



9 April 2024

A McDonald
fyi-request-26039-9f359de5@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe,

Thank you for your email of 6 March 2024 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry), requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“A breakdown (including forecast) JFN funding contracted but unused from 1 July 2024, by the end of the current four-year programme, showing:

- *Total dollar value of unused funding*
- *Names of each contracted party with unused funding, dollar value of unused funding for each contracted party*
- *If the funding is planned to be extended beyond 30 June 2024, the parties that the funding will be extended for (incl. under consideration), and the dollar value under consideration for extension or extended.”*

Jobs for Nature is a cross-government programme established to create nature-based employment in response to the economic impacts of COVID-19. The Ministry is responsible for \$444.5 million¹ to create jobs in regional environmental projects that are improving New Zealand’s freshwater and to improve freshwater and ecology through a number of different interventions.

Many of the projects funded by the Ministry under the Jobs for Nature Programme are either 5 or 6-year programmes; meaning that the majority of projects funded by the Ministry under the Jobs for Nature Programme are not expected to close until 2025/2026. Of the 172 contracts the Ministry administers under the Jobs for Nature programme, only 6 have already closed and 20 are expected to close by 30 June 2024.

¹ As the lead agency, the Ministry has been allocated operational funding for the establishment and administration of the programme, including the Jobs for Nature Secretariat (who oversee and coordinate the Jobs for Nature partnering agencies).

Remaining contracted payments beyond 30 June 2024

The Ministry is unable to provide you with estimates of unused funding beyond 30 June 2024 as these projects are still being delivered and there is no 'unused' funding. On this basis I am refusing this element of your request under section 18(e) as the information sought does not exist or cannot be found.

However, in the spirit of the Act, I am providing you with details of the Ministry's Jobs for Nature projects that are contracted beyond 30 June 2024. (Attachment 1 refers). Please note that, given the frequency of Jobs for Nature reporting, these figures are current as at 31 December 2023 and are best estimates.

The Ministry does not classify these funds as 'unused' given that these projects will still be ongoing and in delivery as at 1 July 2024; instead, these values reflect:

- funding that has already been contracted to project partners by the Ministry under the Jobs for Nature Programme and
- is expected to be paid beyond 30 June 2024.

The Ministry is unable to provide a forecast of the value of funds that may, upon completion of a particular project or fund, be unused while these projects are still in delivery. We note that these projects are all expected to spend their contracted amount in full as per their respective Deed of Funding. The Ministry would not be able to provide details of unused funding, forecast or actual, until after a project has ended and the final reporting has been settled.

Project partners with term extensions

You have also requested details of funding planned to be extended beyond 30 June 2024, including extensions still under consideration.

As noted above, the majority of the projects funded by the Ministry under the Jobs for Nature programme will still be ongoing and in delivery from 1 July 2024. Attachment 1 includes and identifies projects that have end dates beyond 30 June 2024. The total contracted dollar value of remaining payments to these projects is also provided.

I am refusing the part of your request to identify parties with extensions under consideration under section 9(2)(j) of the Official Information Act – to enable the Crown to negotiate without disadvantage or prejudice.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of this information is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lorena Stephen', written in a cursive style.

Lorena Stephen,
General Manager, Partnerships and Investments
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao