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Partnering to Plant Project Profile



Purpose of this review:

**To highlight the positive social,
environmental, and community benefits of
the Partnering to Plant Aotearoa project**





Project Summary

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) established the Million Metres Streams project in 2014 to help landowners and local communities raise funds for waterway restoration. Million Metres is New Zealand’s only dedicated programme for connecting local waterway restoration projects with large scale funding and resources.

SBN partnered with Jobs for Nature (J4N) to further the work of the Million Metres Streams project and created Partnering to Plant Aotearoa (P2P).¹ The P2P programme links community restoration groups nationwide, including nursery work project groups, with J4N funding.²

Why is the project important for the region?

Waterways are in crisis nationwide in Aotearoa, the P2P programme works to support locally led waterway restoration projects. This programme has allowed

regions nationwide to access funding and resources.³

This programme has created 12 partnerships between SBN and community-led conservation groups, including iwi and hapū led projects. These partnerships are extremely important as there are organisations nationwide who have environmental work programmes with high potential for ecological impact, but currently have low capacity and/or capability to directly apply for and administer large-scale funding.

Region	Nationwide/Auckland
Recipient	Sustainable Business Network
Start date	2/08/2020
End date	31/12/2022
Approved funding	\$5,000,000
Project intent	Capability development, ecosystem restoration, freshwater restoration, pest control animals, pest control plants
Project funder	Department of Conservation

What difference is the project making to people?

Significance of employment opportunities⁴

The J4N funding has provided short-term employment and experience to more than 200 people and generated more than 100,000 hours of conservation work, including weeding, pest control, and waterway replanting.

Individual participants have reported that the creation of field jobs, including individuals facing specific challenges such as alcohol addiction, has provided meaningful employment that offers personal fulfilment and contributes to the well-being of employees.

These opportunities are particularly significant in rural areas, where they increase local job availability and economic stability. Employing local whānau has helped raise household incomes above beneficiary levels, making a substantial difference in the lives of community members.

Skills and training

All P2P projects have a significant training and upskilling component to them. These include practical skills such as Spraysafe training, backpack spraying, outdoor first aid, and Growsafe certification. Courses in mātauranga Māori, plant care, seed eco-sourcing, and sustainable management practices have equipped employees with essential skills and knowledge, improving their ability to effectively contribute to restoration efforts and increasing their future job opportunities.⁵

Increased community participation in environmental activities

This investment has also positively impacted the communities involved. For example, the Waiheke Resources Trust's Love Our Wetlands project was a finalist in the 2021 Local Government New Zealand

Excellence Awards. The Whangawehi CMG project has helped individuals with difficult life journeys regain dignity and hope for the future through the employment opportunities created. The Waimakariri District Council/Silverstream initiative has seen participants gain meaningful experience and establish successful businesses.

The Partnering to Plant programme has actively involved local residents in conservation and ecosystem restoration efforts with the aim to create a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the environment. Engaging tamariki (children) in planting activities, connected them with the land and encouraged their involvement.

How is the project contributing to the wellbeing of Māori?

The P2P programme aims to regenerate nature while building capability with a focus on iwi, hāpu, and whānau. Through this programme, SBN was enabled to forge new and important partnerships with Te Orewai o Ngāti Hine, Nga Uri o Hau Native Nursery and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei amongst others.

This programme enabled these iwi, hāpu, and whānau partners to lead their own projects, decide their own priorities, and employ their own kaimahi.

Preserving cultural heritage and knowledge strengthens the identity and continuity of communities. It provides a tangible connection to the past, creates a sense of pride for locals and a deeper connection to the land. This cultural continuity is essential for the well-being of the community and the success of delivering environmental outcomes.

Impact on the environment

Increased protection of threatened species and improved biodiversity

The project contributes to ecosystem restoration efforts by planting native species, managing invasive species, and restoring wetlands, which are crucial for biodiversity and ecosystem health. This investment has enabled projects nationwide to plant over 300,000 plants, over 800,000 plants propagated, more than 14km of stream bank planted and 170 training/ accreditations achieved. The work of P2P included extensive planting, weeding and fencing to improve habitat and food sources for native species to help protect endangered species from predators.⁶

Improved fresh water quality

This project contributes to improving water quality primarily through riparian planting. These measures help stabilise the banks of

waterways and reduce erosion. The planting of native trees helps filter pollutants from agriculture, industry, housing, and roads.⁷

By focusing on these riparian planting efforts, the P2P project works towards improving the ecological integrity of freshwater systems, which is essential for the health of the environment, the economy, and the people.

These measures will help stabilise the banks of waterways and reduce erosion. The planting of native trees helps filter pollutants from agriculture, industry, housing, and roads.

Economic benefits

The P2P programme led to the development of infrastructure and resources that will have a sustainable income past the J4N funding.⁸ This income will allow projects to continually create employment opportunities for local residents.



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