

Submission to the PNCC Draft Support and Funding Policy

From Environment Network Manawatū (ENM)

Contact Details:

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Hearing of Submissions:

ENM would like to speak to our submission. The details of this submission do NOT need to be kept private.

Background:

ENM is the environment hub for the Manawatū Region with the key purpose of facilitating and enabling communication, cooperation, and increasing collective action amongst its member groups and the wider community. ENM provides leadership by fostering and encouraging environmental initiatives in the region and our 60 current member groups are from throughout the Manawatū River Catchment with interests including biodiversity regeneration, freshwater management, citizen science, food security and resilience, sustainable living, alternative energies, and active transport.

Submission:

ENM is generally supportive of the key changes as outlined in the consultation document but as outlined below, wishes to understand more about the detail particularly regarding how the funding for identified sector lead organisations will be transitioned.

ENM is pleased to see that the proposed policy aims to increase capacity and capability of organisations to deliver initiatives that respond to the environmental and social wellbeing of the city as well as cultural and economic wellbeing. We support the proposed policy objectives, principles, and scope.

We have focused on key areas of the draft policy that will impact the Environment Sector:

1. **Confirming the decision-making process to lease Council owned land for community purposes.**

ENM supports the streamlining of this process. We hope this will help create a clearer path for the shared goal of working towards a city Enviro-centre. Enviro-hubs, as mechanisms for leadership in

the Environment Sector and driving environmental initiatives, already successfully operate out of Enviro-centres in several a number of several other regions of Aotearoa.

2. Establishing a process to enter a formalised partnership with sector leads outside a contestable process and funded out of the Strategic Priority Grants budget

ENM strongly supports the inclusion in this policy of partnerships with sector lead organisations that 'support other organisations to develop and connect'. This is what we do, and while the policy remains silent on who these sector lead organisations are likely to be, ENM would welcome being identified as the environmental sector lead. We look forward to working with PNCC on the details of a future contract.

Whilst there is no clear specification of this in the draft policy, our understanding is that sector leads would be reporting the outcomes of their work directly to Council through a formalised process. The concepts of 'developing, connecting and supporting' other organisations through networking and communication are not easily quantified in standardised reporting formats and we would welcome the opportunity to share the achievements and challenges of the environmental sector in an appropriate, customised format that best demonstrates the work of the sector in meeting our collective goals.

We also anticipate the adoption of a partnership agreement (as opposed to the current contestable arrangement) will be of benefit to the sector, the environment, and the city by:

- Identifying ENM as a sector lead for the environment will help the council more fully realise Goal 4, to be an Eco City by raising its profile and importance.
- Allowing ENM's full focus on delivering services to our member groups and meeting specified, agreed outcomes (because there will be more certainty and continuity of funding).
- Allowing us to support our member groups in their funding applications more transparently and comprehensively, thus further boosting the sector; currently ENM could be competing with its own member groups for contestable funding.
- Providing greater opportunity for identified sector leads to work collaboratively so we all achieve a greater understanding of our work and can support each other.
- Providing further opportunity to continue building current relationships with the PNCC Community Development team, which we hope will remain an integral part of the process.

The policy as drafted notes in Part A, Section 5.6 (a) that "funding will be allocated from the Strategic Priority Grants fund to a partnership agreement". We understand there is no additional funding at present for these agreements, however, we wish to seek clarification on how the funding will be transitioned under the new arrangement. We are strongly of the view that partnership contracts should NOT be at the detriment to other eligible organisations applying for contestable funding. Furthermore, we would like to see the funding for sector lead partnership in a specific budget line in future, thus recognising the value of this, and separating it clearly from Strategic Priority Grant funding.

Recommendation: Change 5.6(a) from "If agreed, funding **will** be allocated from the strategic priority grants fund to a partnership agreement" to "If agreed, funding **can** be allocated from the Strategic Priority Grants fund, **or from other funds as appropriate**" (or similar).

3. A broader scope to allow a wider range of support and funding programmes.

ENM supports the range of funding opportunities offered, particularly the new Resource Recovery Fund which we see as an opportunity for ENM and its member groups to continue and build on their valuable work in the waste management and minimisation area.

4. Environmental Initiatives Fund

We note the Environmental Initiatives Fund is not explicitly mentioned in this draft Policy and ENM seeks clarification on how this funding would be transitioned to the new system. This is a fund currently administered by ENM for environmental initiatives that align with PNCC's Eco-City goals. ENM delivers this fund administration as part of a Strategic Priority Grant from PNCC, and this is a good example of where we are providing leadership in the environmental sector. ENM values the task of administering this fund as it is a useful mechanism for developing relationships with organisations involved in environmental activities that have not necessarily interacted with ENM in other ways. Where appropriate, it means we can connect these initiatives with others doing similar work and further strengthen the sector's capability and capacity. It is therefore important that the funding for environmental initiatives is retained in the long term, and that ENM's role in distributing this fund continues.

Recommendation: The transition of the Environmental Initiatives Fund under the new contractual arrangements is clarified and furthermore, the distribution of Environmental Initiatives Funding is formalised as part of the new contractual process and names ENM as the administrator of the fund, and the key organisation to set targeted funding priorities each year.

5. 5.4.4 Discretionary Decision Making.

This section does not seem to fit under the heading of 5.4 Accountability but should sit as point 5.3.4. ENM supports the incorporation of this point into the policy as a mechanism to gain council support for community-led proposals that sit outside of budget and/or scope of funding but are excellent concepts that could contribute favourably to PNCC strategic goals.