



Tourism Industry Transformation Plan: Te Taiao / The Environment phase – Scope

November 2022

1. This document outlines the scope of the Environment phase of the Tourism Industry Transformation Plan (ITP). This is the second phase of the ITP, with the first phase having focussed on addressing the systemic issues in the tourism workforce.

The Tourism Industry Transformation Plan (ITP) sits within a broader framework of Industry Strategy

2. The Government's Industry Strategy is a partnership-led approach for the Government to work with businesses, workers and Māori to shape the future of key industries in New Zealand. It supports the Government's goal to improve the wellbeing and living standards of New Zealanders by building a productive, resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and Māori-enabling economy.
3. ITPs are a high-intensity, high-engagement approach to industry policy, with the purpose of setting a transformative vision and action plan for key sectors in the New Zealand economy. They have a long-term vision of 20 to 30 years, accompanied by short- and medium-term actions that will support step changes towards that vision. Seven sectors are developing and implementing an ITP: Agritech, Digital Technologies, Food and Beverage, Advanced Manufacturing, Forestry and Wood Processing, Construction, and Tourism. Funding for the development of the Tourism ITP was included in the Tourism Communities: Support, Recovery and Re-set Plan, announced in May 2021.

The Tourism ITP is a vehicle for building a regenerative tourism system

4. The overarching objective of the Tourism ITP is to contribute to building a regenerative tourism system. A regenerative tourism system is one that leaves a community and environment better than it was before.
5. Regenerative tourism can be understood as an extension of sustainability. It considers the impact of tourism on the environment, social and cultural connections; people's intergenerational wellbeing and skills; and the physical infrastructure that tourism uses, as well as tourism's financial benefits.

The Tourism ITP has taken a phased approach, initially focussing on Better Work

6. The initial phase of the ITP has focused on enabling Better Work for people in the tourism industry and addressing the systemic issues in the tourism workforce. The environment phase will be the second phase of the Tourism ITP.
7. The guiding principle for the Tourism ITP is to achieve genuine partnership. Some of the actors invited to participate in this partnership approach include (among others):
 - the Government (in its role as steward of the tourism system, regulator, strategy holder, funder, tourism employer, tourism asset owner, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner)
 - the tourism industry



- workers and unions
 - Māori and iwi/hapū
 - academics, independent analysts and economists
 - local communities.
8. Each ITP has a Leadership Group, the composition of which reflects the partnership approach and includes representation from some or all of the above actors.

The Environment phase of the Tourism ITP builds on existing strategic analysis

9. Sustainable tourism in New Zealand has been the subject of extensive analysis, consultation and collaboration. This has resulted in a valuable body of existing work.
10. The Environment phase of the Tourism ITP is an opportunity to focus on actions required to deliver systemic change, rather than producing another stocktake of issues and challenges for the tourism sector.
11. It will be informed by key findings and principles that have been identified in a range of earlier reports and strategies. In particular, the following:
- a. The New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy (MBIE and DOC, 2019).¹
 - b. The Tourism 2025 and Beyond Strategy (Tourism Industry Aotearoa, 2019).²
 - c. We are Aotearoa report (Tourism Futures Taskforce, 2021).³
 - d. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment reports on the environmental impacts of tourism.^{4,5}
 - e. The Department of Conservation's Heritage and Visitor Strategy He Rautaki Taonga Tuku Iho, Manuhiri Tūāurangi hoki (Department of Conservation, 2021) and Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020.^{6,7}
12. The Environment phase of the ITP will also be guided by the principles of the Just Transition strategy, including that the impacts and opportunities that arise from the transition to a low carbon future should be distributed evenly⁸.

¹ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/new-zealand-aotearoa-government-tourism-strategy/>

² <https://www.tia.org.nz/tourism-2025>

³ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/tourism-recovery/tourism-futures-taskforce/tourism-futures-taskforce-interim-report/>

⁴ <https://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/pristine-popular-imperilled-the-environmental-consequences-of-projected-tourism-growth>

⁵ <https://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/not-100-but-four-steps-closer-to-sustainable-tourism>

⁶ [Heritage and Visitor Strategy \(doc.govt.nz\)](https://www.doc.govt.nz/Heritage-and-Visitor-Strategy/)

⁷ [Te Mana o te Taiao - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 \(doc.govt.nz\)](https://www.doc.govt.nz/Te-Mana-o-te-Taiao-Aotearoa-New-Zealand-Biodiversity-Strategy-2020/)

⁸ <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/just-transition/>



Scope of the Environment phase of the Tourism ITP

Three pillars will underpin a regenerative and resilient tourism model

13. Three pillars will underpin the achievement of a regenerative and resilient New Zealand tourism model, and it is on these three pillars that the scope of the Environment phase of the ITP will focus, namely:
 - a. Climate change adaptation – understanding the impact that climate change will have on the tourism industry and taking action to ensure the industry can adapt to climate events
 - b. Climate change mitigation – transforming the New Zealand tourism industry into a low carbon emissions industry
 - c. Fostering positive ecological outcomes, such as biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

Links between the ITP and the Aotearoa Circle Visitor Economy Adaptation Roadmap

14. To advance progress on the first pillar (13a. above), the Government has funded the Aotearoa Circle⁹ to support the development of a Visitor Economy Adaptation Roadmap through the Tourism ITP budget. The Roadmap will identify the risks that climate change poses to the tourism industry, and actions to ensure the industry is resilient to the impacts of climate change.
15. There will be strong linkages between the ITP and the Aotearoa Circle work. The Roadmap will be finalised in late 2022, around the time when the Leadership Group first meets, and be a significant input to the Leadership Group's ideation on climate change mitigation and enhancing ecological outcomes. Aotearoa Circle will develop an implementation plan for the Roadmap and there will be opportunities for the Environment ITP Action Plan to reflect, further develop and advance some actions in the Roadmap.

