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WWF- New Zealand

HABITAT PROTECTION FUND - APPLICATION GUIDE

January 2011

Purpose

This is a guide for community groups who wish to apply to the WWF Habitat Protection Fund (HPF) for financial assistance for projects. It outlines the process for applying to the HPF, the criteria used to assess applications and WWF's priorities for HPF projects.

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HPF background

The HPF funds a range of activities that help to protect or restore priority habitats in New Zealand (see criteria). The HPF is targeted at established community groups with a proven track record of delivering conservation and restoration projects. The HPF offers donations of between \$1000 and \$10,000 per annum, for up to three years (a maximum of \$30,000 over three years).

WWF believes that providing assistance to communities to take conservation action is vital to conserving biodiversity in New Zealand. WWF-New Zealand runs the HPF with the support of the Tindall Foundation and is the Foundation's Environmental Funding Manager. We have run the HPF since 2000.

Aims of the HPF

- To support community groups delivering local habitat protection and restoration projects protecting and restoring New Zealand's most vulnerable habitats
 - To protect and restore habitats that WWF identifies as a priority
 - To promote increased coordination of habitat protection and ecological restoration on a catchment or landscape scale
 - To raise awareness of biodiversity and conservation in the wider community
 - To encourage communities to become guardians of their environment, becoming active partners in protecting, sustaining and restoring our biodiversity for present and future generations
 - To increase the scale and effectiveness of community-led conservation action to achieve this.
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Scope of the HPF

The HPF is open to community groups carrying out habitat protection and restoration projects in New Zealand across a range of land tenures.

Land tenure and protection

The HPF will support projects on land in a range of tenures including; privately owned, multiply-owned Maori land, local authority land and Crown land in the conservation estate (DOC land). In relation to projects on DOC land the Fund will only support community groups and will not fund activities that DOC is responsible for undertaking as part of its functions under the Conservation Act 1987.

The HPF will fund projects irrespective of the protection status of the land, however, for projects involving ecological restoration involving the planting of native species or fencing, proof will be needed that there is a binding commitment from the landowner to protect these areas in perpetuity (e.g. a covenant). WWF encourages private landowners to protect valuable habitats and remaining remnants of natural vegetation with covenants through the Department of Conservation, Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, local authorities or with Kawenata through the Nga Whenua Rahui scheme for Maori owned land.

Process for applying to the HPF

Funding rounds

WWF runs two rounds of the HPF a year. The closing dates for preliminary applications are 01 May and 01 October. Preliminary applications can be made at any time prior to a closing date for each round. Applications will not be assessed until after the funding round has closed. Donations to groups will be made 2-3 months after the closing date for preliminary applications.

How to apply

Complete the HPF preliminary application form which can be downloaded from the WWF website: www.wwf.org.nz/what_we_do/community_funding/

Once completed email this form to msslade@wwf.org.nz

The preliminary application form asks for details about your group and a description of the project you are seeking funding for. **You do not need to provide supporting information at this stage.**

Based on the information provided in the form we will make an assessment as to whether your group and project are eligible for funding, and whether your project meets the HPF priorities. We may contact you by telephone or email to seek further clarification before making a decision.

In your preliminary application form you should clearly demonstrate how you meet the Fund's criteria and HPF priorities.

Assessment process

The preliminary application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Group criteria
- Project criteria
- Eligible costs and activities
- HPF priorities

If you meet the criteria above you will be invited to apply, and you will need to complete a detailed form and provide more detailed information in support of your application (see supporting information section).

Once you have completed the full application and provided the required supporting information, your application will be assessed by the HPF Advisory Panel. This comprises WWF staff and independent advisors appointed by WWF's Board of Trustees.

If you meet the eligibility criteria but the Fund is oversubscribed, we will prioritise applications that best meet HPF priorities. This decision is discretionary and there is no right of appeal. If your application is unsuccessful we will notify you in writing. You will be able to reapply to a future funding round.

