



Purpose of the Fund

To help Regional Councils with the costs of coastal planning for aquaculture in accordance with the RMA and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS).

Introduction

Government has made a commitment to support well-planned and sustainable aquaculture growth and is committed to enabling industry to achieve its goal of \$1 billion in annual sales by 2025. The Aquaculture Planning Fund is intended to help councils plan for aquaculture growth in accordance with the RMA and NZCPS.

Policy 8 of the NZCPS now requires that all persons exercising functions and powers under the RMA must:

“Recognise the significant existing and potential contribution of aquaculture to the social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities by:

- including in regional policy statements and regional coastal plans provision for aquaculture activities in appropriate places in the coastal environment, recognising that relevant considerations may include:
 - the need for high water quality for aquaculture activities; and
 - the need for land-based facilities associated with marine farming;
- taking account of the social and economic benefits of aquaculture, including any available assessments of national and regional economic benefits; and
- ensuring that development in the coastal environment does not make water quality unfit for aquaculture activities in areas approved for that purpose”.

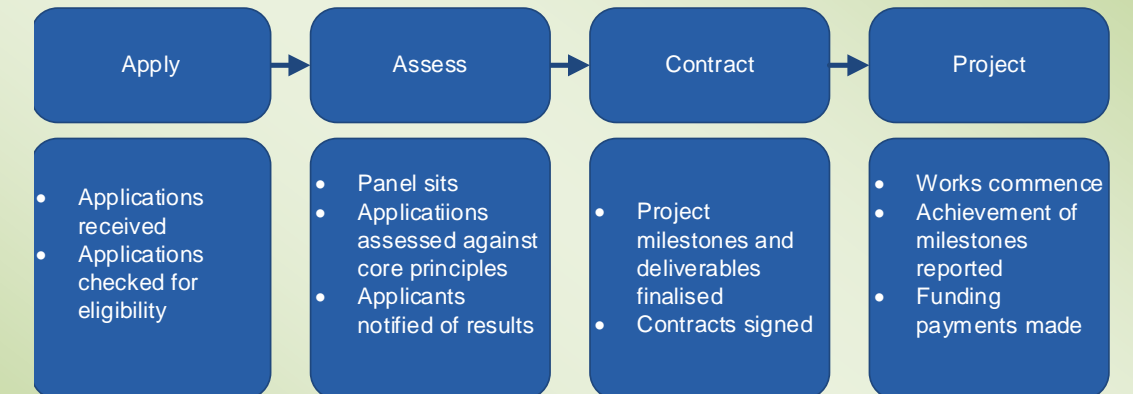
Relevant performance measures

The Government’s Aquaculture Strategy and Five-year Action Plan includes initiatives to improve RMA coastal planning for aquaculture. This Fund contributes to achieving two specific performance measures contained within the Strategy:

- 80% of regional coastal plans contain provision for aquaculture by 2016.
- 4000 ha of new aquaculture space developed by 2016

Process Steps

Councils can access the Aquaculture Planning Fund by applying at any time throughout the year on a standard application form. Final decisions, notification and completion of contracts will occur in June/July.



Projects eligible for funding

The Fund supports improvements to particular regional coastal plans or generic improvements that could be used across plans:

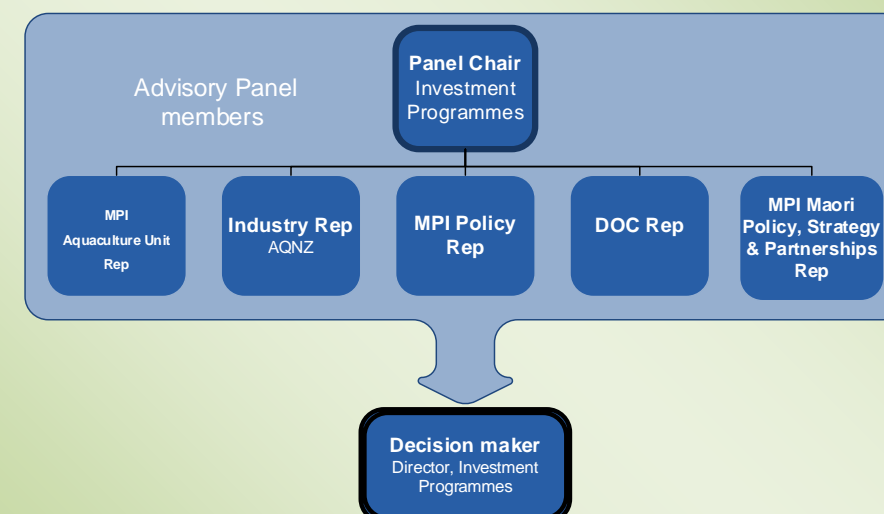
- Provisions to deal with allocation of space
- The creation of zones for new consent applications
- Providing support for the farming of new species
- Improved provisions to deal with environmental impacts
- Scientific and other research, information and advice, and evidence-based standards, to support decision making
- Improved re-consenting provisions and processes.

Costs MPI will contribute towards

- Council staff time – e.g. the staff progressing work, managers’ time for project oversight, the hearing administrator and the reporting officer
- Consultant time – e.g. to prepare aspects of plan change work and/or write plan changes or to act as independent commissioner/s at hearings
- Information to support aquaculture planning - e.g. data collection, science, modelling and spatial planning; AEEs, and information to support s.32 analysis.
- Consultation and hearing costs - e.g. costs associated with venue hire, catering, koha, equipment hire, mediator/s, mail outs, public notices and hearing site visits
- Expert evidence - e.g. to support plan changes at hearing
- Legal representation - e.g. to provide general legal oversight, to review plan change drafts and act as legal counsel for the plan change process.

