities align with focus on ecosystems and sustainable land use

In the freshwater restoration case study, the evaluation considered how well projects aligned with three elements outlined in the J4N investment strategy which guided decision-making for the environment:[10]

1. Evidence that projects and other aligned initiatives have been targeted based on a holistic system view of catchments and ecosystems.
2. Projects target interventions known to have a broad and strong influence on environmental outcomes within an ecosystem or catchment.
3. Projects fit within a regional/catchment strategy.

Freshwater restoration projects demonstrated strong relevance and alignment with these investment strategy criteria. Within the projects sampled for the second year of the evaluation, some focused on a single catchment or estuary, while others supported initiatives across a large region or rohe. Two projects were selected from the Ngā Awa river restoration programme to understand the role of Te Tiriti partnership, and wider catchment engagement in delivering freshwater outcomes for rivers of significance. Four projects undertook lake restoration, and five projects undertook fencing and riparian planting of waterways. This included projects involving farming communities, Māori land blocks, NGO groups, and Iwi.

J4N projects created wide ranging benefits for healthy waterways and strengthened freshwater resilience ecosystem to development, including through the delivery of relevant activities including:

- at least 10,224 hectares of riparian planting[11]
- fencing of waterways
- wetland restoration
- erosion mapping
- farm management plans, sedimentation plans and catchment plans
- initiatives to improve the quality of pasture run-off, including through the release of dung beetles
- catchment condition surveys to identify barriers for freshwater fish
- the provision or installation of fish passage remediation at 955 sites.[12]

Freshwater restoration initiatives have led to other benefits. Fish passage remediation has improved migratory pathways for native fish and helped to restore kākahi (freshwater

[10] Investment Framework 2021.
[11] Individual metrics were combined into total riparian, wetland, biodiversity, or erosion control planting completed.
[12] There were different ways of counting things between regions. This figure is based on site visits and J4N administration data as at March 2024.

mussels). The implementation of farm management plans, sedimentation plans and catchment plans has brought communities together.

> *"It has brought our farming community closer together. It has made us think about farming and trees differently… I think it's opened people's minds to the benefits. For example, someone who never used to plant is now planting some amazing trees. I like to think that we are creating timber for the future (matai, totara) and that's 120 years. Kahikatea, matai, and totara were here initially so its returning." Catchment Care Committee*

While the J4N projects in this case study focused on the restoration of freshwater catchments and ecosystems, they also had a strong focus on creating employment, building capacity and capability, and supporting mātauranga Māori. The projects were inclusive of rangatahi, Iwi and farming communities. They involved wānanga, education in schools and planting days. Rangatahi and tamariki learnt about water testing, macroinvertebrate counting, and catching tuna. J4N staff were reintroduced to their waterways.

> *"I brought my mum and aunties back to the marae because of the [J4N] programme. They hadn't been in contact with this side of their Iwi whakapapa." Trainer*

3.1.3 J4N helped to activate environmental stewardship

Jobs for Nature has supported environmental stewardship as New Zealanders who were employed on the programme learned about the threats of climate change, thriving biodiversity, the challenges for freshwater restoration and what they can do about it. J4N project managers and kaimahi discussed climate change resilience practices they are undertaking as part of their J4N projects.

J4N projects undertook activities that were relevant to climate change resilience, such as working with farmers on environmental restoration activities including planting trees, riparian planting, and converting retired land strips into wetland or forest. Farmers, J4N project managers and kaimahi discussed how they expect this to contribute to climate change resilience by helping farmers to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. For example, planting trees will capture and store carbon.

> *"The trees will make the climate more resistant. We are funding some non-native plants, but a lot are native." Catchment Care Committee*

The funding available through J4N has accelerated the pace of climate change resilience activities for some farmers.

> *"We consider ourselves stewards of the land too, we just didn't have enough money left to advance any restoration work…I would say J4N has fast tracked what I wanted to achieve by a good 15 years." Catchment Care Chair*

J4N has helped farmers think about farming differently. One J4N project described how some farmers had at first been resistant to undertaking environmental restoration activities, but their attitudes had changed over the programme timeframe.

> *"Initially we found a lot of the farmers were reluctant to engage…over the 3 years we got more and more engagement and by the end, with the combination of the legislation [and the funding] farmers were starting to see more the benefits... And so they came to us saying, 'can you look for funding to continue with this?'" Catchment Care Co-ordinator*

Project personnel and landowners discussed how climate change resilience activities such as restoration of the land and retiring strips of wetland that are not profitable have become normalised.

> *"I think it's opened people's minds to the benefits. For example, someone who never used to plant is now planting some amazing trees…kahikatea, matai, and totara were here initially, and its returning." Catchment Care Chair*

3.2 Ability of J4N to adjust to circumstances

3.2.1 The programme's pivot towards a greater focus on environmental outcomes ensured it remained relevant

From mid-2021, funding agencies placed greater emphasis on enduring environmental benefits and sustainable land use benefits of the J4N programme. This was in response to lower than forecast unemployment rates, other government funded job creation initiatives, and the opportunity to invest in ecological infrastructure.[13]

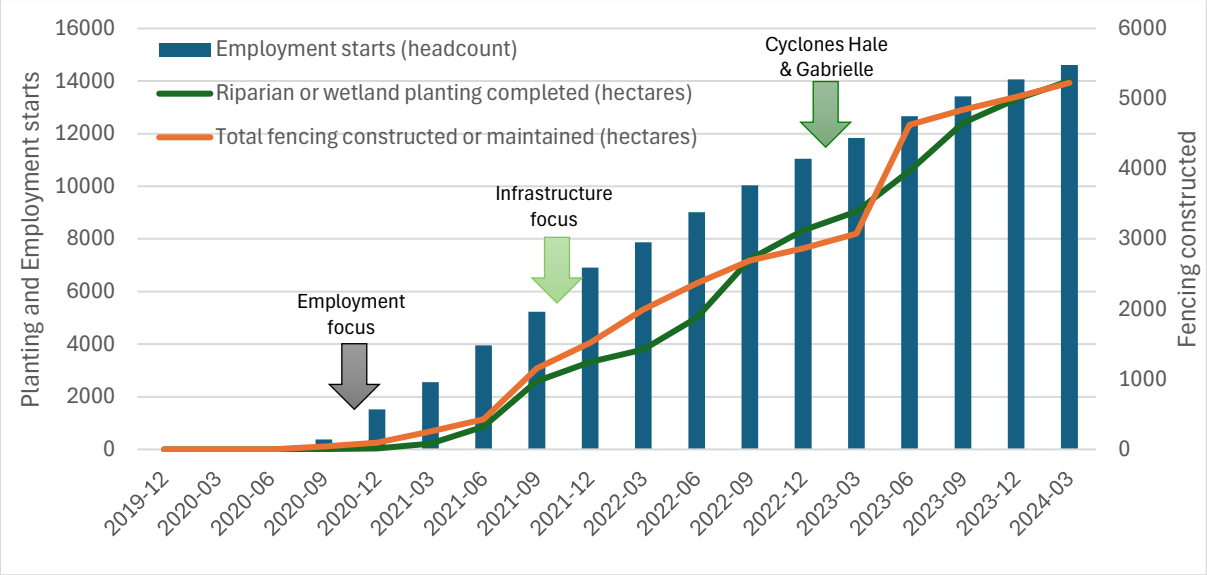
The J4N investment framework remained relevant through this transition, and the principles continued to support funding decisions. Funding decisions included the approval of large scale nature restoration and infrastructure opportunities. The J4N programme was able to adjust its objectives, goals, targets and delivery mechanisms to enable projects to make necessary adjustments.

Figure 14 shows how J4N employment starts increased fairly linearly over time. It also shows some increases in environmental work (planting and fencing) which may align to adjustments to the greater focus on environmental outcomes and to significant weather events. This includes a small upward bump in planting and fencing completed in mid-2021 (as measured in the September 2021 metrics) and a second larger bump in fencing completed between March and July 2023. This jump in fencing completed can be attributed to a single project entering a figure in July 2023 administration data of 1043 hectares. It is difficult to verify this figure, but the project covers a large catchment which was significantly impacted by extreme weather events (including Cyclone Gabrielle) to which there were significant support by community for fencing and riparian planting as part of the recovery, so it is plausible.[14] The

[13] (2021-B-07910 SLU Minister Update and Decision Sought – Jobs for Nature)
[14] Waimatā Catchment Restoration Project allocated $919,500. Waimatā Catchment is 23,600 ha of steep hill country inland from Gisborne. The Waimatā River is 38km in length.
https://nzfetrust.org.nz/stories/waimata-catchment-group/
https://www.gisborneherald.co.nz/news/healing-waimata

rate at which riparian and wetland planting were completed increased after July 2022, possibly indicating the time required to establish nurseries to supply planting programmes.

