2026 Work Programme

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Forest Growers Levy Trust Budget

Forest Growers Levy Trust Budget
Year Ended 31 December

	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Budget
Income			
Commodity Levies	10,401,614	10,714,688	10,200,000
Interest Income	82,804	55,025	40,000
MPI share under OA	414,400	424,850	434,234
Total Income	10,898,818	11,194,563	10,674,234
Expenses			
Operational & Administration			
Administration Costs	254,367	277,830	272,000
Overhead Costs	345,396	310,940	341,000
Programme Delivery	1,243,595	1,253,851	1,363,000
	1,843,358	1,842,621	1,976,000
Business Compliance & Reporting	133,004	195,399	219,000
Levy Collection	251,733	261,299	268,000
Secretariat	95,000	95,000	95,000
	2,323,095	2,394,319	2,558,000
Board Support & Additional Projects	131,583	324,855	20,000
MPI share under OA	414,400	424,850	434,500
FGLT Database Project	-	15,878	60,000
Forest Shield	-	9,146	91,000
Levy Referendum	205,191	-	-
	751,174	774,729	605,500
Work Programme			
NEFD	44,000	-	-
Environment	250,654	270,526	255,255
Fire	7,300	32,589	28,150
Biosecurity	918,964	978,791	1,065,600
Health & Safety	728,000	606,667	728,000
Promotions	802,493	1,214,960	1,206,650
Research	4,454,389	4,902,300	4,865,900
Transport	86,025	55,754	68,400
SME	83,280	104,152	302,793
Training	61,420	39,947	160,500
	7,436,525	8,205,686	8,681,248
Total Expenses	10,510,794	11,374,734	11,844,748
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	388,024	(180,171)	(1,170,248)
Income Tax on Interest Income	22,905	15,127	11,000
Unallocated Funding Provision (CEO)	-	-	100,000
Advocacy Provision to be Specifically Authorised	-	-	400,000
Net Surplus/(Deficit) after Provisions	365,119	(195,298)	(1,681,248)
Total Reserves at 31 December	3,288,358	3,093,060	1,411,812

Operational ($487,000)

Integral and database maintenance ($268,000)

Integral set up a stand-alone company "Levy Systems Limited" (LSL) to operate the Forest Growers Levy data and levy collection system. This separate company ensures individual company data is kept confidential and secure.
LSL is responsible for collecting data on harvested wood products and invoicing the owner of these products. The levy is paid by forest owners directly into the Forest Grower Levy Trust bank account.

Funding for 2025 covers the operation of LSL and the funding of minor enhancements to the collection systems.

Integral Software Amortisation ($0)

Covers amortisation of software used by LSL to upload data and invoice levy payers. The original software programme that commenced 1 January 2014 has been fully amortised. This expense remains here for when enhancements are required in the future.

Business Compliance and Reporting ($219,000)

Covers the cost of the Levy Trust administration including bank fees, legal, Xero accounting subscription, audit fee, business advisory, board and secretariat travel, chair, compliance audits, AGM and other meetings and an associated communications programme.

This expenditure consists of:

Chairman's fee and other Board costs	78,000
Legal expenses, including legal support for the Work Programme	22,500
Audit fee, accounting, and tax advice	23,500
Communications	16,500
Other (bank fees, insurance, website)	22,500
Compliance audit	27,000
Levy Systems audit	29,000
	$219,000

Secretariat Costs ($95,000)

FOA provides a secretariat service to the Levy Trust Board. The Chief Executive of FOA currently serves as the Chief Executive for the FGLT, answerable to the Trust Board for that function, not to FOA. The secretariat has a responsibility for liaising between the Trust and the two associations (FOA and FFA) who are delivering the levy-funded work programme including tabling the annual work programme and regular reports, as well as oversight of the levy collection process, constitutional matters, financial arrangements and accounting, legal and tax compliance.

Programme Management Costs ($1,976,000)

Administration costs	272,000
Overhead costs	341,000
Programme Delivery	1,363,000
	$1,976,000

Changes to Programme Management Costs: these are reviewed each year and adjusted to account for any new resources and/or circumstances to comprise 81% of total costs. The remaining 19% is attributable to either FOA or secretariat activities.

The management costs include FOA resources and are broken down as follows:

FOA Staffing
Approximately 10 FTEs based in Wellington, Rotorua, Christchurch & Cambridge are managing the Levy Trust approved programme of work in collaboration with the FOA/FFA membership committees, communicating with forest growers and the wider industry and coordinating efforts with the Farm Forestry Association. This includes the management of R&D activity.

Phones

Stationery and Printing

General
Depreciation and other

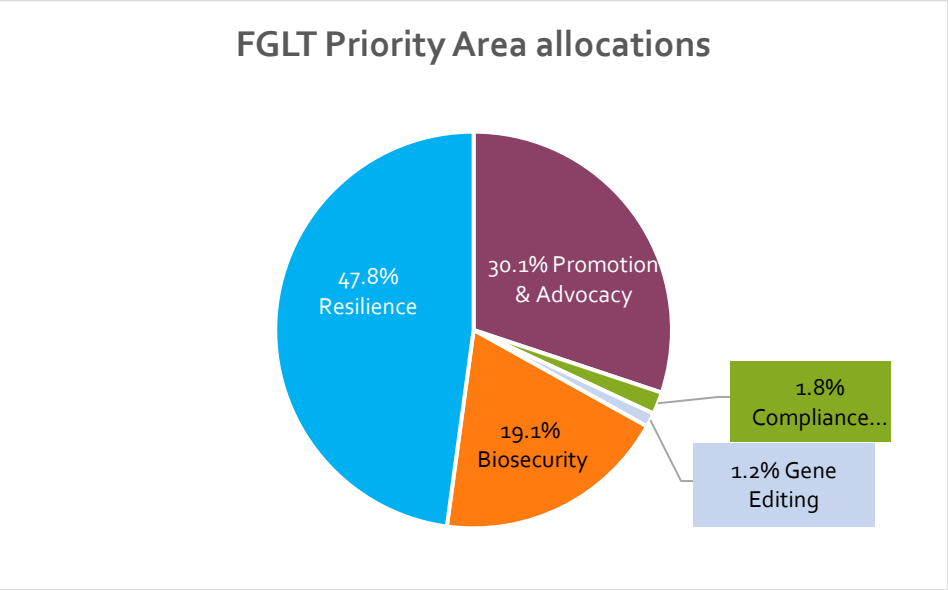
R & M premises and equipment
IT costs, meeting and storage costs and office maintenance

Occupancy
Includes portion of office rental, power, cleaning services, office consumables

Travel and meetings
Catering for committees, flights, accommodation, rental vehicles, workshops, stakeholders' meetings, expert/contractors travel when required, venue charges

International travel
Includes a provision for engagement with International Council of Forest and Paper Association and FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest and with the Australian industry (AFPA)

FGLT Priority Area Allocations



FGLT Priority Area allocations		
	$	%
Promotion & Advocacy	$2,614,443	30.1%
Compliance & Regulation	$157,145	1.8%
Gene Editing	$100,000	1.2%
Biosecurity	$1,656,128	19.1%
Resilience	4,153,532	47.8%
Total	**$8,681,248**	**100%**

Priority Area Descriptions:
1. Industry promotion and advocacy (representation of forest grower interests) reducing the risk from ill-informed criticism and improving forestry's reputation and trust;
2. Identifying and reducing wasteful compliance and unjustified regulatory burden - including improving resource management law;
3. Encouraging early up-take of gene editing opportunities;
4. Maintaining and enhancing biosecurity; and
5. Advancing industry resilience, including initiatives to improve forestry preparedness to adapt to adverse climate, market and other changes.