Successful applicants

Donations offered to successful applicants will be subject to a funding agreement between WWF and the recipient, and may be paid in a number of instalments payable at agreed milestones and dependent on progress.

From time-to-time WWF will evaluate the effectiveness of the HPF and an evaluator will contact and interview a representative sample of HPF recipients. Recipients will be required to participate in and cooperate with this process.

HPF criteria

Applications will be judged on the extent to which they meet the HPF's criteria:

- Group criteria
 - Project criteria
 - Eligible costs and activities
 - HPF priorities
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Group criteria

Your group must:

- Be a small, community group based and operating in New Zealand and employing less than five staff (full time equivalent)
OR
 - Be a locally constituted branch of a national organisation with your own constitution, management committee and set of accounts
AND
 - Be a not-for-profit entity; either an incorporated society, charitable trust, company limited by guarantee (non-profit only) or a trust set up under legislation covering Maori organisations. Your group must have transparent ways of making decisions written down in a constitution or set of rules
AND
 - Have a track record, technical competence and have experience in conservation, restoration or land management that enables you to deliver the project, or have guaranteed ongoing support from a competent organisation such as DOC, regional councils, NZ Landcare Trust etc.
AND
 - If your group employs staff or contractors have relevant policies and procedures in place
AND
 - Be solvent and financially sustainable and demonstrate sound financial management having the necessary financial controls in place
AND
 - Have your own bank account and demonstrate that you can manage funding from a number of sources, maintaining a clear separation of expenditure and tracking of projects.
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Who cannot apply

The following are not eligible to apply for funding:

- National or umbrella environmental or conservation organisations employing more than five (full time equivalent) staff. **Please Note** - locally constituted branches of large organisations, such as Forest & Bird, can apply in their own right
 - Individuals or family/whanau groups
 - Trading companies or businesses (for-profit organisations)
 - Local authorities - territorial authorities, unitary authorities and regional councils
 - Government agencies or Crown Entities e.g. Fish & Game
 - Organisations based or working outside New Zealand
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- Equipment and tools (spades, grubbers, weed eaters)
- Costs associated with monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes
- Volunteer expenses; travel costs, refreshments, tools and equipment, training
- Publicity and promotional materials (posters/leaflets/photos/video production/interpretation signs etc.) that help to raise public awareness of the project in the local community.

What costs and activities are NOT eligible

Applications for the following costs and activities are **NOT** eligible:

- Projects outside New Zealand
- Funding for the same or a very similar project for more than 3 years running
- Capital assets or equipment costing more than \$1,500 per item
- Urgent or retrospective applications
- Research or academic projects
- The purchase, repair or construction of buildings
- Land purchase or costs associated with the purchase of land
- Costs associated with applications or processes under the Resource Management Act 1991
- Establishment costs of setting up Incorporated Societies, charities or other bodies
- Domestic or overseas travel (except volunteer travel costs)
- Environmental education projects. Groups seeking funding for EE projects can apply directly to WWF-New Zealand's Environmental Education Action Fund (EEAF) and should discuss their proposal with the Education Programme Leader
- Work that a landowner is required to do by law
- Sports and recreation activities/projects
- Drama, art or performing art projects
- Core education; scholarships, equipment, activities etc
- Health, medical, disabilities, equipment expenses
- Religious or political advocacy or advancement
- Business or investment capital, expenses etc.

HPF Priorities

The priorities for HPF funding are:

- Projects in areas close to population centres with the objective of increasing awareness of biodiversity conservation and increasing community involvement in conservation action
 - Projects working in areas of lowland biodiversity including:
 - Freshwater environments and their catchments
 - Coastal and dune systems
 - Wetlands and estuarine systems
 - Lowland and coastal forest and scrub communities
 - Habitats of threatened indigenous species
 - Projects in areas where there are remaining patches of high quality habitat which are threatened by habitat fragmentation, changes in land use or invasive species.
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Additional priorities

Additional preference will be given to groups and projects that demonstrate that they:

- Are working at a wider catchment or landscape-scale and the project has ecological outcomes including:
 - Protecting the integrity of existing good quality habitats
 - Restoring connectivity between existing habitats
 - Providing buffers to remaining habitat remnants
 - Restoring ecological processes
 - Are working to meet priorities identified in local biodiversity strategies or action plans (if one exists)
 - Create opportunities for local economic development, employment or social development
 - Are part of a multi-agency partnership supported by the local or regional council or the Department of Conservation
 - Demonstrate that they are cooperating with or can provide support and advice to other community groups working in their area.
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Supporting information

If you are invited to apply to the next stage of the HPF you will be asked to provide a more detailed application and will be required to provide the following supporting information. We will notify you of this once we have assessed your preliminary application.

General information

All Full HPF applications must provide:

- A detailed project plan outlining the project's intended outcomes, how they will be achieved, the skills and experience of those delivering the project and a timeline for the project
- A full project budget
- Details of any consents, permits or licences needed for the project
- Evidence that the project has support from the Department of Conservation and/or local authority (for example a letter of support)
- Details about consultation with the local hapu and/or iwi about the project, and letters of support where appropriate
- All projects must provide ownership information (see below).

Land tenure and protection

If the applicant does NOT own the land or property in the application, the following supporting documentation is required:

- Proof of land ownership
- An agreement for the use of the land for the project from the owner
- Support for the project from the organisation which has legal title to the project site if this is crown or local authority land
- The reasons why the legal owner is not making the application.

Ecological restoration plans

All applications for ecological restoration projects must provide an ecological restoration plan completed or endorsed by a suitably qualified ecologist, which:

- Identifies the restoration area, including a map and photographs
 - Details of the ownership and any legal protection given to the area
 - Details the responsibility of government agencies, including local authorities, for the area or for the project
 - Describes the area including providing detail of the dominant vegetation cover, species present and natural heritage significance of the area
 - Details the original and current condition of the area and identifies the need for ecological restoration, including providing a benchmark "reference" against which to measure the success of the project
 - Identifies the aims and objectives of the restoration
 - Assesses in detail the risks to the restoration of the area, including animal and plant pest invasion
 - Details of any legal requirements for the project such as resource consents
 - Provides an assessment of the cultural concerns raised by the project
 - Provides a plan for how the restoration will be achieved, including:
 - A risk management plan, including animal and/or plant pest
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- Ecological restoration plans continued**
- management plan (if relevant)\
 - How locally eco-sourced plants will be used in the restoration
 - Timing for the restoration
 - Long term management and monitoring of the restoration project
 - Provides an assessment of the viability of the project ecologically and in terms of the long-term sustainability, taking into account the risks, resources and costs involved.

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- Pest management plans**
- All applications for pest animal or plant management projects must include:
- A plan including:
 - A map and description of the project area
 - The species to be targeted and the flora and/or fauna being protected
 - Evidence of why the project is needed
 - The intended outcome of the project:
 - The pest management target
 - The target for the successful protection of the flora and/or fauna
 - How these targets will be achieved and sustained
 - The method to be used
 - A plan for monitoring and evaluating the project including a benchmark against which progress will be measured
 - Support for the project from the biosecurity officer of the relevant local authority or DOC
 - Details of consents, approvals, licenses advertisements, signage and/or other notifications legally required for the project
 - Details of any health and safety certification and/or training required to carry out the work (e.g. GrowSafe for the administration of horticultural herbicides) and evidence that you and/or any contractor used has up to date certification to carry out the tasks proposed.

Additional questions and information

If you have any questions in relation to the HPF's criteria or application process or wish to discuss a potential application contact Marc Slade, Terrestrial Conservation Programme Manager, WWF-New Zealand at:

Email: msslade@wwf.org.nz

Phone: 04 815 8521 (Direct line)

Or Ph: 04 499 2930