Figure 14. Cumulative employment starts, riparian/wetland plantings, and fencing completed, December 2019–March 2024



3.2.2 The adjustments were not always easy for projects

The lower than forecast unemployment rates meant that jobs on J4N project were not always easily filled. This brought projects and J4N funding agencies into contact with MSD. Projects and agencies reported that MSD had been very supportive of J4N, partnering to produce training support and supporting jobseekers with purchasing workwear. However, projects also reported that MSD jobseekers often required a level of pastoral care that they had not anticipated.

> *"I think that's has been a massive challenge the amount of time I've put into pastoral care is, you know, beyond what I thought I was going to put in." Project Manager*

The pivot towards a greater focus on environmental outcomes also required adjustments to J4N funding contracts. Several projects described contract variations as very slow to process, with the delay in administration causing "more problems than it was worth". One project reflected on the relevance of its contracted measurements for pest and weed management.

> *"The measurements and milestones made no sense of what was required on the ground. It looked like a desk-top exercise by people who had never done weed and pest management before...for example you can't just do weed management once on a newly established wetland, you need to go back several times. Another example…one of our milestones is to service Mustelid Network quarterly, but best practice for us is to service it monthly. However, we can only record that area once, but we would service it three times in the quarter because that's actually what is required." Project Manager*

Another J4N project reported having to wait three months before receiving any money for a multi-million dollar project. They stated that they were expected to have kaimahi on the ground and host the minister at a launch of their programme, despite having received no funding.

The shift in emphasis to environmental restoration and infrastructure projects, in particular to 'shovel ready' projects that could be implemented at pace, also created pressure for some projects. Projects described having to report on the delivery of milestones before projects were properly planned and established.

4 Coherence – how well does the programme fit?

This section reports emerging findings on how well Jobs for Nature fits with other strategies. It considers whether the programme aligns with other national and regional employment and environmental strategies and interventions. This section addresses two evaluation questions:

1. To what extent was the J4N project selection coherent with regional/catchment and national needs?
2. To what extent has the job creation element of the programme been coherent with other support measures?

4.1 Coherency with regional/catchment and national needs

Jobs for Nature has built capacity that is consistent with needs associated with implementing and achieving the goals of other strategies, policies and agreements. For example, J4N projects have built capacity that has supported communities to meet requirements under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) and apply Te Mana o te Wai framework to freshwater management, locally. At a very practical level, this is demonstrated through, for example, support for fencing waterways and planting riparian zones, and active collaborations between tangata whenua, councils and communities.

> *"The regional council are on board. They recognise that it's been successful but really, it's been driven by the catchment and community driven...that 70 kilometres of fencing has been above regulation and we're proud of that, so that should improve [the reduction of] phosphorus and e-coli. The 50/50 funding was the primary thing that helped." Chairperson*

J4N is helping landowners to meet requirements in catchment management plans and farm management plans. In Tukipo Catchment, J4N was identified as having helped farmers advance restoration efforts.

> *"We consider ourselves stewards of the land too, we just didn't have enough money left to advance any restoration work…I would say Jobs for Nature has fast tracked what I wanted to achieve by a good 15 years." Chairperson*

Jobs for Nature is also helping to build capacity in environmental policy which has enabled communities to engage in ongoing work. One project involved creating a team of 10 Taiao Advisors to work with hapū across its rohe. Another project wanted to create a taiao unit in the Taiwhenua to tackle some of the big environmental issues that impact on the estuary that were beyond the scope of its J4N project. A taiao unit would leverage the capacity that has been developed through J4N to respond to issues such as the RMA, the NPS-FM, and other environmental policies and regulations.

There is also strong consistency between J4N and Te Mana o te Taiao, the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. Again, at a practical level, J4N projects target direct actions to address threats to biodiversity and connections between nature and people. In addition, projects are tackling some of the key gaps in the current system, including building capacity, creating collaborations and partnerships, and building knowledge and data, including the utilisation of mātauranga Māori.

Jobs for Nature projects have complemented Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements. There are examples of projects which have kick-started the capacity of Iwi to be able to deliver on Deed of Settlement aspirations through building capacity to participate in the taiao. J4N has also supported funding agencies' obligations to support Iwi aspirations for rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga.

Jobs for Nature is also supporting the delivery of existing programmes, such as the Ngā Awa river restoration programme and the One Billion Trees programme, though direct investments into projects. J4N projects were also able to leverage off investments through the Provincial Growth Fund.

> *"PGF projects set-up the skilled workforce that went onto contracting or into other projects like Jobs for Nature for Hokianga Harbor Catchment Care Group". Project Manager*

Coherency across funding programmes was particularly evident in J4N projects in Te Tau Ihu, facilitated through Te Kotahitanga mō te Taiao, as discussed in Section 2.3.3.

4.2 Coherency of job creating element with other support

Many J4N projects worked with MSD to support kaimahi into employment. MSD was described as helpful, supporting people coming onto J4N projects with the right clothing and footwear and paying for training courses. Some J4N projects also delivered presentations about Jobs for Nature work at MSD workshops to recruit people to the J4N work. The relationship between MSD and J4N projects was, overall, reported as complementary and positive.

> "*They [MSD] have been great, especially for equipment needed such as outdoor clothing and training…you need that for this type of work and training…this isn't for everyone…it is really tough work, dealing with blackberry." Project Manager*

As discussed in Section 4.1, J4N complemented existing regional development and investment initiatives such as the PGF with J4N projects hiring people who had upskilled on PGF projects.

J4N projects also demonstrated a coherent approach to their workforce needs, with some organisations sharing skilled workers across projects.

> *"…the kaimahi get a range of experience, we share them across projects so they get to work on Tekateka, Mahitahi or Moawhitu for example" Tauawhi Taiao*

J4N has also provided workers with skills and experiences that complement skill requirements in the wider labour market, particularly within other organisations working in the environmental space.

The evaluation did not find that J4N had displaced or duplicated other employment support measures.

5 Additionality – what added value does the programme provide beyond the individual funds?

This section reports emerging findings on the additional benefits Jobs for Nature has created, that are over and above the original investment. It considers whether the programme has added value beyond the investment of money. This section addresses three evaluation questions:

1. To what extent has J4N as a programme added value beyond the individual funds?
2. How much of what has happened would have happened anyway or been funded through other mechanisms?
3. What additional funding/resourcing has the J4N programme attracted towards reaching its objectives?

5.1 Added value beyond the individual funds

J4N invested into nature-based work which directly created jobs and delivered environmental outputs. The evaluation considered added value beyond these direct investments. This includes additional economic benefits from multiplier or spillover effects, increased productivity and efficiency, and adjacent benefits beyond employment and environmental outputs.

5.1.1 J4N facilitated increased local economic activity

Many projects provided examples of economic activity facilitated by the employment opportunities created by J4N. These varied from people having money in their pocket to spend at local businesses to projects purchasing equipment and services from local suppliers. The employment opportunities have also led to a feeling of prosperity in some communities.

> *"Our local economy benefited too. Like some of the local businesses obviously, you know, the dollar goes around [and that was what] was happening here… young peeps who are making some money. They are stopping off at the old Waimai fried chicken for lunch, or the Waimamaku, you know…You could see that that was happening." Project Manager*

> *"When the team are finished their four days in the bush they come back in and buy goodies from the local shops here in the outskirts of Hawke's Bay. It all makes a difference."*

Another project manager identified the significance of one the project team members buying their first home.

> *"This has been life changing...on this J4N project people bought their first home. They were one of the first to buy their home in their generation. Home ownership is security and sets them up well for life." Project Manager*

J4N has also supported growth in local businesses as J4N organisations, kaimahi and contractors have gone on to secure further employment and contracts with the private sector, regional and local councils, and DOC. Many projects established plant nurseries, or fencing and planting services, and have gone on to secure other contracts or supply other sectors. A J4N project described helping a contractor develop HR skills, accounting skills and building his service until it had become a small business that now hires people to restore nature.

> *"He is now a preferred supplier for his services…I think it's fair to say we played quite an important part in his growth…this project was a big part of that…he has personally planted his millionth tree…he runs a couple of crews…and he's sustainable" Project Manager*

5.1.2 J4N facilitated new ways of doing things which brought efficiencies

Jobs for Nature facilitated partnerships between organisations that brought different knowledge and experience together. A number of organisations reported that these partnerships contributed to project efficiency and productivity. For example, one J4N project partnership supported Iwi leadership in the vision, management and practices of the J4N work. Mātauranga Māori informed land management practices.

> *"We have learnt to read the landscape because the Iwi has spent time with us talking about their lands. Now we know that wherever there are karaka trees there were old papakāinga. Karaka trees were planted by the Iwi, brought in by them for food." Kaimahi*

Another project attributed greater efficiency to the holistic approach facilitated through partnerships, which brought together expertise in science, technology and community engagement and focused at the ecosystem or catchment scale led by Iwi values, and based on a Te Tiriti based partnership.

> *"This shouldn't just be a pandemic response. This should be continuous, there should be more partnerships. It can change the way land is managed. It can help with streamlining and prioritising work that needs to be done. You can also have accreditation while people learn and earn. This provided a platform in which government agencies could work together." General Manager*

Farming communities reflected on the holistic approach which brought the right incentives to progress environmental protection work. This included funding for restoration work, such as planting and fencing, in combination with support for education and training (e.g. to teach people how to plant), and for facilitating communities working together.

> *"We have learnt more about nature, planting natives and have a vision of bird life returning that we didn't have before as a community." Catchment Care Committee*

Other projects trailed the use of new methods, resources and tools for ecosystem restoration. This included new and novel ways of luring and killing predators such as through understanding the genome of pests, new ways of looking at managing lands and waters such

as through integrated catchment plans, and the collection and use of new scientific research and data, such as in the Lakes380 project with Moawhitu. Further examples of innovation methods and ways of doing things include:

- the release of dung beetles in catchments across the Te Hoiere project to improve water quality and increase the turnover of available grazing area
- the production of lake weed mats made from harakeke, smothering weeds while providing a habitat for native fish and freshwater koura to thrive underneath the harakeke uwhi
- aligning industry and Iwi values, for example forestry practices with Iwi values for restoring the ngahere
- governance models that place Te Tiriti at the centre, such as the Waikanae Water Restoration project
- facilitating partnership working at a regional scale, such as in Te Tau Ihu, to advance a shared vision through shared decision-making and resources.

5.1.3 J4N supported communities during disaster responses

J4N projects and communities consistently reported that J4N kaimahi contributed significant skills and capacity to help communities respond and build resilience to disasters and emergencies. This was most clearly seen in the civil defence response to flooding after Cyclone Gabrielle.

> "*Jobs for Nature crews featured heavily in flood-stricken areas, providing civil defence some much need help in clearing trees and rebuilding fences." Project Manager*

> *"We actually put a team together of a lot of us…and went to Wairakei cause they had huge amounts of fence go down. So we went and rebuilt their fence for them." Kaimahi*

The skills developed in the J4N nature-based work lent itself to civil defence, from driving to clearing trees, outdoor first aid, chainsaw and scrub bars and construction. J4N brought together younger people and the physical nature of the work meant that they were fit and able to respond effectively.

Jobs for Nature teams added a level of community resilience complemented by marae and Iwi coordinating things in their communities.

> "*Our team just got out their chainsaws and started clearing the roads. Our marae was set up to care for the communities, and our Jobs for Nature teams pitched in." Supervisor*

> *"Firstly J4N enabled our team to go out into the public and actually be redeployed to those communities that were affected for about 2 months…So everyone obviously shut down and we stepped up and our Taiwhenua…day-to-day operation stopped and we set up a massive logistical operation and we sort of had a food hub going and trucks coming and dropping off and clothes and bedding...Our Jobs for Nature team were in people's garages, water blasting and pulling, you know, getting jib off walls and getting stuck into it." Project Manager*

5.1.4 J4N provides additional health benefits

Health and wellbeing outcomes for kaimahi were reported by many J4N projects. Time spent in the natural world has a wide range of health benefits, for both physical and mental wellbeing.

> *"It has been good for my cardiovascular health, really good for my body. My mental health has been the best it has been for years. I have faced alcoholism drug addiction, all that, but now I feel great." Supervisor*

> *"There were mental health benefits to being occupied and active through those COVID times" Project Manager*

> *"A lot of our youth need work. Need to connect. Need to get outdoors. That mental wellness space is massive too. So, this sort of supports that as well." Project Manager*

5.2 Change that would have happened anyway

It is difficult to determine how much of the change brought about by J4N would have happened anyway, without the investment. Certainly some pest and weed management work that was undertaken by J4N would have been delivered under business-as-usual regional council work programmes. Some flood protection works advanced under J4N would also have occurred anyway, but with more emphasis on asset protection than freshwater restoration. Some projects would likely have progressed under existing funding programmes too, such as Freshwater Improvement Funding and the One Billion Trees programme.

However, the J4N programme policy recognised that there was underinvestment in these types of projects and was also developed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The demand for investment in nature-based projects exceeded the existing availability of funding, and there was a need to invest at speed to support the economic wellbeing of regions, communities and people affected by job and income losses. Where change might have happened anyway, this change was brought forward or accelerated by J4N.

> *"It has advanced one farmer's environmental restoration plan by some 15 years." Regional Council*

> *"[The] investment will mean the project crew can push on with the next phase, accelerating river restoration work, planting, weed control, animal pest control and habitat enhancement for native species such as pekapeka/bats, mioweka/banded rail and shortjaw kokopu".*[15]

5.3 Leveraging additional resources

The evaluation did not include a systematic assessment of how much additional funding and resourcing the J4N programme was able to attract to help it reach its objectives. There was, however, evidence of J4N projects attracting additional resources from:

- local and regional councils
- central government agencies and Crown entities, including the Department of Internal Affairs, Te Puni Kōkiri, MSD, and Tourism New Zealand
- Iwi, including supporting project management, administration and training
- the private sector, including energy companies, Fonterra
- environmental NGOs, including The Nature Conservancy, for example in supporting project management.

J4N projects leveraged non-monetary resources including many volunteer hours contributed by communities to complete work such as planting and pest control. Some organisations that hosted J4N projects also gifted project management expertise or administration to support the J4N vision or raised additional funding to top up salaries.

J4N also supported existing projects that were effective in bringing together resources from multiple sources. For example, J4N provided $19.7 million to the Save the Kiwi Trust to support 11 projects. This funding, reportedly, had been used to employ 171 people for 210,444 hours (135 FTEs), and to protect 127,432 hectares, as at September 2023. Save the Kiwi Trust receives additional funding support from a variety of sources, including a hotels chain, chocolate brand, Google, Home Reality, a home building company, finance companies, a global law firm, rental companies, creative agencies, consultancies and building stores.

[15] https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/teaming-protect-top-south

6 Sustainability – will the programme benefits last?

This section reports emerging findings on the extent to which extent to which the benefits of Jobs for Nature are likely to last. It considers whether the employment and environmental initiatives are sustainable and ongoing. This section addresses two evaluation questions:

1. To what extent are the results of the projects likely to continue after the end of the programme?
2. What factors influence the sustainability of the projects?

The sustainability of the benefits of the J4N programme will be considered more in the third and final year of the evaluation. This will include consideration of initiatives by the delivery agencies to promote sustainability, such as the development of a programme transition strategy.[16]

6.1 Sustainability of employment opportunities

6.1.1 Some J4N kaimahi have secured ongoing employment and income

It was reasonably common for J4N projects to report that their staff were sought after and had taken up permanent employment or secured contract work with, for example, the private sector, regional and local councils, and DOC. Additionally, projects reported staff enrolling in formal education and training. These pathways were influenced by the J4N training they had received, including education and training credits, and the breadth of work experience which was considered highly transferrable to other jobs.