Advisory Panel

An Advisory Panel meets to provide input into the assessment of applications. The panel provides knowledge and information on: industry growth, RMA and coastal planning, government priorities and work programmes, and Settlement and iwi objectives.



MPI’s Investment Programmes team administers the Fund and the Advisory Panel. Funding decisions are made by the Director, Investment Programmes, based on MPI and Advisory Panel advice.

Core Principles

- The Fund is only open to Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities
- MPI will only fund projects where councils contribute to at least 50% of the costs
- MPI will not fund projects where we consider the benefits to sustainable aquaculture growth are low or the outcome is highly uncertain. Applications must score a minimum 35/100 points against the fund criteria (over page)
- If the fund is over-prescribed, priority will be given to projects that score highest against the fund criteria
- MPI will only fund projects consistent with RMA legal requirements
- Councils must show they have the project management skills and capability to deliver on the project
- Funding decisions will be made by MPI based on best available information with input from the Advisory Panel
- MPI will contribute to project start-up costs, but further payments will only be made on completion of agreed project milestones
- MPI will work with councils to maximise the value of any planning initiative or supporting project. MPI will consider how government can best support the project, including linkages to other government initiatives
- The Fund will be reviewed regularly to ensure benefits are maximised and consistency with Office of Auditor General Guidelines for Grant Management.

MPI reserves the right to accept or decline any applications.



Assessment Criteria: Applications will be assessed against their business case which will be used to judge whether the project is desirable, viable and achievable, and therefore worthy of government investment.

Weighting	Criteria	Description	Information Sources	0	1, 2 or 3	4, 5 or 6	7, 8 or 9
Reasons for the project – the business case should explain the reasons why the project is required				SCORE			
12.5%	Need	Why is this project needed? How will the project contribute to improved coastal planning and decision-making for aquaculture and its timing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council business case Existing regional plan provisions 	No evidence the project will contribute to improved coastal planning [DECLINE APPLICATION]	Minor benefits only and no clear linkage to improved planning processes	The project would contribute to future planning but timing unclear	The project clearly contributes to improved coastal planning and decision-making within reasonable timeframes
12.5%	Strategic alignment	How will the project contribute to strategic goals and objectives for aquaculture? Is the funding requested an appropriate level of government investment given the project's goals/objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's Aquaculture Strategy Industry and Regional Growth Strategies Settlement priority regions and negotiations New species strategy Catalyst for future growth opportunities Value for money analysis 	Not a priority at this time [DECLINE APPLICATION]	Low strategic priority	Medium strategic priority	High strategic priority – project clearly linked to strategic growth objectives
Expected benefits/disadvantages				SCORE			
20%	Economic Benefits	Economic benefits (direct and indirect) can come from coastal planning that supports new space, better use of existing space, and the adoption of innovation and new technologies. Preference will be given to proposals that would result in tangible economic benefits. (Economic benefits will only occur if industry will invest.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry support and willingness to invest Fit with industry growth plans and priorities Independent economic analysis Regional economic development reports Expected compliance cost savings 	Industry unwilling or unable to invest in new aquaculture in the region	Industry may consider investing but some constraints currently exist and economic benefits low or unclear	Industry will likely invest. Reasonable level of information to suggest moderate economic benefits	Industry fully support application and will invest Good economic benefits and supported by good information
10%	A healthy aquatic environment	Aquaculture growth must be environmentally sustainable. Preference will be given to projects that deliver good environmental outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice from aquaculture technical group Guidance on the standards of ecological impact assessments for aquaculture Options to avoid remedy or mitigate environmental effects Council State of the Environment Report 	Environmental effects of proposed aquaculture growth are significant and can't be managed [DECLINE APPLICATION]	Concern about effects and insufficient information to demonstrate these can be adequately managed; doesn't contribute to improved understanding of effects	Likely effects can be managed and/or proposed development can be modified to lessen risk	Conclusive science that demonstrates effects are minor and/or can be fully managed
10%	Benefits to Maori	Maori are important players in aquaculture. Preference will be given to projects that benefit Maori including assisting settlement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maori support for project Aquaculture objectives in iwi fisheries plans Regional Settlement negotiations Iwi economic and cultural strategies 	Iwi opposed to application and/or new aquaculture development opportunities	Iwi indifferent to application and/or new aquaculture development opportunities	Iwi give general support the application and are interested in new aquaculture	Strong confirmed iwi support Likely good settlement and development benefits
10%	Social Benefits	Aquaculture can support broader social benefits through job creation and enhanced community cohesion. Preference will be given to projects that would support social growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community views on aquaculture Social benefit assessments Benefits of current regional aquaculture Decile ratings and social development plans 	Majority of community do not support aquaculture No social benefits expected	Unclear whether community will support Social benefits low	Community generally supportive but opposition from some groups Likelihood of social benefits	Majority of community and key stakeholders supportive Clear social benefits
Major risks to the project realising the expected benefits				SCORE			
25%	Aggregated risk profile	It is important to identify and assess the major risks to the project delivering its objectives and benefits. (An aggregated risk profile will be used.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior or proposed community collaboration Known stakeholder views Council and councillor commitment Previous aquaculture history Council project management capacity Council assessment of risks/ mitigation DOC support Legal complexity of plan change/proposal UAE test issues 	Project unlikely to succeed [DECLINE APPLICATION]	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk