



Waihi North Biodiversity Project – Overview Document

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Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	CONSULTATION	3
3	BASELINE MONITORING	5
4	PROJECT DESIGN	6
4.1	Project Governance and Funding	6
4.2	Goals and Objectives	7
4.3	Location	7
4.4	Possible Methods	8
4.5	Key Benefits	9
5	DRAFT CONSENT CONDITIONS	9
6	CONCLUSION	12

1 INTRODUCTION

An important and integral part of OceanaGold New Zealand's (**OGNZL; OceanaGold**) approach to the management of biodiversity issues associated with its mining developments involves working in collaboration with recognised experts, government agencies, and iwi to promote and deliver integrated and improved outcomes for biodiversity. OceanaGold Corporation's (**OGC**) Biodiversity Performance Standard requires all OGC operations to implement appropriate mechanisms to avoid, minimise, restore, rehabilitate and/or offset effects on social, cultural and environmental uses and values. These standards promote, where relevant, habitat offsets to achieve 'no net loss' or ideally lead to a 'net gain' in the biodiversity value of an area impacted by the development. Whilst the Waihi North Project (**WNP**) effects management package is expected to achieve a 'net gain' of ecology values, OGNZL is committed to a wider scale biodiversity project that will deliver meaningful environmental, social, and cultural benefits to an area wider than just the WNP footprint, and for a period that extends beyond the life of the project. To that end, OGNZL has proposed the **Waihi North Biodiversity Project (The Biodiversity Project; the Project)** as an associated benefit of the WNP, in addition to the effects management package linked to the potential biodiversity effects of the WNP.

The Biodiversity Project is in addition to 632 ha of intensive pest control proposed as part of the WNP to offset potential impacts to native frogs from the effects of vibration (and with associated benefits to other biodiversity values in the area). A conceptual design for the Project has been developed to allow engagement with iwi and sets out possible details for the project, including an up to 18,870 ha area of predator control in the Coromandel Forest Park surrounding the WNP area. Importantly, the Project is not mitigation or compensation for an adverse effect of the WNP. Rather, it is a positive beneficial project OceanaGold has proposed in addition to the mining related aspects of the WNP. As such, given it provides an opportunity for tangata whenua to take a central role in the development of the Project's goals and practical implementation of the Project in recognition of their role as kaitiaki the exact goals and design of the project are intended to be defined through a collaborative process with iwi. The Department of Conservation (**DOC**), as the land administrator of the Project area, are also expected to be a key stakeholder in the collaborative process to design and implement the Project.

2 CONSULTATION

In 2021 OGNZL's Waihi Operation staff commenced engagement with relevant iwi representatives to discuss iwi interest in the Project, and a possible Project vision, objectives, and outcomes. Specifically, the company engaged the following iwi groups:

- Ngaati Whanaunga
- Ngāti Hako
- Ngāti Hei
- Ngāti Maru
- Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki
- Ngāti Pū
- Ngāti Rahiri Tumutumu,
- Ngāti Tamatera
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui / Ngāti Koi

Whilst our approach to the Biodiversity Project is to optimise the overall design of the Project through collaboration with iwi, it was important that commitments were made by OGNZL as to what its contributions would be. Accordingly, on the basis that the WNP is approved and proceeds, the following committed contributions from OGNZL have been communicated to iwi:

- A willingness to hand over decision-making for the programme to a project group co-governed with iwi.
- The Project is above and beyond what is required of OGNZL for effects management i.e., the programme is in addition to the actions needed to remedy, mitigate, offset or otherwise compensate for the adverse effects of the WNP
- Initial seed funding will be provided for the establishment of the Project and the required upfront implementation costs.
- Annual funding to support the operation of the Project for the life of the WNP.
- Additional funding for each year of operations to support the programme beyond the life of the WNP (i.e., extending the programme past the life of the WNP, consistent with New Zealand's aspiration to be predator free by 2050, and designed with long term, inter-generational ecological outcomes in mind).

During initial engagement, iwi recognised that working in collaboration with OGNZL, DOC, the community, and other interested and motivated stakeholders, would enable far greater social, cultural and environmental outcomes to be achieved in the Southern Coromandel than if the area continued to be managed as it currently is. As a result, there was an eagerness to work together, and the framework of a draft Terms of Reference for the group was developed. At the time of writing, this document remains unsigned, with ongoing engagement continuing regarding its contents.

While iwi representatives indicated broad support for the Biodiversity Project, this initial eagerness has been tempered by the fact that there is no current and comprehensive monitoring data available for the Biodiversity Project area; and therefore, no robust understanding of what native and pest plant and animal species are currently present. Iwi have rightly pointed out that this data is crucial to formulating and finalising the Project vision, outcomes, and objects, and to creating a framework under which the Project can operate. Baseline monitoring work ahead of Project commencement will also allow consideration of the crossover between biodiversity and cultural values to ensure the project is designed in a holistic way. Baseline data will also be required prior to any detailed planning to inform management options.

In addition to this feedback, the iwi groups involved in the project expressed concerns regarding the number and diversity of iwi invited by OceanaGold to participate in the initiative. Some of these groups had opted not to participate in collective hui, and there was increasing reluctance among those engaging meaningfully to continue to do so unless the group was limited to mana whenua who had strong connections to the proposed project area. In respect to this, the core group of iwi which continue to consistently engage in the programme, are outlined below:

- Ngaati Whanaunga
- Ngāti Hako
- Ngāti Maru
- Ngāti Pū
- Ngāti Tamaterā
- Ngāti Tara Tokanui / Ngāti Koi

All of these groups have consistently emphasised to OceanaGold that their participation in the Biodiversity Project should not detract from their rights more broadly, nor affect their ability to take a position on the overarching Waihi North Project, including opposing it if they choose to. OceanaGold acknowledges and accepts this.

Currently engagement with iwi is ongoing, with the focus at present being the finalisation of the draft Terms of Reference, better understanding what native and pest plant and animal species are currently present in the proposed project area (as described further below), and working towards

incorporating the group as a charitable company or trust under the auspices of NZ National Parks and Conservation Foundation (or other appropriate entity).

The Department of Conservation, as a key stakeholder in the Project and land administrator for the Project area, has been kept informed in relation to the Project and the Waihi North Project more generally. OGNZL intends to commence detailed consultation with DOC in the coming months, including the results of baseline monitoring and progress on the draft terms of reference.

3 BASELINE MONITORING

At the request of iwi and in recognition of the fact that further information on biodiversity values within the Project area is required to progress with development of the Project, OGNZL engaged consultant ecologists to design and implement a baseline biodiversity monitoring programme across the Southern Coromandel.

The baseline monitoring programme includes biodiversity and pest mammal monitoring across eight sites in the Southern Coromandel. The biodiversity monitoring includes:

- Vegetation community (RECCE plot based) and incidental observations of notable species.
- Nocturnal emerged frog surveys for Archey's and Hochstetter's frog surveys.
- Nocturnal emerged invertebrate surveys (plot based).
- Nocturnal and diurnal lizard surveys (plot / transect based).
- Bird and bat surveys using acoustic recorders.
- Establishing photo points to monitor vegetation response to proposed pest management (optional).
- Collection of eDNA samples at each site.

Pest animal monitoring includes:

- Chew card surveys for rodents and possums (7-night monitor)
- Camera trap surveys for mustelids, cats and pigs (21-night monitor)

Monitoring commenced in quarter four of 2024 and is scheduled to continue until quarter three of 2025, when a full year of data has been collected. Due to access limitations on DOC administered land, the programme is restricted to Hauraki District Council Road Reserve within, and private land adjoining, the Coromandel Forest Park but is considered to be representative of the broader Southern Coromandel area.

The data collected from the baseline monitoring is intended to inform the Biodiversity Project Plan, including the location of the Project, target species, and key Project goals.

The data collected from these baseline surveys will add to existing knowledge of biodiversity in the area, collected from previous OGNZL and DOC work. Previous work of note for the Southern Coromandel Area includes:

- OGNZL Archey's frog surveys which have indicated Archey's frog are widespread along the main range of the Southern Coromandel from as far south as Waitekauri, to as far north as the Wires/Wentworth Crossing. High densities of Archey's frogs are present to the west of Golden Cross and to the south of the Wires-Wentworth crossing, in the Waipaheke area.
- OGNZL pest monitoring data along HDC administered Road Reserve (paper road) running through the Coromandel Forest Park between Wharekirauponga and Golden Cross, showing very high levels of pests including rats, stoats, possums and pigs throughout the area monitored. Although not the focus of the monitoring, cats and deer were also recorded.

- OGNZL surveys in the Wharekirauponga area indicating that: Hochstetter's frogs are likely present in streams with suitable habitat throughout the area; geckos are likely present in low numbers across the area; bird assemblages found at Wharekirauponga are likely similar to those present across the Southern Coromandel including riroriro, kotare, pīwakawaka, miromiro, tūī, koekoeā, ruru, kākārīki, and kākā.
- Historical data for the Otahu Ecological Area indicating that the area was historically home to kiwi and kōkako, and while likely no longer present, the area could provide a future release location for these species if effective pest control was implemented.

4 PROJECT DESIGN

The final design of the Project will to be developed in conjunction with stakeholders, and therefore only high-level Project design information can be put forward at this time. The following sections set out a framework for the Project, with specific details to be finalised following the grant of WNP approvals.

4.1 Project Governance and Funding

OGNZL is committing a total of at least NZ\$8.4 million to the project, comprising an initial payment of \$2,400,000 and payments of \$600,000 annually thereafter, paid by 31 March each year. This payment will be adjusted according to the Consumer Price Index each year. The annual payment is to continue for a minimum of 10 years, or until stoping associated with WUG is completed, whichever is later. OGNZL is proposing to guarantee its commitment to this funding by including it in consent conditions for the WNP so stakeholders can be certain that OGNZL will provide the funding at a future time.

This funding is expected to be sufficient to cover costs associated with the establishment of a broad scale pest control and monitoring programme covering an area within the southern portion of the Coromandel Forest Park that is large enough to deliver significant conservation benefits.

A Biodiversity Project Group will be set up at prior to the commencement of underground mining below Wharekirauponga to oversee the design, governance, implementation, monitoring and review of the Biodiversity Project and associated funding. The Biodiversity Project Group will comprise the following members, subject to iwi representatives and DOC agreeing to participate:

- An independent chair;
- Representatives of OGNZL;
- At least one suitably qualified and experienced restoration ecologist appointed by OGNZL;
- A representative from each of Ngāti Hako, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Puu, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Tara Tokanui / Ngāti Koi, Ngaati Whanaunga, if they agree to participate; and
- A representative of the Department of Conservation.

The group will likely be incorporated as a charitable company or trust under the auspices of NZ National Parks and Conservation Foundation or other appropriate entity, and will be responsible for developing, implementing, and reporting on a Biodiversity Project Plan.

The Biodiversity Project Plan will include:

- The specific management and enhancement objectives for the Biodiversity Project;
- The detailed programme of activity for the first 5 years following the commencement of activities authorised by the WNP approvals;
- Any land access arrangements (concessions) with the Department of Conservation which are required to implement the Project Plan;
- Measurable and time bound performance targets for effectively reducing target pest species;

- Methods of outcome monitoring for pest and native species to determine Project effectiveness; and
- The reporting and review process for the Project.

4.2 Goals and Objectives

Key goals and objectives of the Project are to a. to provide long term (inter-generational) ecological benefits to the wider CFP area, and to assist tangata whenua in their exercise of kaitiakitanga. Detailed objectives are to be designed in consultation with the Biodiversity Project Group following the grant of WNP approvals. Detailed Project goals and objectives are however expected to include targeted pest mammal control to provide long term benefits to forest health, ecological processes, and individual species populations. The goals and objectives may be focussed on a key species, such as Archey's frogs, or may be more general, focussing for example on improving forest health by tracking indicators such as canopy cover. The goals and objectives are expected to include measures based on both western science and Mātauranga Māori.

4.3 Location

The Project will be located within an area totalling 18,870 ha in the Southern Coromandel, encompassing all public conservation land administered by DOC between the Wires/Wentworth Crossing in the north and State Highway 2 in the south (Figure 1). The area measures approximately 15km north to south and 13km east to west and includes regenerating and old growth native forest within the Waihi Ecological District.

This area has been selected for the following reasons:

- Its cultural significance to several iwi groups who have indicated interest in being involved in the Project.
- It contains significant biodiversity values which would benefit from a wide scale pest control programme, including native frogs, bats, and birds.
- Previous survey data indicates the area contains high or very high densities of a range of pest species. Controlling pests within this area would deliver significant benefits for forest health and native species.
- The area surrounds the WUG footprint where 632 ha of intensive pest control to manage the potential effects of vibration on frogs is proposed as part of the WNP. A project area adjacent to, or surrounding, the 632 ha of pest control already proposed could provide significant additional benefits for biodiversity.
- The area contains the Otahu Ecological Area, which has historically been home to kiwi, kokako, and native frogs.

The final Project area is not expected to encompass the full 18,870 ha, as this envelope is intended to provide flexibility for the Biodiversity Project Group to select an appropriate location or locations within the larger area that meets its goals and objectives. The final location is expected to be selected considering the following factors:

- The results of baseline monitoring undertaken.
- The funding available and cost of proposed pest control methods, noting that additional funding for the Project may sought from sources other than OGNZL.
- Stakeholder priorities and values, including the willingness of DOC to support the Project on Crown land it manages
- Advice from an appropriately qualified restoration ecologist on goals, outcomes, and achievability of any proposed goals and outcomes within the Project area.

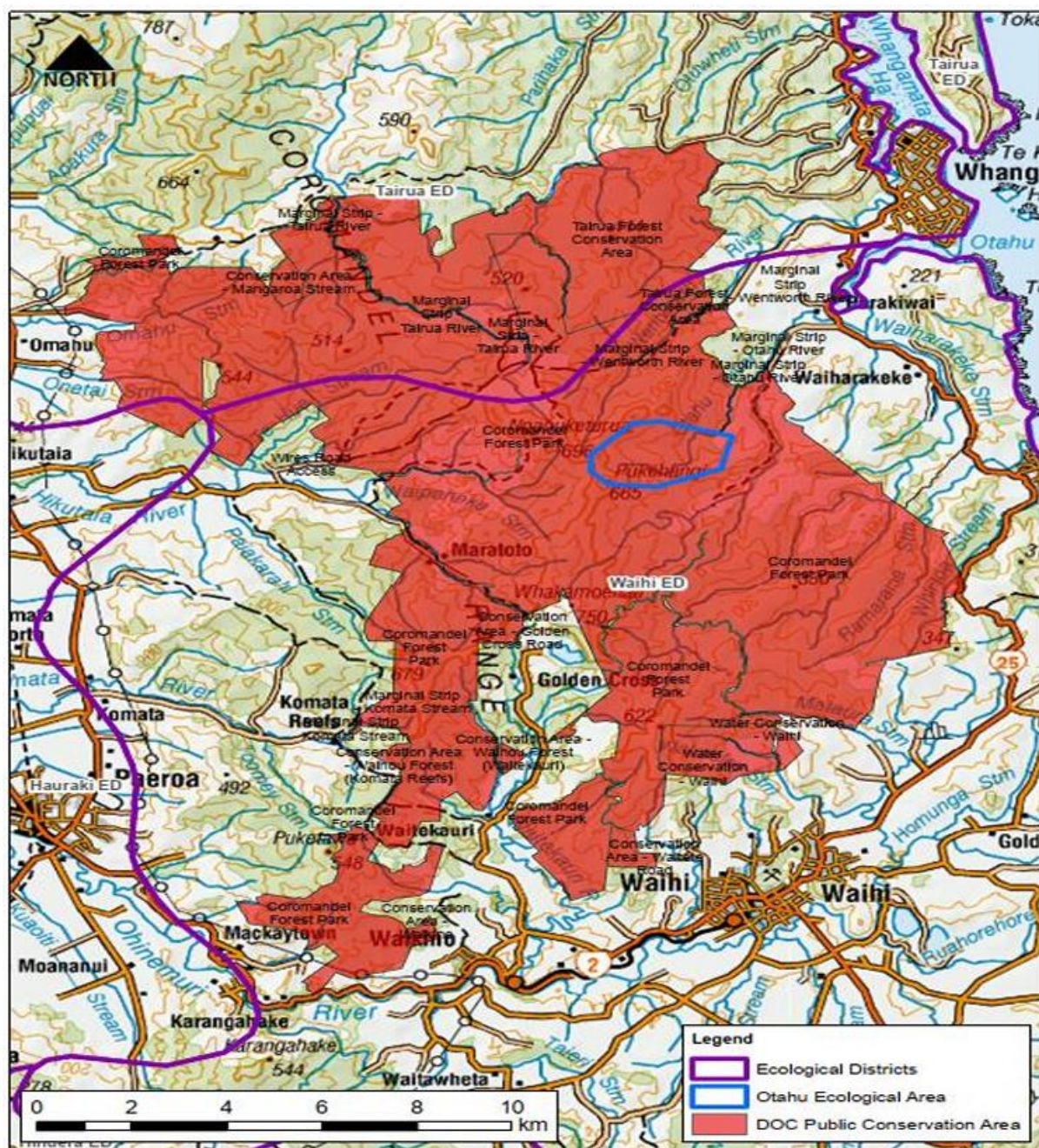


Figure 1: Proposed Waihi North Biodiversity Project Area

4.4 Possible Methods

The likely pest mammal control methods employed for the Project include kill trapping, baiting with ground-based toxins, hunting with a firearm, and aerial toxin application. Exact methods and design specifications will be chosen based on the goals and objectives of the Project and will be formulated according to the advice of a suitably qualified restoration ecologist on the Biodiversity Project Group to ensure best practice is followed.

4.5 Key Benefits

A broad scale pest mammal control programme can be expected to deliver ecological benefits such as improved forest processes, improved forest health, and improved outcomes for individual species populations. The benefits of controlling pest mammal species in native forests are well understood and documented.

Additionally, the programme can provide social, economic, and cultural benefits. In terms of social and economic benefits, the Project can be expected to create training, development, and long-term job opportunities for local residents including iwi. The creation of related education and community conservation activities will be an option for the Project, and it will also provide business for New Zealand suppliers of toxins, traps, and pest control equipment. Opportunities for research and development of new and enhanced pest control methods to support the NZ government's Predator Free 2050 goal can be considered and incorporated into the Project. In future, the increase in wildlife may also provide tourism opportunities, with associated increases in visitor numbers to the area.

Cultural benefits include increased opportunities for tangata whenua to practice traditional cultural uses of the forest, increases in numbers of taonga species, the possibility to reintroduce taonga species to the area that are not currently present, and to create a kaitiakitanga legacy for the area.

5 DRAFT CONSENT CONDITIONS

Whilst the Project is intended to be provide benefits over and above effects management and is undertaken at OGNZL's discretion, OGNZL volunteers a commitment to the Project for the life of the WNP to provide certainty of funding to all stakeholders. Therefore, OGNZL is proposing the consent conditions set out in Table 1 in relation to the Project, which will require funding for the Project to continue for the life of the WNP.

