

Foundation North Submission to Manatū mō te Taiao / MfE

Te mahere urutanga ā-motu (tuhinga hukihuki) / Draft national adaptation plan

3rd June 2021

CONTEXT

[Foundation North](#) was established in 1988 as one of 12 regional community trusts, to distribute income to support regional communities in perpetuity. Foundation North holds in trust an endowment, or pūtea of over a billion dollars to make grants each year to not-for-profit initiatives in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland and Te Tai Tokerau/Northland to enhance lives and respond to community needs now and for generations to come.

In 2016 Foundation North initiated the Gulf Innovation Fund Together (GIFT) to spark innovation to improve the mauri or life force of Tīkapa Moana/Te Moananui-ā-Toi (Hauraki Gulf). The aim was to support breakthrough ideas and solutions to improve the Gulf's health.

When Foundation North initiated GIFT, it knew little about the human systems surrounding the Hauraki Gulf, root causes behind its environmental degradation, or what it will take to reverse declining ecosystem health. Five years on, GIFT grantees have provided evidence from their projects, evaluation, reflection and learning processes about what is blocking change and where seeds of hope and potential lie. Our annual GIFT reports can be accessed [here](#)

Influenced in part by this evidence, Foundation North has organized all its work into [4 focus areas](#).

- Hāpai te ōritetanga | Increased Equity
- Whakauru mai | Social Inclusion
- Whakahou taiao | Regenerative Environment
- Hāpori awahina | Community Support

Each of these focus areas has a clearly stated kaupapa or purpose, desired outcomes, change pathways, core activities and signs of progress identified. For example, the focus area of Whakahou taiao | Regenerative Environment states that Foundation North will support holistic approaches to conserving, restoring, and renewing the environment so that Te Taiao and people can flourish together. Initiatives proposed by tangata whenua are the priority.

Importance is placed on activity that will lead to:

- Ecosystems and communities being renewed and regenerated
- Mātauranga Māori being recognised, valued, and implemented
- Tino rangatiratanga – community-led action for Te Taiao
- Increased connection and access to Te Taiao

This regenerative environment approach supports a deeper lived understanding of the relationship between people and Te Taiao and is an approach well suited to tackling climate action.

Foundation North have climate action and Te Tiriti sitting at the top and across all the organisation's priorities. In early 2021 Trustees of Foundation North approved an update to their Trust Deed, to

include a specific commitment to have regard to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in interpreting the Trust Deed and in performing our obligations under the Deed.

At a similar time, Foundation North, along with the other community Trusts around the country, set on a journey to understand views about climate change and priorities for action by the community sector. The combined Trusts are now working together to clarify what they can do to catalyse a reduction in emissions and support the community response to climate change.

Foundation North is focused on building a portfolio of responses to climate change, the following being an excerpt from that work:

Framing the Challenge

Climate change is a huge, complex, and urgent problem. The scale of funding required is significant and the amount will always feel too small. Finding leverage is critical. We need to support clusters of interrelated experiments and solutions, amplify what others are doing, go to new places and crowd-in others.

Meeting the climate challenge requires a systems approach and deep, structural changes to how we live and behave. This will only be possible if the values, rules, and behaviours of society at large change.

The building blocks of a more sustainable future are in place. We are privileged to have Te Ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori alongside modern science solutions to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. We need to accelerate the adoption and diffusion of these practices and solutions by, for and with our priority communities.

The timing and severity of impacts is unknown. Our communities are already needing to respond to the effects of climate change. Adaptation is highly localised with no one right solution known at the outset.

Foundation North Goals for Climate Action

- 1. Accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions*
- 2. Support an equitable and just transition to a low carbon society*
- 3. Understand and prepare for the impact of climate change*
- 4. Kaitiakitanga and a resilient natural environment*
- 5. Create and strengthen the conditions for climate solutions to develop and scale*

Foundation North (FN) submission on draft national adaptation plan (NAP):

Overall FN opinion on the draft NAP direction:

ONE: Foundation North supports:

- A. The breadth of government commitment to this NAP and openly sharing in one place what is being done already to adapt to climate change and proposals for what to do in the future.
- B. The commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi that is articulated throughout the NAP with specific acknowledgements for the impacts of climate change on Māori.
- C. The acknowledgment and commitment to reform institutions to be fit for a changing climate and the specific inclusion of a System-wide actions focus. Climate change is a huge, complex and urgent challenge that requires a systems approach and deep structural changes to how we live and behave.
- D. The section focus on Communities that acknowledges and honours the place-based strength and knowledge of local people.
- E. The section focus on Natural Environment being oriented to a Mountains to Sea approach and supporting implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao.

TWO: Foundation North encourages:

- A. A commitment to more fully embrace the opportunity posed by **Rauora**, the indigenous worldview framework for the national adaptation plan. This includes an acknowledgement of the need for transformation not tinkering to be fit for a changing climate. It also recognizes that humans are part of our natural systems and not separate.
- B. An exploration of Collective Impact and Community Led Development¹ as fields full of lessons that the Government institutions can employ in truly reforming to be fit for a changing climate. This includes building 'adaptive capability' to try different ways of thinking and acting.
- C. A conscious shift from deficit language around vulnerable groups to strength-based language and mindsets that recognize the capabilities in priority communities and how well placed these communities are to lead climate action.
- D. Conscious and supported participation by youth in the NAP and all other government climate action initiatives. The youth voice and intergenerational wisdom sharing is missing from the NAP.
- E. Acknowledgement of the shift/travel needed to take us from the current not-fit-for purpose institutional structures to being fit for the changing climate AND investment in collaborative fitness to support people in the transition.

¹ Collective Impact and Community Led Development are rapidly developing fields where people collaborate in complexity to achieve transformative outcomes. Some of the many resources to explore are locally; [Centre for Social Impact, Inspiring Communities](#) and globally; [Collective Impact Forum](#) and [Tamarack](#).

National adaptation plan – General feedback

I roto i ou tātou ringa ringa te rongōā – already in all our hands are the remedies

Foundation North observes grantees and their communities in Northland and Auckland taking climate action now, demonstrating the whakatauki/proverb above, that the answers are already in our hands, we simply need the will (mental models and values) and systems (human designed processes and systems) to apply them.

Foundation North recognizes that there are no easy answers to climate change challenges and that new ways of working need to be encouraged and supported. We've been on a journey to grow our understanding and practice in innovation and systems level change and now welcome the opportunity to share some of our learning in this submission on the Draft national adaptation plan.

We acknowledge and comment on the national adaptation plan's focus on three key areas:

1. Reform institutions to be fit for a changing climate.

Foundation North completely supports the need for institutions to change and prefers a focus of transformation to reform. The deep structural changes we need to undertake in adapting to climate change will only be possible if the values, rules, and behaviour of society at large change. This includes a preparedness to examine power structures and aim for equitable and diverse decision making.

2. Provide data, information, and guidance to enable everyone to assess and reduce their own climate risks.

Foundation North fully supports evidence-based decision making and encourages full involvement of diverse perspectives in gathering, collating, analysing, and disseminating the data, information, and guidance. FN does note however that data and information are often homes for unnamed power inequities, therefore effort must be consistently taken to have open-source sharing of data and information. In addition, guidance should be reciprocal with government institutions being open to guidance from at-place communities and tangata whenua as well as providing government guidance to all.

On page 6 of the NAP, Hon James Shaw says, "the actions in this plan are intended to drive a significant, long-term shift in our policy and institutional frameworks." Yet will they drive a significant, long-term shift in our hearts and mindsets?

3. Embed climate resilience across government strategies and policies.

FN supports this focus area, particularly the long-term commitment indicated by the NAP for ongoing governments to embed climate resilience in their work.

Foundation North suggests the NAP add a fourth key focus area:

4. Resource local-led solutions to local-impact climate change.

Although the section on Community in the NAP recognizes that some individuals and communities are more exposed to climate impacts because of where they live, overall, the NAP does not address the steps needed to resource locals to be fit for the changing climate. FN acknowledge and trust the wisdom that is held by locals for their ecosystems of lands, seas, and people. FN not only provides funding for these priority communities but actively teams the funding with a practice and dissemination of learning. FN encourages the NAP to adopt these practices as powerful pathways for the aim of being fit for climate change. It is important for people to see themselves in the solutions and the case studies are welcomed.

National adaptation plan – General feedback continued

Rauora

In Aotearoa/NZ we are privileged to have Te Ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori alongside modern science solutions to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Foundation North believes we as a country need to accelerate the adoption and diffusion of these practices and solutions by, for and with our priority communities.

It was thus disappointing and confusing to read the commentary on page 19 of the NAP:

For the Crown, the framework acknowledges that its Tiriti partners have a worldview that sits outside Western interpretations, and that the Government has commitments to uphold.

As a government plan, the national adaptation plan draws on key concepts of the Rauora framework. Notably, the framework supports and promotes transformative approaches, resilience building and the development of supporting measures.

FN would strongly encourage MfE and the partnering government institutions to commit to a full embrace of the opportunity posed by **Rauora**, the indigenous worldview framework for the national adaptation plan. This includes:

- an acknowledgement of the need for transformation not tinkering to be fit for a changing climate.
- Taking the power out of the Ministries and enabling tino rangatiratanga at an iwi and hapū level alongside communities.
- Acknowledgement of the systemic barriers that have contributed to and continue to perpetuate degradation of te taiao and climate injustice.

Mātauranga Māori is referred but not centred, including a lack of specificity on how tangata whenua can be resourced to have the capacity to contribute. For example, FN is interested in what is meant by *Support mātauranga Māori and kaupapa Māori research* on page 106 of the NAP. Also, FN is interested in better understanding the *Foundation to work with Māori on climate actions*, page 29.

FN suggests that the NAP explore and articulate how *data sovereignty* will be treated in the roll out of the NAP. This needs to be well considered, protect mātauranga Māori so harm is not caused and provide sufficient resources for whānau, hapū and iwi to participate.

Language use

FN proposes that the final NAP makes a conscious shift from deficit language around vulnerable groups to strength-based language and mindsets that recognize the capabilities in priority communities and how well placed these communities are to lead climate action.

The text box on page 11 of the NAP uses deficit language that can be compared with page 11 of the Rauora framework. Here text such as *economies need to be relocalised and to reposition communities to positions of strength rather than exposed vulnerability*.

Unfortunately, the language of the Vision, Purpose and Goals on page 11 is not inspirational, although the table of principles on page 16 is practical and useful. FN suggests that additional work be put into the Vision and Purpose statements and that this work happen with the authors of the Rauora framework.

The text box of leading roles on pages 17 & 18 has some unconscious bias that is at odds with the previously praised Table of principles on page 16. For example, The **research and scientific**

community needs to contribute because adaptation decisions at all levels should be based on the best available science. FN would prefer the term *knowledge* be used so all forms of knowing are tapped into for what the greatest challenge of humankind is. Certainly, science is important, as is mātauranga Māori and knowledge held by citizens for their local places and spaces. Figure 5 on page 22 continues this unconscious bias towards western science

System wide action – FN feedback

FN is wholly supportive of the NAP consciously focusing on the necessary system wide-action to address climate change. FN believe that human systems are causing the problems. It is not a climate crisis. It is a crisis of people's behaviour and the impact on our natural systems. We need to recognise that humans are part of our natural systems. That means working on our ways of thinking and living in balance with our natural systems.

FN want to make sure that whatever climate action takes place that it happens within a holistic perspective. The Rauora framework articulates the indigenous way of thinking that the NAP could be centred on. That is, that all things are connected; what is good for the land, is good for the air, is good for the sea, is good for the people.

As noted in our introduction, when Foundation North initiated GIFT, it knew little about the human systems surrounding the Hauraki Gulf, root causes behind its environmental degradation, or what it will take to reverse declining ecosystem health. Five years on, GIFT grantees have provided evidence from their projects, evaluation, reflection and learning processes about what is blocking change and where seeds of hope and potential lie.

This [learning](#) has been all about systems change and we would encourage the NAP authors to prioritize training in the social aspects of navigating systems change. FN believes that an exploration by Government of *Collective Impact* and *Community Led Development* would be useful. Skills such as establishing Backbone structures that can 'hold' multiple reinforcing actions whilst providing conditions for self-determined actions to adapt to climate change will contribute to the desired reform of institutions. The Department of Internal Affairs has been investing in such learning for some time now and could contribute to the government partners' upskilling.

There are an impressive lot of actions in the various tables of the NAP. Sharing the actions in the NAP is an excellent first step at collective action. A next step is being able to hold a mirror so the many parts in action can see themselves and each other. Skills of collaboration and collective impact will assist achievement of the NAP goals. This is the HOW of climate change adaptation, whereas the NAP largely focuses on the why and what. All are important.

The Info Focus area from page 30 on, highlights the crucial need to have information that is current and evolving and widely accessible. However, there is little commentary, if any, on the relational work of systems change. People need to trust the information being shared. Such trust comes from trusting relationships. FN suggests the NAP give additional attention to the social aspects of information transfer, including having near peer transfer of climate change information and a diversity of Climate Change information champions.

Natural Environment – FN feedback

FN wholly supports the holistic, mountains to sea thinking that is articulated in the Natural Environment section of the NAP.

The natural environment encompasses indigenous and non-indigenous species in natural and modified terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. It includes all ecosystems in environments from the mountains, lakes and rivers to native forests, coasts, oceans and farmlands.

Many of FN's grantees live in places that are vulnerable to climate change. All of GIFT's work is centred on a natural ecosystem, Tikapa Moana/Te Moananui-a-Toi/the Hauraki Gulf. Thus FN is supportive of all actions to actually make change to the incessant human pressures we are inflicting on our natural environment.

Of particular interest to FN is the page 49 references to implementing the Revitalising the Gulf: Government action on the Sea Change Plan. FN supports the establishment of the Oceans and Fisheries portfolio but is disappointed at the lack of collaborative action since its establishment. The original Sea Change Plan was a comprehensive plan that relied on implementation of the whole. Revitalising the Gulf does not do that, rather it selects parts of the original Sea Change Plan and is proceeding to implement those parts at a glacial pace, in what appears to be a non-collaborative and agency siloed way. FN continues to be optimistic however and funds many grantees who are making huge strides in their collaborative actions. It is also heartening to see the specific funds in the recent budget going to implementation of Revitalising the Gulf. Perhaps with the additional funding, the Government agencies involved (mainly DOC, MPI, FNZ) will be able to learn from and work with the many tangata whenua and community groups in this area.

Communities – FN feedback

FN supports this section of the NAP, although finds the definition of community in the text box on page 74 to be unusual with its vulnerabilities focus.

FN supports the desired achievements on page 77:

Communities have a high level of adaptive capacity and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

- *Communities are able make decisions and put resources into suitable adaptive actions.*
- *Government work programmes are focused on ensuring no one is left behind.*
 - *Local knowledge, including mātauranga Māori, is valued.*
 - *Decision making is transparent and builds and maintains trust.*
- *Decisions support the tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) of Māori*

FN encourages the implementation of learnings from the covid vaccination roll out to ensure priority communities are empowered to lead and respond in line with their aspirations.

<https://waitangitribunal.govt.nz/news/tribunal-releases-priority-report-on-covid-19-response/>
<https://www.waikato.ac.nz/news-opinion/media/2022/new-study-shows-inequality-in-vaccine-rollout-for-maori-and-at-risk-communities>

As stated in our summary on page 3 of this submission, the role of youth in climate change adaptation needs to receive increased focus and support. Rangatahi play a crucial role in supporting communities to understand, prepare for, and adapt to a changing climate. Youth should be active stakeholders in decision-making at all levels and must be empowered to decide what needs to change to be resilient in future. More than any other community or group in Aotearoa, the lives and livelihoods of youth are going to be most affected by a changing climate now and into the future.

In general, FN believes that self-determination is a key principle with codesign of the solutions with tangata whenua and community being a factor for success. As noted on page 4 of this submission, FN proposes that the NAP amplify the need to resource local-led solutions to local impact climate change.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Tynan', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Tynan
Chief Executive, Foundation North