Work Programme Costs ($8,681,248)

Fire ($28,150)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Final Reporting and Publication of Sector Fire Capability and Aircraft Use Surveys To complete and publish the final report from the 2025 forestry sector surveys, consolidating findings on aircraft use, firefighting capability, insurance, and investment. The objective is to produce a professionally designed, widely distributed report that informs engagement with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), supports sector planning, and promotes forestry's role in emergency management.	**$5,650**
Forest Sector Fire Communications Plan – 2026 The Forest Sector Fire Communications Plan will deliver a targeted strategy to promote accurate, evidence-based narratives on fire risk and forestry. It will highlight the sector's proactive fire risk management, adherence to FFRM guidelines, and public safety contributions, while addressing misconceptions about fire origins and clarifying the role of land use versus climate change in fire risk. Stories will cover plantation risk management, the urban–rural interface, fine fuels, and real-world examples like the Port Hills fire, alongside investment in fire capability and FENZ levy implications. A journalist will be engaged to produce evidence-based stories throughout the year to shape public understanding and counter misinformation, supporting industry promotion, advocacy, resilience, and trust-building	**$20,000**
Travel and accommodation Costs for Committee members to attend meetings. Subject to approval by Committee Chair.	**$2,500**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$28,150**

Forest Biosecurity ($1,065,600)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Forest Biosecurity Surveillance (FBS) – Field Surveillance The Forest Biosecurity Surveillance (FBS) – Field Surveillance project is an industry-led, nationally coordinated programme that protects New Zealand's plantation forests from biosecurity threats. Delivered by SPS Biota on behalf of the forest industry, it conducts annual risk-based surveys to detect new pests and pathogens early, support market access with evidence of pest absence, and safeguard trade and forest health. Guided by advanced modelling, the programme optimises survey effort and contributes data to national forest health systems, underpinning pest freedom assurances, and supporting industry research. Cost-shared with the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Government Industry Agreement (GIA), FBS provides quarterly updates and an annual report, ensuring biosecurity excellence and sector resilience.	**$367,821**
Forest Biosecurity Surveillance (FBS) – Diagnostics Diagnostics, delivered by the Bioeconomy Science Institute, are the cornerstone of New Zealand's forest biosecurity system, providing early detection of pests and pathogens and generating critical data that underpins pest status knowledge, pest freedom claims, and national forest health intelligence. These services support and enable the sectors three key surveillance programmes—Forest Biosecurity Surveillance (FBS), Non-Model Allocated Surveillance (NMA), and Forest Health Assessments (FHA). Costs for FBS diagnostics are apportioned at approximately one-third each across FBS, NMA, and FHA activities, with Biosecurity New Zealand sharing 50% of the FBS component costs and the remainder covered by the Forest Growers Levy Trust under the GIA.	**$260,563**
FBS Programme (NON-MODEL) - NMA The Non-Model Allocation (NMA) Surveillance programme is a fully industry funded, nationally coordinated component of the forestry sectors forest biosecurity system that strengthens early detection of pests and pathogens in high-risk areas. Using a structured risk profiling approach developed by SPS Biosecurity, NMA predominantly targets peri-urban and in-forest sites with high visitor traffic, industrial activity, or proximity to transport routes, addressing gaps in the Forest Biosecurity Surveillance (FBS) model and increasing the likelihood of timely containment or eradication. This programme also extends surveillance effort across high-risk urban areas and into high-risk forests in rural areas. The programme also serves as a platform for piloting and operationalising innovative surveillance methods such as remote sensing, building capability and resilience while supporting pest freedom assurances critical for trade. Annual delivery includes	**$197,000**

surveillance data, reporting, and contributions to the Forest Health Database, ensuring preparedness and long-term benefits for all plantation forest owners.

GIA Secretariat Cost Share **$48,900**

This project ensures the forestry sector's continued participation in the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) for Biosecurity Readiness and Response, a partnership between primary industries and MPI to collaboratively manage biosecurity risks. Through the Forest Owners Association, the sector signed the GIA Deed in 2015 and contributes to funding core GIA Secretariat services—a minimum commitment required of all signatories—via a fixed club share and proportional cost allocation based on industry value, estimated at $48,900 for 2026. This funding secures the sector's role in governance bodies such as the Deed Governance Group and GIA Operations Limited, enabling influence over biosecurity strategies, operational agreements, and system improvements. The project aligns with Forest Growers Levy Trust priorities by enhancing biosecurity excellence, advocacy, and resilience, with outcomes including improved decision-making, early detection capability, and strengthened market access.