Table 1: Draft Consent Conditions in Relation to the Waihi North Biodiversity Project

Condition Reference	Condition	Comment
	Waihi North Biodiversity Project	
C.29.	<p>The Consent Holder must establish and implement a Biodiversity Enhancement and Predator Control Programme (the Biodiversity Project) within the approximately 18,870 hectare of public conservation land shown in Schedule 1 (the Biodiversity Project Area) in accordance with Conditions C30 to C41.</p> <p><i>Advice Note:</i> The land shown in Schedule 1 specifies the overall project area, or "envelope", within which Biodiversity Project activities will be undertaken. It is not the intention that particular biodiversity enhancement and predator control activities will be applied uniformly across the entire area.</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Project is a beneficial action to be undertaken voluntarily by the Consent Holder in addition to other biodiversity-related actions required by this consent. It is not required to remedy, mitigate, offset or compensate for any adverse effects of the mining activities associated with the Waihi North Project.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Project is in addition to pest management the Consent Holder is required to undertake</p>

		in the Wharekurauponga Animal Pest Management Area under Conditions of the Hauraki District Council Land Use Consent.
C.30.	<p>The objectives of the Biodiversity Project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to provide long term (inter-generational) ecological benefits to the wider CFP area, over and above the management of mining effects; and. b. to assist tangata whenua in their exercise of kaitiakitanga 	To allow due exercise of kaitiakitanga, it is intended that the specific objectives and details of the Waihi North Biodiversity Project will be developed and implemented in partnership with tangata whenua.
	Waihi North Biodiversity Project Fund	
C.31.	Prior to commencing construction of the Dual Tunnel within Area 1 the Consent Holder must make available sufficient funds to finance the design of the Waihi North Biodiversity Project and the activities of the Biodiversity Project Group required by Condition C34.	The Dual Tunnel is expected to take about 3 years to reach the ore resource. During this period the Biodiversity Project Group and the associated Biodiversity Project Plan would be established. OGNZL is required to fund those processes.
C.32.	<p>Prior to the commencement of stoping within Area 1 the Consent Holder must establish a fund to implement the Biodiversity Project as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initial payment of \$2,400,000; and thereafter: b. Payments of \$600,000 annually, paid by 31 March each year. <p>The Consent Holder must continue the funding set out within b. above for a period that is the later of ten years from the date of the initial payment referred to in a. or the completion of stoping.</p>	This represents the minimum amount of money that OGNZL will commit to implementing the Biodiversity Project. Additional money may be sourced for the programme from other sources.
C.33.	<p>The monies paid into the fund account in accordance with Condition C31 must be allocated to the extent necessary to finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ongoing operation of the Biodiversity Project Group in accordance with Conditions C34 to C37; b. The implementation of the Biodiversity Project Plan in accordance with Conditions C38 to C41; and c. The ongoing review and updating of the Biodiversity Project Plan. 	
	Biodiversity Project Group	
C.34.	Prior to commencing construction of the Dual Tunnel within Area 1 the Consent Holder must invite the following entities to participate in a Biodiversity Project Group:	The composition of the group that will oversee the design, governance,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ngāti Hako b. Ngāti Maru c. Ngāti Puu d. Ngāti Tamaterā e. Ngāti Tara Tokanui / Ngāti Koi f. Ngaati Whanaunga g. Department of Conservation 	implementation, monitoring and review of the Biodiversity Project is subject to ongoing discussion with tangata whenua and the Department of Conservation.
C.35.	<p>The purpose of the Biodiversity Project Group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Oversee the design, governance, implementation, monitoring and review of the Biodiversity Project; and b. In partnership with the consent holder, allocate the funding specified in Conditions C31 and C32. 	
C.36.	<p>Subject to any or all of the groups listed in Condition C34 agreeing to participate, the Biodiversity Project Group must comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An independent chair; b. Representatives of the Consent Holder; c. At least one suitably qualified and experienced restoration ecologist appointed by the Consent Holder; and d. Representatives of each of the groups listed in Condition C34 who agree to participate. 	The restoration ecologist to be agreed by the parties referred to before being formally appointed by the applicant.
C.37.	<p>Subject to any or all of the groups listed in Condition C34 agreeing to participate, the Biodiversity Project Group must be convened for the first time within 6 months of the Consent Holder commencing construction of the Dual Tunnel within Area 1. Thereafter, the frequency at which the Group meets shall be determined by the Project Group itself in order to fulfil its purpose under Condition C35.</p>	