Focussing efforts on climate mitigation/decarbonisation and fostering positive ecological outcomes

16. To complement the work of the Aotearoa Circle, the Leadership Group for the Environment phase of the ITP will progress the remaining two pillars (pillars 13b. and 13c. above).
17. There is a strong interrelationship between the pillars. A solution to one challenge can be a solution to the other. For example, mitigating climate change and reducing its impacts is crucial for preventing biodiversity loss. Protecting and enhancing native biodiversity can contribute to climate mitigation by preserving and expanding carbon sinks.
18. In line with the goal of regeneration, the focus of the ITP will extend beyond reducing or offsetting negative impacts (such as reducing emissions) to a focus on also enhancing positive ecological outcomes.

⁹ The Aotearoa Circle is a voluntary initiative bringing together leaders from the public and private sector.



19. Ensuring the tourism industry protects and restores the natural environment is important because our natural environment is central to our attraction as a destination. From a te ao Māori perspective, te taiao (the natural world) is paramount and inextricably linked with human wellbeing. Humans have responsibilities and obligations to sustain and maintain the wellbeing of te taiao.
20. Most tourism activity results in greenhouse gas emissions. Long haul travel due to New Zealand's geographic isolation is associated with high emissions. Reducing the contribution that tourism makes to greenhouse gas emissions is important, both to achieve New Zealand's emissions reduction commitments and to ensure New Zealand remains a popular destination for climate-conscious visitors.
21. There are many examples of firms in the tourism industry promoting positive ecological outcomes (for example trapping and native reforestation). The Environment phase of the ITP can explore opportunities to expand and enhance these positive actions and minimise any negative ecological effects that may exist as a result of tourism activity.
22. The scope will encompass the full traveller journey, including emissions relating to international travel as well as the emissions produced while a visitor travels in New Zealand. The ITP process will contribute to the related debate and could progress related initiatives and their uptake – recognising, however, that there is already work underway across the public and private sectors to address carbon emissions from aircraft, passenger ships and forms of land transport.
23. The Environment phase of the ITP will address risks and opportunities that relate to the natural environment, rather than the built environment. It will not focus specifically on issues related to congestion or the loss of natural quiet which may be caused by tourism activity and can in some instances negatively impact the visitor experience and social licence for tourism. Although these issues are important, they are not, strictly speaking, environmental issues. In saying that, where congestion damages the ecology of a particular place then this will be within scope.
24. The scope of the Environment phase of the ITP is intentionally broad. This will allow the Leadership Group the agency to target areas where it sees the greatest potential to contribute towards a regenerative tourism model. A narrower scope may inadvertently exclude investigation of areas where opportunities exist.

The definition of tourism for the Environment phase of the Tourism ITP

25. For the Environment phase of the ITP, the definition of tourism will be based on that used in international Tourism Satellite Accounts, i.e., a product will be considered tourism-characteristic if at least 25% of production is purchased by tourists.
26. The Better Work phase of the ITP took a broader approach to the definition of tourism by including food and beverage services/products. This is because many of the systemic work-related challenges being addressed are exemplified in the food and beverage sector. However, the emissions produced by the food and beverage sector are relatively minor when considering the total emissions profile of the tourism industry.¹⁰ Further, other work programmes are focussed on improving environmental

¹⁰ Estimated at 14% by Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, *Pristine, popular ... imperilled? The environment consequences of projected tourism growth*, 2019.



outcomes in the food and beverage sector, such as the Food and Beverage ITP and efforts to reduce food waste in the Emissions Reduction Plan.

Related work programmes

27. There is much work underway across the private and public sector that seeks to achieve the outcomes outlined in this scope. It is important that the Environment phase of the Tourism ITP is aligned with this existing work.
28. Consideration will need to be given to how the tourism industry can support this existing work, as well as what gaps may exist.
29. For example, there is work underway to reduce land-transport related emissions, particularly through the Emissions Reduction Plan. However, there will be opportunities for the tourism industry to support this transition, such as through supporting the conversion of rental vehicle fleets to electric vehicles.
30. Across government, many of the related initiatives have a national, systemic focus, and this phase of the ITP provides opportunity to support these with tourism sector-specific action. Examples of related government initiatives include:
 - a. [Emissions Reduction Plan](#) – in particular the chapters on the circular economy and bioeconomy, transport and waste and related actions
 - b. [National Adaptation Plan](#)
 - c. [National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity](#)
 - d. [The Tiaki Promise](#).
31. Relevant tourism industry initiatives include:
 - a. [Aotearoa Circle Visitor Economy Adaptation Roadmap](#)
 - b. Sustainable Aviation Aotearoa – a government-industry partnership to explore commercial opportunities for sustainable aviation fuel
 - c. Tourism Industry Aotearoa's [Sustainability Commitment](#) and Carbon Challenge.
32. Internationally, examples of related initiatives to which New Zealand has made commitments include:
 - a. Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)
 - b. International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)
 - c. [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).
33. Relevant agencies and industry stakeholders who lead these work programmes have been consulted during the development of this scope document. There is broad support for the scope and consensus that it will complement existing work programmes.

Deliverables and timeframes

34. The initial objective of the Environment phase of the Tourism ITP is to develop a draft Environment action plan comprising initiatives, developed in partnership, for the actors in the tourism system to collectively implement.



35. The intention is that the draft Environment action plan will be developed by the second quarter of 2023. This will then be refined based on public consultation. A final action plan will be delivered later in 2023.
36. The planning horizon for the Environment ITP action plan is for it to produce intermediate actions (within the next two to three years) which will affect the medium to long-term future of the tourism system.