Lepidoptera Readiness and Response Contingency Planning **$23,000**

The Lepidoptera Readiness and Response Contingency Planning project is an ongoing initiative delivered under a multisector Operational Agreement signed in March 2023. It aims to strengthen New Zealand's biosecurity preparedness for Lepidoptera incursions that pose significant risks to forestry and other plant-based sectors. Initiated through the Government Industry Agreement (GIA), the project implements a shared work programme focused on early detection, response capability, and sector-wide coordination. It is designed to deliver measurable improvements in readiness and resilience, aligning with Forest Growers Levy Trust strategic priorities for biosecurity and industry sustainability.

Forest Biosecurity Consultant **$20,000**

This function provides dedicated technical support and advice on forest biosecurity, ensuring the sector's active role in strengthening New Zealand's biosecurity system. It includes supporting the forest biosecurity surveillance system, engaging in Forest Biosecurity Committee and GIA activities, and liaising with key partners such as MPI, the Bioeconomy Science Institute, primary industry groups, regional councils, and others. Responsibilities include programme design, data analysis, reporting, governance representation, participation in technical working groups, support for biosecurity research, and expert advice on emerging threats and system improvements, maintaining a proactive and collaborative approach to forest biosecurity.

Forest Biosecurity Awareness and Communications programme **$15,000**

The Forest Biosecurity Awareness and Communications Programme strengthens biosecurity across New Zealand's planted forest sector through coordinated communication, training, and engagement initiatives such as PineNet, Forest Biosecurity News, the annual Forest Biosecurity Conference, fact sheets, and other awareness activities. By addressing low industry awareness and promoting proactive measures, the programme enhances early detection, risk management, and sector reputation while fostering community engagement and highlighting the critical role sector participants

play, and the importance of them proactively managing the risks they are best placed to manage to protect their forests and the wider sector. These efforts align with Forest Growers Levy Trust priorities and deliver measurable benefits through improved preparedness and engagement metrics.

Forest Biosecurity Training Workshops **$14,000**

This project delivers four face-to-face biosecurity training workshops across New Zealand for industry participants, covering case studies, current protocols, and reporting processes. By increasing awareness and equipping participants with the knowledge and information to cascade within their organisations, the initiative strengthens biosecurity practices, improves early detection of pests and diseases, and supports effective control or eradication. Building on successful 2025 sessions and responding to strong industry demand, the expanded programme will reach a wider geographic audience, enhancing sector resilience and preparedness.

Incorporating Mātauranga Māori into commercial forestry biosecurity training **$5,000**

This project will design and deliver a pilot training programme that integrates Mātauranga Māori and western biosecurity science into commercial forestry practice. Māori play a significant part in New Zealand's plantation forestry sector, yet training opportunities are often framed solely in scientific or technical terms. This programme will co-develop content with iwi forestry representatives, ensuring training is culturally relevant, practical, and accessible. A pilot wānanga (workshop) will be delivered in 2026, supported by bilingual training materials (English and te reo Māori). Participants will learn to identify priority pests and diseases, apply hygiene and monitoring practices, and use existing reporting channels. The programme builds capacity for Māori landowners and forestry managers to act as frontline biosecurity partners, protecting both commercial and indigenous forests.

Plant Pass OA Commitment **$12,000**

Plant Pass is a voluntary biosecurity certification framework for nurseries that reduces the risk of forest pathogens spreading through nursery pathways into production forests. By providing independent assurance and promoting best-practice biosecurity management, it strengthens industry resilience, builds trust, and safeguards New Zealand's forests. This project ensures the wider plant sector certification scheme is available to the forestry sector, leveraging learnings and efficiencies from a plant sector-wide approach, and addressing a critical gap in nursery supply chains and the sector's biosecurity system. Implemented as a five-year multi-sector Operational Agreement under the Government Industry Agreement (GIA), Plant Pass involves MPI, NZPPI, and industry partners, ensuring collaborative governance and shared responsibility for protecting the forest sector.

Beetle trapping for early detection of invasive forestry pests **$40,630**

Bark and wood boring beetles, along with other insects, pose a significant threat to New Zealand's plantation forestry, with global trade and climate change increasing the risk of exotic pests establishing locally. Early detection is critical for eradication, and this project will continue the national trapping programme previously funded under NMA to detect unwanted beetle species. Around 40 high risk locations, selected for proximity to population centres, production forests, and accessibility, will host flight traps with dual

lures, and collected specimens will be identified under a stereomicroscope. All data on trapping locations and species will be available through an online dashboard accessible to FGLT, strengthening biosecurity and enabling rapid response to forestry pests.

Forest Biosecurity Readiness Planning **$24,686**

The project aims to improve New Zealand's plantation forestry sector's readiness to respond to major biosecurity threats. It builds on existing surveillance efforts under the GIA Deed and proposes developing detailed contingency plans (e.g., surveillance, disposal, treatment, hygiene). The initiative seeks funding from the Forest Growers Levy Trust, ideally matched by external funding, and will be delivered in collaboration with Biosecurity New Zealand and other partners. Outcomes include enhanced response capability and sector resilience, with progress tracked through quarterly reporting and stakeholder communications. The project aims to improve New Zealand's plantation forestry sector's readiness to respond to major biosecurity threats. It builds on existing surveillance efforts and proposes progressing the developing of contingency plans (e.g., surveillance, disposal, movement controls, treatment, hygiene).

Radiata Pine Nematode Survey **$30,000**

There is a lack of information on nematodes vectored by bark and wood insects in New Zealand pine forests.

This project will collect bark wood boring insects and wood samples from which nematodes will be extracted and identified.

Recently, two nematodes in the genus *Bursaphelenchus* were identified in New Zealand from *Pinus radiata* wood and the beetle *Hylastes ater*. These nematodes are in the same genus as the pine wilt nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*, PWN) which is a major forestry pest overseas. This survey will provide baseline information on nematodes vectored by bark and wood boring insects in New Zealand.

Live specimens of bark and wood insects will be collected from Pinus radiata wood exhibiting symptoms associated with nematode e.g. damp wood, staining. Additionally, wood samples exhibiting nematode infection symptoms will be collected.

All beetle and wood samples will be submitted to Landcare Research for nematode extraction and identification. Nematodes will be identified using standard morphological or DNA based methods.

Better Border Biosecurity **$5,000**

The Better Border Biosecurity (B3) programme is a collaborative research initiative that strengthens New Zealand's plant biosecurity system. This project seeks $5,000 in funding to maintain the independent Chair and Executive Director roles, which are critical to B3's strategic leadership and governance, ensuring it remains a balanced, multi-sector partnership rather than being dominated by any single entity. The forest industry has supported B3 for nearly two decades and benefited from research in early pest detection, market access, and biosecurity preparedness. Sustaining these leadership roles will enable continued delivery of world-class biosecurity research and ensure industry influence in shaping priorities.

Travel and accommodation Costs for Committee members to attend meetings. Subject to approval by Committee Chair.	**$2,000**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$1,065,600**