> "*Staff are highly sought after. Some work for local councils now, others have taken up environmental employment, others have gone on to environmental degrees." General Manager*

> *"We are constantly losing our kaimahi to other environmental work, agencies, councils, we work with…" Tauawhi Taiao*

Several projects reported establishing business areas which became self-sustaining through generating contract work. This included plant nurseries, fencing contractors, planting and pest control contractors, and environmental monitoring and restoration. Once again, the investment J4N projects had put into training was reported as a key enabler to securing contract work.

[16] https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Jobs-for-Nature-Programme-Transition-Strategy.pdf

> "*I planned for our people to undertake the contract works. We got to know the regional and local council staff and demonstrated that our work was excellent. We have deliberately charged competitive rates and over delivered on quality. We also undertake the taiao work, and do it well." Project Manager*

6.1.2 Iwi organisations are looking to embed environmental capacity

Many Iwi organisations that received J4N funding or that worked with J4N projects were looking to embed roles within their organisation to maintain their increased environmental capacity. Some of these opportunities were at an exploratory stage whereas others had firm plans.

> "*We want to take care of these young people; they are our own. We would like to get them into a course or set them up with pest control contractors." Land Trust*

As discussed in Section 4.1, some organisations were looking to establish environmental units leveraging off their J4N project funding.

6.1.3 There are considerable challenges to sustaining employment outcomes

Jobs for Nature projects reported several barriers to sustaining employment outcomes and considered the retention of employment was unlikely. One of the reported challenges was the current constrained fiscal environment and the competition for funding, including contract work, particularly in regional and rural areas.

> "*I chair a farming community. Contracts for our kaimahi for pest contract on land blocks or forestry blocks are already being done by someone else. Employment is tough here." Supervisor*

> *"It takes time to build and sustain employment in communities that are not by the 'big city'. Regional communities have been under invested in…" Project Manager*

> *"Basically funding has gone down. A lot of NGOs, charities, for whatever reason…So yeah, we're in a place right now that our general manager would love to retain us, but she can't make any promises… it's going to be a big loss." Project Manager*

Another challenge reported was the time it takes to establish partnerships and build and sustain capacity for holistic catchment scale work in regional communities. Projects reported that the short-term employment focus of the J4N programme, established as a COVID response, did not align with this need to consider longer term plans. Projects reported having built the know-how and taiao knowledge, but require an additional round of funding to embed these benefits.

> *"It is not like it has just been sprung on us about sustainability, a year ago all the project managers discussed sustainability…DOC told us there is no funding, got us to all discuss sustainability…We set this up with no taiao knowledge…if you are still a new business, 3 years you're just [learning]…it is a lot clearer now what we are going to do, how are we going to do it. We are just hitting our straps now." Project Manager*

> *"There isn't a transition plan. We want to continue the work; it has taken us 3 years to learn what to do. We have finally got there and now it is time to stop." Project Manager*

Projects questioned the feasibility and sustainability of achieving valuable outcomes from three-year cyclical funding, delivered at a pace that demanded immediate outcomes that did not align with planning for sustainable outcomes. Some projects reported the potential to deliver stronger social impacts if the same funding was spread over a five-year period, enabling more time for planning and establishment in the first year,

6.2 Sustainability of environmental impacts

6.2.1 J4N has helped to establish some building blocks for ongoing environmental benefits

Jobs for Nature has strengthened some of the building blocks needed to deliver environmental impacts that have the potential to sustain beyond the J4N funding. The investment in training and capacity building to undertake nature-based restoration work will support the sustainability of environmental outcomes if this workforce continues to be engaged.

> *"Growing a conservation force was a massive outcome" Government agency*

Less directly, but perhaps more significantly in the long term, the achievements of J4N in terms of connecting people with and making them passionate about the environment has the potential to ensure benefits are sustained. Bringing people into contact with the natural world has helped to create a culture of kaitiakitanga, stewardship of lands and waterways. These impacts are intergenerational and will not go away when the J4N funding ceases. For example, projects reported that the community continued to be engaged in voluntary weeding and planting after J4N project activities.

> *"We've become so passionate about it…it matters beyond a work matter." Kaimahi*

> *"100% [it's become a part of our lives] and even the flow on to my family, and my children." Kaimahi*

> *"I flat with our co-workers, and her son is crazy excited about it all, and wants to know about what we are doing. He's five years old, and he comes to planting days and is so active about restoring the landscape "*

The community partnerships and collaborations established and strengthened through J4N projects are also likely to bring longer term benefits. The J4N programme has launched the Tūhono Taiao Connecting to Communities website as a platform for further collaboration. Its mission is to empower communities to restore their nature in Aotearoa New Zealand by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and access to resources and support. The website highlights the innovative approaches taken by many J4N projects.[17]

At a tangible level, J4N has delivered environmental restoration infrastructure, such as fencing and tracks for pest control and species monitoring, that will bring benefits beyond the lifetime of the programme. Similarly, the programme has increased planting that has become part of the natural capital infrastructure that will continue to support improvements to water quality, control erosion and provide habitats beyond the J4N funding. Critically, however, there will be a need to maintain this built and natural infrastructure to prolong impacts.

J4N's contribution to the development of management plans, for example for farms and freshwater, is also expected to have an ongoing impact.

> *"Fencing, planting and ecosystem services are beyond the life of the Jobs for Nature project. The services have had strong environmental outcomes beyond the life of the funding in the project, it is connected with land use plans for owners of the land block, this provides for continuity." General Manager*

> *"We have been doing community workshops, developing property plans for their [the landowners] property. We write the property plan up for them, and some contribute for fencing, they buy materials and [J4N project] fence it for them." Training Supervisor*

6.2.2 Some J4N projects have achieved legal protection

There are examples of J4N projects that have led to areas being legally protected. This should help to ensure environmental outcomes are sustained. For example, the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Ngā Kairauhī Papa (QEII) has a J4N contract to ensure the biodiversity gains from the Crown's investment in Jobs for Nature are protected and sustained on private land and allows for the legal protection of hundreds of hectares of private land with high biodiversity value. For example, the Harare Takatū J4N project in Hawke's Bay has erected four kilometres of fencing to keep feral deer and other animals from feeding on native plants in a wetland, which will now be protected in perpetuity by a QEII Open Space Covenant.[18]

The funding was intended to give greater certainty that the effort being put into these projects is not wasted and the special biodiversity will remain for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

[17] https://www.tuhonotaiao.org.nz/
[18] Source: https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2021-media-releases/protecting-unique-land-for-generation-next/

> *"With significant Jobs for Nature investment into planting, fencing, weed control, pest animal management and other conservation activities, we [QEII National Trust] want to help you to legally protect these areas, ensuring the values of your projects are protected forever."* [19]

A new form of legal protection, called a restoration agreement, was also developed for Jobs for Nature projects that do not have strong enough existing biodiversity values to meet the Open Space Covenant criteria. Such an agreement is expected to be more suitable for native revegetation or wetland restoration projects.

6.2.3 The maintenance of impacts is not assured

While some projects have begun to plan for activities post-J4N, they remain concerned by the challenge of maintaining the environmental work and the gains made.

> *"There's a large network of volunteers that service traps and bait stations, but when you come into bird breeding season, the volunteer capacity doesn't change…We were brought in to infill between them so that there is more frequency, especially during bird breeding season…We were able to adapt like that and fill in gaps. But post project? That's going to fall over because we don't have the capacity to carry on just doing that." Project Manager*

Projects reported that the J4N funding agencies had discussed sustainability. The J4N transition plan identifies that delivery agencies were to engage directly with their individual project delivery partners to understand needs, opportunities and provide tailored support.[20] DOC had been reported meeting with J4N projects for over a year, but a long-term strategy and sustainable employment was not in place at the time of completing field work in May 2024. The limited funding for ongoing environmental restoration work was the main challenge and uncertainty.

> *"Will the benefits last? We have tried to build a legacy – a hot house/depot helped with a business plan going forward. It is [up to] the Iwi /DOC/council and philanthropic to fund it" General Manager*

[19] Source: https://qeiinationaltrust.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/1369-QEII-Restoration-Agreement-factsheet-A5-ff2WEB.pdf
[20] https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Jobs-for-Nature-Programme-Transition-Strategy.pdf

7 Learning and improvement

This section identifies lessons associated with Jobs for Nature's funding and reporting processes, and potential areas for improvement. This section addresses two evaluation questions:

1. What can be learnt from implementation and what might we do differently in future?
2. Did the projects generate approaches that can be implemented elsewhere?
3. Has the programme trialled innovative approaches and if so, what has been learned from them?

The final report in the third year of the evaluation will consider the evaluation's recommendations.

7.1 Lessons on what could be done differently

7.1.1 Contractual requirements could be more responsive

Projects identified several lessons and areas for improvement with J4N contracts. Firstly, several J4N projects discussed the burden and associated high compliance cost of reporting. Projects also indicated that quarterly reporting was appreciated, reporting requirements had improved over time, and the format had become simpler for DOC. End of contract reporting for Kānoa was identified as requiring a lot of time.

> *"Most organisations wouldn't have the administrative capacity. And the ability to measure environmental outcomes. It took Jobs for Nature one-and-a-half years before they got the reporting right, so when they did ask for the correct data, we were fine, because we knew we had to measure the work (we have 9 software specialists that sit behind the work we normally do) but other agencies would have struggled." General Manager*

The second lesson identified was the need for more flexible contracts that are more responsive to changes in context. When it became clear that high unemployment rates would not eventuate, it would have been appropriate to adapt the project FTE employment targets. Projects reported challenges in getting agencies to adapt contracted employment counts.

> *"We had a massive underspend early on, which put more pressure on deliverables. We asked for a variation to the contract. It took so long to come through, that it created more pressure than it was worth." General Manager*

A third lesson concerns the appropriateness of contracted milestones. Some regionally based J4N delivery agencies managing project sites identified that contracted milestones were too high for weed and pest management for J4N projects that were teaching people how to do the work. The weed and pest management milestones were, reportedly, set at levels that a professional contractor might be able to achieve.

7.1.2 Funding needs to be adequate and timely

Some J4N projects reported that the level of funding did not enable them to pay reasonable wages to kaimahi or to increase rates over time as workers increased their skills. Some kaimahi identified that they loved the work, but the salary was terrible.

> *"Three years the economy changes a lot. You know, when you first start the base pay might be suitable, but then you get all these skills. Three years later, you're still on the same pay." Kaimahi*

J4N projects who were providing successful outcomes reported experiencing long delays in receiving funding. They reported having to find alternative means to pay for work already delivered.

> *"The last 12 months we have been lending money to keep Jobs for Nature going [due to delays in processing funding invoices]" Project Manager*

7.1.3 Improvements needed to project metrics

The employment and training data reported by J4N projects did not always align with experiences reported to the evaluation team. For example, one J4N project reported that their biggest disappointment was not employing Iwi/Māori and low numbers for kaimahi; yet their employment data indicated 160 employment starts. On the other hand, another project reported 17 full time and 35 part time staff, yet they had no employment opportunities recorded in the administration data.

Discrepancies might be partly explained by some early design flaws in counting employment metrics and different ways of counting and reporting employment data across the five delivery agencies. Also, there did not appear to be a high degree of consistency in how projects' employment targets were calculated, including whether the FTE was a maximum or was continuous through the duration of the project, and whether they included contractors or not.

The design of the contracting processes, reporting and measurement would have benefitted from a joint agency approach. Metrics that were common across all projects and were easy to estimate, worked well, such as employment hours and employment starts and plants planted. Metrics that could have worked better were fencing because there were a range of fencing activities asked in several ways, and area of plantings which was also asked in several ways (e.g. the area of riparian wetland versus other areas).

The engagement metrics did not work well. There were only two measures: the number of wānanga and the number of catchment groups created or supported. No projects reported on the wānanga. Two projects reported on catchment groups. The J4N programme would have benefited from a measure for the number of stakeholder engagements.

There was also a metric for regulatory implementation but no projects reported against it.

7.1.4 It is important to align project delivery with Iwi and hapū values

There were some project delivery issues in a lake restoration project that had very limited investment with Māori, hapū and Iwi. The J4N project acknowledged and supported Iwi and hapū values but these did not always translate into project delivery. Although the project had a relationship with local marae, no Iwi members were hired and no Iwi capacity was built.

The project did invest in a flood management scheme but this appeared to be at odds with the J4N investment principles which require projects to not duplicate funding; the flood scheme should part of the regional council's BAU works.

In this case, we note that the Iwi had been busy with the formal settlement body of the lake governance, which was being developed. This may have impacted the Iwi's capacity to engage with the J4N project and highlights the need to allow adequate time for planning and engagement activities.

7.1.5 There are benefits in developing structured approaches to training

A J4N project run by a regional council undertook a 12-month programme of training. The project did not hire experienced educators to deliver the training, or align the programme to an NZQA qualification. An independent evaluation of the programme found kaimahi did not enjoy it. The trainees did not go on to leadership roles in the project. The project has since switched to a formal training provider.

Another J4N project provided a 12-week course covering environmental restoration through the lens of the Iwi management plan. The project was supported by an expert NGO environmental service provider. They brought on board an experienced educator who developed an environmental-based kaitiaki programme. Kaimahi learnt about riparian fencing, planting, animal pest control, sustainable land management practice, community engagement and education. The training achieved NZQA credits. Kaimahi could tailor the training to suit their interests and needs. This formalised and structured approach to training offered substantial benefits to the projects. Graduates of the training went on to leadership roles on the project.

7.1.6 It pays to invest in dedicated project management

Projects that achieved a high FTE, built capacity and achieved good environmental outcomes tended to be strongly managed. They invested in dedicated project management roles from the start. As well as planning and overseeing the delivery of the projects, these project managers always had an eye on sustainability and efficiency. For example, the management at one J4N project always had a focus on investing in people development and prioritised this over investing in expensive infrastructure such as vehicles, buildings and nurseries.

On the other hand, projects that experienced a delay in appointing a project manager, only appointed a part time manager, or had a change in project management, faced barriers to implementation. For example, a J4N project delayed appointing a project manager for 12 months and, as a result, engagement with key partners had not occurred. This impacted on the success of the project.

7.1.7 Innovation needs space

As discussed, some projects implemented innovative methods such as plant and pest control, regional partnerships, and collaborative governance structures. Other projects experienced limited opportunities for innovation because of tightly prescribed contracts and the pace they had to work at to implement restoration often at a large scale. There have been limited opportunities to reflect on, learn from and share these experiences. The Tūhono Taiao Connecting to Communities website may provide an opportunity to share learning from these innovative approaches.[21]

[21] https://www.tuhonotaiao.org.nz/

Conclusion

8 Conclusion

The purpose of the evaluation of the Jobs for Nature programme is to understand how effectively the programme has been implemented and the extent to which it is on track to deliver its intended outcomes for participants and the environment. The second year of the three-year evaluation focused on identifying emerging findings from three theme-based case studies and from J4N programme administration data.

Jobs for Nature projects reported supporting their local economy. J4N supported New Zealanders to gain more skills and knowledge to improve the environment. The programme supported more than 14,000 employment opportunities and delivered over 10 million hours of nature-based work. This upskilling and experience helped to build a conservation workforce and provided additional benefits to the wellbeing of participants. These employment and wider social benefits were significant within the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jobs for Nature projects reported improvements to the functioning of natural systems including improving water quality, enhancing flood control, supporting biodiversity through riparian planting and restoring wetlands. Projects and communities reported increases in the prevalence of native species and that J4N is helping to strengthen resilience to climate change.

The J4N programme delivery is characterised by partnerships that have enabled the sharing of resources, expertise and knowledge. These partnerships have increased the environmental capacity of many organisations, including Iwi. Many partnerships have demonstrated the strength of collective action. Not all partnerships have developed to the same level of maturity or have been able to deliver on a shared vision.

Jobs for Nature projects have engaged tangata whenua, diverse age groups, the disability sector, farming and forestry sectors, the scientific community, rangatahi, and school children in conservation work. Projects have brought diverse groups together and contributed to a passion for environmental restoration work. This may be one of the programme's significant legacies.

Some J4N projects have built policy capacity and are developing comprehensive restoration policies and plans. These projects align with national and regional strategies and priorities for clean water, restoration of biodiversity and climate change. There remains a need for ongoing interagency communication and planning across sustainable land use agencies to strengthen these synergies.

Some employment outcomes of J4N are likely to be retained with kaimahi gaining ongoing employment and projects securing contract opportunities. J4N has also contributed to many of the foundations for environmental restoration, including fencing and planting, that will have ongoing benefits beyond the lifetime of the programme. However, the sustainability of employment and environmental outputs are far from assured for most projects.

Looking ahead, the final year of the evaluation provides an opportunity to better understand the efforts being made, including by the delivery agencies, to transition and sustain the benefits of the J4N programme. The final year also provides an opportunity to synthesise the findings across the evaluation, identify the main lessons, and consider the implications of the findings and lessons for the design and delivery of future initiatives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Principles for investment

The principles for investment included:[22]

- Speed and certainty are critical – funding decisions need to be made quickly for a significant proportion of the available funding so people can access job opportunities as soon as possible.
- Regional delivery – only at place can the workforce be effectively connected with training and job opportunities.
- Use existing organisations and structures if they can be made fit-for-purpose.
- Phased approach – where programmes can be delivered immediately, they should be. However, if more planning or human resources would deliver greatly enhanced environmental outcomes, then this should occur provided it does not compromise the employment objectives
- Use resourcing to overcome barriers to rapid deployment – in normal circumstances, the Crown would seek a significant private contribution to projects – typically around half. This takes time and risks compromising the primary employment objective. The Government will still seek co-funding for most projects, particularly when there are significant benefits to private landowners, but this will typically be at reduced rates and can in some cases include 'in kind' contributions.
- Funding must enhance not degrade the environment.
- Additionality – funding must lead to additional activity and employment – not simply use Crown funding to fund what would have happened anyway (although can accelerate things that would have happened over a longer timeframe).
- Fund specific projects ready for delivery – not proposals that are at an early stage of development.
- Coordinated programme management, but distributed project management – programme decision-making and oversight delivered centrally. However, to ensure decisions on individual projects are rapid and well connected to what is happening locally, including where is the greatest need for jobs, decisions about funding individual projects will be delegated as much as possible.

[22] Appendix 4: Investment Strategy across the $1.3 billion Jobs for Nature programme. Source: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Cabinet-papers-briefings-and-minutes/investment-statement-across-the-1.3-billion-jobs-for-nature-programme.pdf

Appendix B: Thematic case study project samples

The following tables present the J4N projects that were included in each of the three thematic case studies.

Table 6: J4N projects included in the social impact case study

Region	Total Funding Contracted	Project Name	Agency
Hawke's Bay	$1,443,800	Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) Restoration Project	DOC
Northland	$3,558,451	Me He Wai	MfE
Northland	$3,500,000	Iwi Collaboration for Kauri Action	DOC
Northland	$876,400	Kia hoki mai te ketekete a ngā manu ki ngā Ngahere o Ngāti Hine	DOC
Waikato	$1,051,416	Employing our Rangatahi on the Maunga	DOC
Waikato	$542,000	Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tuwharetoa - Manaaki Whenua	DOC
Waikato (BOP)	$2,500,000	Te Arawa Lakes Trust J4N project	LINZ
Wellington	$8,500,000	Waikanae Waterways Restoration	DOC

Table 7: J4N projects included in the freshwater restoration case study

Region	Total Funding Contracted	Project Name	Agency
Hawke's Bay	$870,000	Te Puna Waiora o Nukutaurua	MfE
Hawke's Bay	$1,177,499.10	Waingongoro Awa Project	MfE
Northland	$3,220,000	He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package	Kānoa
Northland	$2,000,000	Hokianga Catchment Restoration Project	MfE
Tasman-Nelson	$4,676,490	Restoring the Moutere: Ridgetops to the Sea	MPI- TUR
Tasman-Nelson	$2,000,000	Maitai Ecological Restoration Project	DOC
Waikato	$826,000	Restoration and Enhancement of geothermal, freshwater & cultural sites in the Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa rohe	DOC
Wellington	$3,500,000	Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project	MfE

Table 8: J4N projects included in the climate change resilience case study

Region	Total Funding Contracted	Project Name	Agency
Hawke's Bay	$2,286,000	Kia eke Te Ngarue, Kia eke Arapawanui	DOC
Hawke's Bay	$1,443,800	Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) Restoration Project	DOC
Hawke's Bay	$1,191,017	Te Matai Jobs for Nature	DOC
Hawkes Bay	$2,268,337	Tukipo Freshwater and Biodiversity Enhancement	MfE
Marlborough	$6,390,285	Te Hoiere/Pelorus Catchment Restoration Project	MfE
Marlborough	$ 759,000	Securing the Mauri of Moawhitu	MfE
Waikato	$1,257,452	Moehau ki te Moana	MfE
Wellington	$1,560,000	The Hem of Remutaka Coastal Wetland Restoration	DOC

Appendix C: Project descriptions

This table includes a description of the projects selected for the case studies in the second year of the evaluation.

Project name	Description
Me He Wai	The project is delivered by Te Waka Pupuri Pūtea Trust supported by Northland Regional Council. They are engaging with marae, hapū, and landowners (predominately Māori) to implement the project across Te Rarawa rohe, monitor waterways and collect data to support the council's Regional Freshwater Plan.
Kia hoki mai te ketekete a nga manu ki nga Ngahere o Ngati Hine	Establish predator control over 5,600 ha targeting rats, stoats and possums.
Employing our Rangatahi on the Maunga	Expand monitoring and surveillance and repairs to the predator-proof fence at Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, and employ and train four full time cadet rangers.
Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) Restoration Project	Expand and protect the wetland habitat that services Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) and establish riparian protection zones along the Taipo Stream and the associated waterways.
Te Matai Jobs for Nature	Pest control, including control of mustelids and rats, deer and possums as well as pest plant management on Te Matai whenua consisting of 3399 hectares of native bush on land administered by Ahu Whenua Trust.
Waikanae Waterways Restoration	Environmental restoration in the Waikanae River catchment, including native afforestation, fencing, and pest animal and weed control.
Nga Kaitiaki o Te Awa Waitangi	Aims to provide education in relation to environmental issues and create employment opportunities for disadvantaged members of the community within the Te Tai Tokerau area with a view to improving their health, welfare, and economic wellbeing to reduce poverty generally in the community and be self-sustainable through our community's co-operation. Whilst providing employment opportunities, the project will regenerate the Waitangi catchments through fencing, native planting, and pest control. Cultural monitoring of the catchment will allow the water quality to be assessed and monitored throughout the project.

Project name	Description
Moehau ki te moana	A collaborative project by farmers, Iwi and community to enliven the waters of the Moehau region. Working together to protect and restore wetlands and riparian strips to improve water quality and enhance biodiversity in the region. By removing rats, mice and possums from the coastal lands, will improve overall ecosystem health and breeding success for native species. Through local employment and training will provide pathways to sustainable job opportunities and upskill the local workforce. With the integration of mātauranga Māori and robust environmental monitoring, aims to achieve the best possible outcomes for people and the environment.
Te Whanganui a Orotu	Expand and protect the wetland habitat that services Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) and establish riparian protection zones along the Taipo Stream and the associated waterways.
Tukipo Freshwater and Biodiversity Enhancement	A multi-faceted environmental project across the 22,000 ha Tukipo catchment, Central Hawke's Bay. It is a mixed farming area with a strong community spirit and willingness to improve water quality and biodiversity. Over the 4 years, the project will provide advice on and funding for stock exclusion through riparian fencing and planting, wetland projects and erosion control. Local jobs will be created with workers needed to coordinate project delivery, complete fencing and planting, and to provide professional wetland, planting and biodiversity advice.
Securing the mauri of Moawhitu	Moawhitu is a ki uta ki tai (mountains to sea) landscape within a previously farmed catchment that is now under active restoration. Previous restoration has been highly successful in restoring wetland water levels and initiating revegetation. Over 4 years, this project aims to improve the cultural and ecological Mauri of Moawhitu through targeted restoration of Moawhitu lake water quality, reintroduction of aquatic habitat for taonga species, and revegetation of indigenous plants. The project will be delivered by a multi-partner freshwater management approach that integrates Mātauranga Māori, scientific and cultural health assessment monitoring, in addition to providing employment and training for staff, Iwi/hapū, and rangatahi.
The Hem of Remutaka Coastal Wetland Restoration	Focused on restoring threatened coastal and wetland systems; ecological connectivity, improving tracks for hikers and cyclists, fishing and diving activities along the Eastbourne, Parangarahu and Wainuiomata coastlines.