	The Biodiversity Project Plan	
C.38.	<p>The Consent Holder must prepare a Biodiversity Project Plan no later than 36 months after the Consent Holder commences construction of the Dual Tunnel within Area 1. A copy of the Biodiversity Project Plan must be provided to the Councils.</p> <p>Provided any or all of the groups listed in Condition C34 agree to participate, the Biodiversity Project Plan must be prepared in partnership with the Biodiversity Project Group.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Project Plan must specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The delivery mechanism for the Biodiversity Project (e.g. charitable company or trust, NZ National Parks and Conservation Foundation or other appropriate entity); b. The specific management and enhancement objectives for the Biodiversity Project; c. The detailed programme of activity for the first 5 years following the commencement of activities authorised by this consent; 	<p>These conditions require OGNZL to develop, implement and review the Biodiversity Project Plan in partnership with the Biodiversity Project Group. As is outlined above these activities are funded by the Biodiversity Project Fund.</p> <p>The requirement to complete the initial Biodiversity Project Plan within 36 months of commencing construction of the Dual Tunnel means it will be ready for</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Any land access arrangements with the Department of Conservation which are required to implement the Project Plan; e. Measurable and time bound performance targets for effectively reducing pest species; f. Methods of outcome monitoring for pest and native species to determine programme effectiveness; and g. The reporting and review process for the programme. 	implementation before the Consent Holder commences mining of ore.
C.39.	The Consent Holder must implement the Biodiversity Project Plan and, provided that it has been established, do so in partnership with the Biodiversity Project Group.	
C.40.	<p>The Biodiversity Project Plan may be reviewed and updated by the Consent Holder at any time, after consultation with the Biodiversity Project Group. The Consent Holder must ensure the Councils are provided with the current version of the Biodiversity Project Plan within four weeks of any update being completed.</p> <p>Any such review must adopt the matters addressed in Condition C41c.</p>	
	Reporting	
C.41.	<p>The Consent Holder must provide an annual report to the Councils by 30 June each year which summarises:</p> <p>The activities undertaken by the Biodiversity Project Group;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Progress on the development and/or implementation of the Biodiversity Project Plan (as appropriate). Where aspects of the Biodiversity Project Plan have not been implemented within the timeframes set out in the Biodiversity Project Plan, the Report must include the reasons why, and the measures that have been taken by the Consent Holder in partnership with the Biodiversity Project Group, or are intended to be taken by the Consent Holder in partnership with the Biodiversity Project Group, to address timing issues as quickly as is practicable; b. An assessment of the effectiveness of the Biodiversity Project Plan in achieving its objectives and performance indicators. Where the report identifies the that the performance indicators have not been achieved or maintained the Report must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The reasons why the performance indicators have not yet been achieved; ii. Details of any specific measures that have already been implemented, or are intended to be implemented to achieve the performance indicators; and iii. Any amendments to the Biodiversity Project Plan which would assist the Consent Holder and Biodiversity Project Group to meet the objectives of the Biodiversity Project Plan. 	<p>These conditions specify the requirements for OGNZL to report on progress in delivering the Biodiversity Project Plan.</p> <p>As is outlined above these activities are funded by the Biodiversity Project Fund.</p>

6 CONCLUSION

The Waihi North Biodiversity Project is intended to deliver biodiversity benefits over and above OGNZL's proposed effects management pest control programme for the WNP. A 18,870 ha area has been identified within which the final Project location will be selected by the Biodiversity Project Group, based on the group's key objectives and goals. This group will be made up of key stakeholders, including representatives of iwi who have elected to participate in the Project. While specific design of the Project is yet to be determined, it is expected to be centred around pest mammal control to improve outcomes for forest health and individual native species. A funding commitment of NZ\$8.4 million is to be provided by OGNZL for the Project, with the funding to be secured by WNP consent conditions for at least 10 years, or for the duration of underground stoping at WUG, whichever is longer. This funding commitment is expected to provide long-lasting environmental, economic, social, and cultural benefits for the Southern Coromandel area.