Environment ($255,255)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Statutory change and subsequent implementation The Environment Committee will need to be resourced to respond to new regulations and policies are they are developed and consulted on. Typically, funding is used to obtain legal advice. The funding set aside in the statutory change project will resource the committee to do this. It is difficult to anticipate how much funding will be required and funding for this project is somewhat of a contingency with the amount estimated based on the amounts accessed in recent years. In addition to consultation and submissions it is important that the committee is resourced to engage with government departments on guidance material, workshops and general implementation of the new policies and regulations that are gazette. Churn in policy settings has continued into 2025 and it is anticipated that this will continue up until the 2026 election in particular with regards to resource management reform. Other regulations and policies that are likely to change includes the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity, Essential Freshwater, the ETS and electricity regulations. The statutory change project fund is also used to deal with regional matters that the Environment Committee view to be national precedent setting. Examples of such issues in 2025 included the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Plan Change 1. Members of the Environment Committee have felt overwhelmed with the volume of engagement and litigation on regional and local matters and are looking to the Environment Committee for greater support and resource. Additionally, funding is utilized to respond to severe weather events, data is collected or scientific review is commissioned to provide evidence on the sector's attributable impact. For example, woody debris surveys were undertaken on Tasman beaches following the June – July storms to correct misinformation about forestry slash.	**$50,000**
Environmental Consultant The Environment Committee calls on the services of an expert RMA environmental consultant for advice as needed on issues that affect the sector. Time billed includes attending Committee meetings, advice on RMA and planning matters, and updates to national policies in light of a number of regulatory changes.	**$13,000**
Travel and accommodation Costs for Committee members to attend meetings. Subject to approval by Committee Chair.	**$2,500**

Rare Species Website **$110**
Annual fees to cover website hosting of the rare species guides.

Forest Practice Guides/Environmental Code of Practice **$15,000**
In 2023 work combining and updating the FPGs with the older but more comprehensive Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) commenced. The bulk of the ECOP will be completed in 2025 but production of the final document including graphic design, review and promotion will need to be funded in 2026.

Land Use Study – Pakuratahi Paired Catchment **$20,000**
Over the period 1993-2005 Hawkes Bay Regional Council with assistance from a number of parties undertook a paired catchment study, monitoring and comparing various water quality attributes in two similar adjacent catchments, one in forestry and the other in farmland. The study period included first rotation harvest of forest in the Pakuratahi catchment, second rotation harvest is scheduled to occur in the next few years. It is proposed that the study is repeated, making use of emerging monitoring technologies and capturing a wider suit of environmental parameters.

FSC Cluster Group Hui's and GE Advocacy **$4,000**
Funding supports the costs associated with wider FSC cluster group meetings. FSC is commencing a review of the principals and criteria, this will have an important bearing on the day-to-day operations of certificate holders in New Zealand, it is important that the FSC cluster group is resourced to respond to this. Additionally, New Zealand certificate holders are seeking greater involvement with governance and are working with Australia to improve this. The FSC cluster group will also continue to promote opportunities to advocate for greater access to emerging genetic technologies such as gen editing.

Wilding conifers advocacy and subscription **$3,000**
An annual subscription fee of $3,000 is required for membership of the Wilding Pine Network (WPN), a group advocating for the control of wilding conifers. A strong anti-forestry rhetoric is being pushed by many of the WPN members, it is important that the Environment Committee keeps a position on the Wilding Pine Network to respond to and bring balance to this group.

Save the Kiwi: The impact of moderd harvesting techniques in plantation forests on resident kiwi populations **$49,805**
Kiwi can thrive in pine forests. There has been no recent research into the effects of modern harvesting techniques on North Island Brown Kiwi, the most recent research was conducted in the 1980s. This project hopes to answer the question of whether capture and removal of kiwi at harvest time or lesser mitigation at harvest time but greater investment in predator control and dog management over the rotation of a forest will have a greater positive impact to kiwi numbers. It is unclear how national direction will change in relation to Indigenous Biodiversity, currently councils are required to restore and protect biodiversity. It is hoped that the outcome of this research will provide both the forestry sector and regulators with a science informed tool to make the best decisions to protect kiwi while ensuring production forestry can progress efficiently. The project is also

supported by the University of Canterbury. It is anticipated that the project will occur over 3 years, the first year of the study was funded in 2025.	
Invasive mammal populations in native and exotic plantation forests This proposal, from the School of Forestry at the University of Canterbury, seeks funding to study the abundance of invasive mammalian predators in New Zealand's native and plantation forests. The project aims to address misconceptions about plantation forests being poor habitats for native biodiversity by providing robust evidence on predator populations and their impact on bird species. Using camera traps, the study will monitor predator activity across six regions with varying climates and vegetation, comparing native forests and five age classes of Pinus radiata plantations. The project involves collaboration with five forestry companies, which will provide in-kind support, field assistance, and co-funding for additional cameras. The study will generate valuable data to inform evidence-based policies and afforestation regulations, supporting the forest industry's environmental certification initiatives and social license. The project is expected to benefit forest owners and managers by demonstrating the ecological value of plantations and will go some way to correcting myths perpetuated by the farming sector about the proliferation of pests coming from plantation forests.	**$95,000**
NZ Falcon guidelines review and industry training Project commissioning Parker conservation to update and review the existing falcon management guide with new best practice information.	**$2,840**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$255,255**