Project name	Description
He Ripo Kau Recovery and Employment Package	Fifteen new jobs in Hokianga and Waipoua over 2 years. Ten of these roles embedded into existing biodiversity restoration projects, 5 roles that make up a riparian restoration crew who fence and plant native plants onto Māori and private land.
Hokianga Catchment Restoration Project	On-the-ground activities to improve the health of the freshwater catchments within the Hokianga district, thereby improving the health of the Hokianga Harbour and the community that relies on it. The activities undertaken include planting and fencing (riparian, wetland, and erosion prone areas), pest plant control, and eco-sourcing/growing native plants.
Restoration and Enhancement of geothermal, freshwater & cultural sites in the Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa rohe	Weed control and native planting at five sites in the Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa rohe – Rotokawa and Nga Awa Purua Reserve, Wai-o-Tapu Scenic Reserve, Orakei Korako, Mataarae Marae and Waimahana Marae.
Te Puna Waiora o Nukutaurua	Development of a whanau, hapū, Iwi led freshwater framework with a focus on the health and wellbeing of the water bodies within the Mahia peninsula. Aspirations and knowledge from Iwi and non-Māori (including engagement with council) and a monitoring programme will consolidate priorities and outline a way forward for freshwater planning, environmental investment, cooperation and outcomes for Te Mahia.

Project name	Description
Waingongoro Awa Project	The Waingongoro awa is a short Hawke's Bay costal stream (11 km) that flows from large freshwater springs off the Maraetotara plateau through significant wetlands and discharges out at Waimārama, south of Napier. This river is sacred to the local Māori community as it provides sustenance, spiritual connection, and drinking water to the local hapu. However, water quality has degraded over the years mainly due to habitat loss, erosion and faecal contamination. This community lead ecosystem restoration project purpose is: • Protecting and enhancing biodiversity values based around freshwater ecosystems by using proven and effective enhancement techniques. • Building capacity and capability around freshwater management within the local community. • Transferring the local knowledge (Matauranga Māori) to the younger generations. • Protecting and reconnecting Tangata Whenua with sites of significance. • Partnering with existing local structures such as the Nga Whenua Rahui Waimārama Nursery, the Marae as well as Eastern Institute of Technology where possible to offer skill building opportunities around environmental management.
Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project	The collaborative Governance Group has been working towards the project Vision: Whakaora te repo, ka ora te taonga wai - Restoring our wetland treasure. The purpose of the project is to restore the Wairarapa Moana wetlands, and work with the community to improve recreational and economic opportunities in the region. The aim of this project is to ensure: • Wairarapa Moana is highly valued as a place of cultural and historical significance that inspires our future. • Healthy water in Wairarapa Moana nurtures all native plants, animals and their ecosystems. • Wairarapa Moana underpins environmental, customary, recreational and commercial values that benefit the wider community.
Mauri Tu Mauri Ora	Six Iwi-led landscape scale restoration projects, involving wetlands, pest eradication, beehive placement, community initiatives, and water monitoring.
Te Hoiere/Pelorus Waterways Restoration	Collaborative work to protect the interconnected land and waters of Te Hoiere from the mountains into the sea. The approach seeks long-term environmental, cultural, social, and economic outcomes to benefit present and future generations to come.

Appendix D: Administrative data quality

Data quality

Before analysis of administrative data began, the quality of the data was assessed and data cleaning undertaken. The different funding streams and project outcomes proposed/delivered required differing metrics be recorded for reporting purposes. At times these metrics were overlapped or measured slightly different things

Outliers

Project ID J4N0030.12 (Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust) had an outlier number entered for the period 2023-12-31 of 1392 NZQA credits earned. It is highly unlikely the project had over one thousand kaimahi working for the organisation during this quarter and that they all attained NZQA credits Accordingly this value was replaced with the mean (15.5) of NZQA credits earned of the previous and subsequent number (23 and 8 respectively).

Project ID PWER024 (Hāpara Takatū - Hawke's Bay Regional Council) entered one figure (411.5 hectares) on the 2022-06-30 creating a spike in reported area planted. The project entered no other estimates for this metric, so it is likely that all work up to that point was combined and entered as a single figure. The metric was retained in the analysis.

Four administrative projects (Table 9) were removed from the analysis as they were not directly related to 'on the ground' environmental and social impact outputs.

Table 9. Projects removed from analysis

Project ID	Project name	Agency	Allocation
OVA1	Overheads	LINZ	$3,784,000
EFF1021e	EFF1021 Envelope	MfE	$19,900,000
EFF1020e	EFF1020 Envelope	MfE	$9,245,551
ARC05	ARC Envelope	MfE	$2,212,684

Metric data quality

A number of metrics were not reported by any projects, these being People Currently Employed, People In Formal Training, Area Of Land Protected, Number Of Wānanga, and Intent Regulatory Implementation. Hours worked (100%) and employment opportunities (employment starts) was the single best reported metric, with 79% of projects reporting this metric. Other metrics with reliable data were Area Treated For Possums (20%), Area Treated For Rats And/Or Mustelids (25%), Area Treated For Weeds (31%), and Number Of Plants Planted In Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland Areas (27%). These differences are largely explained by the differences in contracted outcomes, for example only 1.5% of projects reported controlling for Wallabies, which relates to only being a few areas in Aotearoa with Wallabies living in the wild.

Based on previous official J4N reporting, a number of key measures were identified to be reported on (Table 10): Hours worked, Employment opportunities, Land under pest control (hectares), Land under plant pest control (hectares), Wildling conifers controlled (hectares), Freshwater land under restoration (hectares), Land under restoration excluding freshwater (hectares), Total plants, Fencing constructing (kilometres). Additional measures will be incorporated as needed in the reporting.

- *Hours worked and Employment opportunities* was drawn directly from the Hours worked and Employment Starts metrics.
- *Land under pest control (hectares)* was drawn directly from the Total Area treated for pests metric.
- *Land under plant pest control (hectares)* was drawn directly from the Area Treated For Weeds metric.
- *Wildling conifers controlled (hectares)* was drawn directly from the Area Treated For Wilding Conifers metric.
- *Freshwater land under restoration (hectares)* was a sum of the metrics for: Area Of Riparian Strip Restored By Plantings Excluding Other Restoration Planting, Freshwater Area Under Active Restoration Riparian/Wetland, Area Of Riparian Or Lake Or Wetlands Planting Completed.
- *Land under restoration excluding freshwater (hectares)* was a sum of the metrics for: Area Restored By Plantings Excluding Riparian Planting, Area Of Afforestation Or Other Biodiversity Planting Not Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland, Area Under Active Restoration Not Riparian/Wetland, Area Of Planting For Erosion Control Completed, Area Of Land Protected.
- *Total* plants was a sum of the metrics for: Number Of Plants Planted In Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland Areas, Number Of Trees, Number Of Other Plants.
- *Fencing constructed (kilometres)* was a sum of the metrics for: New Fencing, Existing Fencing Maintained, Riparian Fencing, Fencing Not Riparian, New Fencing Constructed Or Existing Fencing Maintained.

Table 10. Number of projects reporting primary metrics (March 2024)

Projects reporting metric	Number	%	Cumulative total reported
Hours worked	526	100%	10,668,522
Employment opportunities	413	79%	14,607
Land under pest control (hectares)	182	35%	4,254,644
Land under plant pest control (hectares)	163	31%	697,460
Wildling conifers controlled (hectares)	45	8.6%	2,121,153
Freshwater land under restoration (hectares)	159	30%	5,562
Land under restoration excluding freshwater (hectares)	96	18%	8,112
Total plants	147	28%	10,916,228
Fencing constructed (kilometres)	179	34%	5,224

Employment starts (Table 11) is a broad measure that does not distinguish between full and part-time work and may double count employees who are part time across multiple related projects. However, it is the most well reported metric and has a definition that is consistent across agencies and funding streams. No projects reported on the People currently employed and People in formal training metrics. Only 9% of projects reported on the People Completed Formal Training metric, which is surprising given the very large number of projects reporting on employment starts. Interviews with providers indicated that there were multiple workshops and training for staff to upskill them in areas like pest-control, fencing, equipment use, poisons, and health and safety. The number of NZQA credits earned was also low (2.3%), although we were not able to ascertain in this analysis whether this low rate was due to low numbers reporting on this, project requirements (i.e., was not a requirement of the funding), or low uptake by those employed.

