

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS FUND 2024

Entry criteria

The Environmental Leaders Fund (ELF) aims to support schools and early childhood centres with projects that increase their students' knowledge and passion for the environment.

As we respond and adapt to a changing climate, projects that improve biodiversity, reduce our impact on te taiao (the environment) and care for the earth's resources, will help us build a climate-resilient future.

Rules of entry

- Entrants can be schools and early childhood centres that are based in Northland.
- The 'Northland' region is defined by the Northland Regional Council boundaries, which can be viewed [here](#).
- By entering, you agree to participate in any marketing and promotional activities should your application be successful.
- Applicants must demonstrate that their project aligns with at least one of the categories outlined below.
- Winners must submit a project completion report by 31 December 2025. The report must include photos of the completed project and answers to our provided questionnaire.

Judging process

- When assessing applications, the panel may take into consideration any/all of the following:
 - Geographic spread of projects.
 - Balance of projects in each category.
 - Whether the project can be completed if only partially funded.
 - Whether the school has received ELF funding in recent years.

Applying

You must complete your application online [here](#).

In submitting your application, you'll need to provide the following information:

Provide a summary of the project:

- Who is involved?
- What is the purpose and what are the objectives?
- What are the expected environmental outcomes?
Explain how they will be achieved.

General criteria

- How does the project consider te ao Māori?
- How does the project involve the wider community?

Future thinking

- Could the project be replicated and/or developed by other schools/centres across Te Taitokerau?
Explain how.
- Are there plans to continue or further develop this project?

Project categories

You will need to clearly describe how your project meets **at least one** of the following categories.

Exploring alternative energy and sustainable transport

Alternative energy, also known as renewable energy, is energy that is generated from sources that are replenished naturally. Making use of abundant renewable energy is one way to reduce greenhouse emissions and improve our climate balance. We can also reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in other ways like using sustainable transport modes.

Some examples of projects we can support include:

- Installation of solar panels or other alternative energy sources.
- Providing bike and scooter racks.
- Creating a school wide sustainable travel plan.
- Providing safety equipment and protective clothing for walking school buses and biking.
- Creating a repair workshop for bikes.

Fund recipients will demonstrate:

- A commitment to a project or activity that is using alternative energy sources and/or sustainable transport.
- Measurable outcomes that show how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions and/or builds resilience to a changing climate in Te Taitokerau.

Improving biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. It includes different species of plants, animals, and microorganisms. Biodiversity is essential for the health of our planet, providing food, clean water, clean air and helping to regulate the climate.

Some examples of projects we can support include:

- Native restoration and riparian planting.
- Trees for shade to cope with rising temperatures.
- Dune health restoration.
- Weed eradication.
- Eco-sourced native plant nurseries.
- Marine or freshwater ecosystem protection and restoration.

Fund recipients will demonstrate:

- A commitment to a project that protects, restores or improves biodiversity.
- Measurable outcomes that show how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions and/or builds resilience to a changing climate in Te Taitokerau.

Supporting a circular economy and reducing waste

A circular economy is like nature's recycling system. Instead of throwing things away, we reuse, fix, and recycle them. By supporting a circular economy, we reduce the amount of waste that is transported to landfill, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving natural resources, and protecting air and water quality.

Some examples of projects we can support include:

- Composting and worm farming.
- Reusing, recycling and repairing.
- Sustainable procurement – choosing products that can be used again and again.
- Replacing plastic with natural or bio-degradable alternatives.

Fund recipients will demonstrate:

- A commitment to a project reduces the amount of waste generated.
- Measurable outcomes that show how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions and/or builds resilience to a changing climate in Te Taitokerau.

Project categories continued

You will need to clearly describe how your project meets **at least one** of the following categories.

Protecting and preserving water

Wai (water) is essential for life, and a changing climate will impact water availability, water quality and all living things that depend on it. Protecting freshwater ecosystems and finding smart ways to conserve and access water are essential.

Some examples of projects we can support include:

- Rainwater harvesting and storage for onsite gardens.
- Transforming concrete spaces into rain gardens to reduce runoff and maintain soil moisture.
- Water conservation and efficiency projects.
- Riparian or wetland planting projects.
- Monitoring equipment, such as SHMAK kits for water quality testing.

Fund recipients will demonstrate:

- A commitment to a project or activity that protects and improves water resources.
- Measurable outcomes that show how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions and/or builds resilience to a changing climate in Te Taitokerau.

Growing kai

Foods bought from shops travel an average of 2,400 km+ before being eaten. Processing and transporting food generates greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Food that is grown locally travels a shorter distance to get to your plate, and often doesn't come with all the unnecessary packaging resulting in fewer carbon emissions.

Some examples of projects we can support include:

- Working with your community to develop a community garden.
- Sharing excess kai through food banks or your school community.
- Creating a seed library or seedling swap.
- Planting a local food forest.

Fund recipients will demonstrate:

- A commitment to a project that is working to increase local food supplies.
- Measurable outcomes that show how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions and/or builds resilience to a changing climate in Te Taitokerau.