Table 11. Percentage of projects reporting: Employment, training and education metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Hours worked	526	100%
Employment Starts	413	78.5%
People Currently Employed	0	0.0%
People In Formal Training	0	0.0%
People Completed Formal Training	46	8.7%
Number Of NZQA Credits Earned	12	2.3%

The area treated for Weeds, rats/mustelids, and possums (Table 12) were relatively well reported (31%, 25%, and 20% respectively), and 15% of projects reported controlling for other animal pests. Much smaller numbers of projects reported on pest control for goats (4.9%), deer (4.4%), and wallabies (1.5%). Forty-five projects (8.6%) reported on the area treated for wilding conifers. Twenty-eight projects (5.3%) reported on the combined metric 'area of animal pest control completed' all of whom were funded from the LINZ, MfE - Freshwater Improvement Fund, MfE - Capability and capacity development, MfE - Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration Fund, MfE – At Risk Catchments, and MfE – Envelope funding streams; projects under these funding streams did not report on individual pest control metrics.

Table 12. Percentage of projects reporting: Pest control metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Area Treated For Possums	107	20.3%
Area Treated For Rats And/Or Mustelids	131	24.9%
Area Treated For Goats	26	4.9%
Area Treated For Deer	23	4.4%
Area Treated For Wallabies	8	1.5%
Area Treated For Other Animal Pests	77	14.6%
Area Of Animal Pest Control Completed	28	5.3%
Area Treated For Weeds	163	31.0%
Area Treated For Wilding Conifers	45	8.6%

There were a range of fencing metrics that could be reported against (Table 13), which would have been challenging to report against. These ranged between a single metric for all fencing activity (New Fencing Constructed Or Existing Fencing Maintained, 8.2%), and separate metrics for New Fencing (12%), Existing Fencing Maintained (9.1%), Riparian Fencing (11%), and Fencing Not Riparian (2.5%). The combined metric was only reported on by projects funded from the funding streams labelled as MfE - Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration Fund, MfE - Freshwater Improvement Fund, MfE - Capability and capacity development, MfE - At Risk Catchments, MfE – Envelope, and the MfE - Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme. Projects reporting against riparian/non-riparian fencing were the PDU, MPI – TUR, MfE – MPI, MfE - At Risk Catchments, and MfE – Envelope funding streams. Projects reporting new/maintain fencing metric were from the DOC_RN_PLF, DOC_KfN_programme, MPI-BNZ_B20_WAL, MfE_MPI, DOC_RN funds, MfE_Secretariat, DOC_KfN_programme, MfE - At Risk Catchments, and MfE_PW funding streams.

Table 13. Percentage of projects reporting: Fencing metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
New Fencing	65	12.4%
Existing Fencing Maintained	48	9.1%
Riparian Fencing	55	10.5%
Fencing Not Riparian	13	2.5%
New Fencing Constructed Or Existing Fencing Maintained	43	8.2%

The planting metrics also had multiple metrics measuring similar or overlapping outputs (Table 14). There metrics had relatively lower reporting rates with plantings for riparian restoration (excluding other restoration work, 13%), riparian/lake/wetlands plantings (16%), and area restored by plantings (excluding riparian planting, 16%) the most reported. There are a range of other planting metrics that were reported by few projects: Afforestation Or Other Biodiversity Planting Not Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland (1.5%), Freshwater Area Under Active Restoration Riparian/Wetland (4.2%), Under Active Restoration Not Riparian/Wetland (3.2%), Planting For Erosion Control Completed (0.8%), and Land Protected (0%). Again these relate to the funding requirements, with most metrics corresponding to DOC funding, Area Under Active Restoration Riparian/Wetland more likely to be part of MPI funding streams, and the other metrics from MfE - Freshwater Improvement Fund and At Risk Catchments funding.

Table 14. Percentage of projects reporting: Wetlands/riparian and non-wetland/riparian planting (area)

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Area Of Riparian Strip Restored By Plantings Excluding Other Restoration Planting	68	12.9%
Area Of Riparian Or Lake Or Wetlands Planting Completed	86	16.3%
Area Restored By Plantings Excluding Riparian Planting	85	16.2%
Area Of Afforestation Or Other Biodiversity Planting Not Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland	8	1.5%
Freshwater Area Under Active Restoration Riparian/Wetland	22	4.2%
Area Under Active Restoration Not Riparian/Wetland	17	3.2%
Area Of Planting For Erosion Control Completed	4	0.8%
Area Of Land Protected	0	0.0%

The number of plants planted, while related to the area planted, was arguably an easier metric to report against as evidenced by the 27% of project who reported against this metric from DOC, MfE, and MPI funding streams (Table 15). Projects reporting this metric also tended to report number of trees and other plants at the same time. It is impossible to determine whether any double counting was occurring. The projects reporting the trees and other plants metric were funded from the MfE – MPI, MPI – TUR, and MfE - At Risk Catchments funding streams.

Table 15. Percentage of projects reporting: Planting (number)

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Number Of Plants Planted In Riparian Or Lake Or Wetland Areas	143	27.2%
Number Of Trees	21	4.0%
Number Of Other Plants	15	2.9%

*Te Uru Rākau - One Billion Trees

Only two projects (Table 16) reported on the area where aquatic weeds were controlled (both LINZ funded projects), while ten projects (1.9%) reported on fish passage remediation as part of MfE - Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration, MfE - Freshwater Improvement, and MfE – MPI funding streams.

Table 16. Percentage of projects reporting: Freshwater metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Area Where Aquatic Weeds Were Controlled	2	0.4%
Number Of Fish Passage Barriers Remediated	10	1.9%

Projects reporting on the length of tracks maintained (14%) and created (2.5%), and number of huts maintained (3.6%) were primarily from DOC funded projects (Threatened Species Recovery, Community Conservation, Private land fund, Māori Land Fund, Kaimahi for Nature, and Nga Awa), with two projects from the LINZ and MfE – MPI funding streams (Table 17). Forty-five (8.6%) projects reported on the maintenance of historic heritage assets, funded through DOC (Kaimahi for Nature, Community Conservation, Private land fund, Māori Land Fund) and MfE (Freshwater Improvement Fund, Capability and capacity development) funding

streams. The number of farm environmental plans (4.0%) was reported more often than the area covered by the plan (1.7%); it is easier to count the number of plans than to calculate area. Planning metric were reported by projects funded through MfE (Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration Fund, Freshwater Improvement Fund, Capability and capacity development, Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme) and MPI (TUR) funding streams.

Table 17. Percentage of projects reporting: Infrastructure and environment plan metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Number Of Huts Maintained	19	3.6%
Length Of Tracks Maintained	71	13.5%
Length Of Tracks Created	13	2.5%
Number Of Historic Heritage Assets Maintained	45	8.6%
Number Of Farm Environment Plans Completed	21	4.0%
Area Covered By Farm Environment Plans Completed	9	1.7%

The number of projects reporting engagement metrics was very low (Table 18). Only two projects (0.4%) reported on the number of catchment groups created or supported as part of the MfE - Capability and capacity development funding stream. No projects reported on wānanga held or regulatory implementation.

Table 18. Percentage of projects reporting: Engagement and regulatory metrics

Projects reporting this metric	Total	%
Number Of Wānanga	0	0.0%
Intent Regulatory Implementation	0	0.0%
Number Of Catchment Groups Created Or Supported	2	0.4%

Computed Variables

Social impact

Social impact includes skills, training, employment, capability development, historical and cultural heritage restoration, recreation enhancement and regulatory implementation. Includes projects with any of the following: Intent Capability Development, Intent Historical Or Cultural Heritage Restoration, Intent Recreation Enhancement, Intent Regulatory Implementation.

Climate resilience

Climate resilience includes areas planted in response to ‘erosion control’, ‘Riparian planting’, ‘Farm and Environmental Plans completed’, ‘Pest Control of animals and pest control of plants’, ‘freshwater active rehabilitation’, ‘fish passage’, ‘wetlands, stream and lake riparian planting’, ‘aquatic weed control’. Includes projects with any of the following: Intent Ecosystem Restoration, Intent Freshwater Restoration, Intent Pest Control Of Animals, Intent Pest Control Of Plants.

Freshwater restoration

Freshwater restoration includes projects with Intent Freshwater Restoration.

ALLEN + CLARKE

+64 4 890 7300

office@allenandclarke.co.nz

www.allenandclarke.co.nz