Health and Safety ($728,000)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) Committed liability for 2025 including an admin resource and accounting support for FISC Trust. FISC has operated successfully to date and has commitment from ACC for new project funding up to June 2030. FISC requires core funding for 2026 to continue its programme of work. ACC's contribution will be in addition to the funding granted by the FGLT and has specified agreed outcomes.	**$728,000**

FISC operating costs (Chief Executive Office, administrative support costs and office overheads)	$327,000
Stakeholder engagement via regular newsletters, regional workshops, attendance at industry events and an annual Safetree conference	$67,000
Costs associated with the operation of the Council and their governance of the agreed work programme and projects	$58,000
Safetree Certification (Ecoportal licensing, and certification programme costs)	$215,000
IRIS (Injury Recording Incident System) industry data programme	$56,000
Operational Action Group	$5,000
Total	**$728,000**

Safetree Contractor and Worker Certification Scheme
Embed certification in industry

The Independent Forest Safety Review (IFSR) made key recommendations that the forest industry, led by FISC, implement the following:

- a contractor certification scheme
- individual competency standards for high-risk tasks; tree felling and breaking out

Schemes have been developed, Safetree Contractor Certification and Safetree Worker Certification, along with governance of both schemes.

In developing these certification schemes a key focus has been to educate the wider sector in the following areas: leadership, risk management, worker engagement and current competency for high-risk tasks.

In developing Safetree Contractor Certification, the following matters have been taken into consideration:

- There is sufficient industry support for the schemes to become self-sustaining; development work has been supported strongly by FICA and NZFOA have also taken a keen interest.
- Maintain costs at an accessible level to ensure smaller companies will be able to participate; currently costs for individual companies to join the certification scheme are estimated to be in the region of $1,500 - $2,500.

It is recognised that support for the scheme will rely largely on forest owners and other supply chain participants acknowledgement and acceptance of the certifications.

The FISC Council continues the "roll-out" and embedding of these schemes with industry participants nationwide which will require additional infrastructure requirements. In order to accomplish this FISC requires funding for

Certification:

- Training sufficient assessors for Safetree Worker Certification and conducting peer review workshops*
- Training sufficient auditors for Safetree Contractor Certification and conducting peer review workshops *
- System administration costs

Promotions ($1,206,650)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Annual public opinion survey This project will enable the Promotions Committee to continue its annual Social Licence to Operate (SLO) public opinion survey in 2026, marking the sixth year of tracking New Zealanders' perceptions of forestry. The 2026 survey will engage a nationally representative sample of 1500 adults and explore public sentiment on forestry's economic contribution, environmental performance, harvest practices, climate impacts and acceptance of innovation, including gene editing. The research will benchmark forestry's reputation against other primary industries, identify priority audiences, test message recall and efficacy and highlight emerging narratives influencing public discourse. The survey has become a cornerstone tool for monitoring forestry's reputation, providing a longitudinal dataset that guides industry-wide communications and advocacy efforts. Findings offer forest growers timely, objective insights that help strengthen trust, reduce reputational risk and align industry storytelling with public expectations. Outputs will inform future campaigns, refine communications strategies and support sector advocacy.	**$37,000**
2026 Reputation and Trust Campaign Forestry's reputation continues to face pressure from shifting community expectations, evolving environmental standards and persistent misconceptions about the sector. The 2026 Reputation and Trust Campaign marks a major step-change in forestry's national promotions – extending 2025 campaign efforts into a full 12-month presence. This funding enables securing of high-impact traditional television placements, alongside sustained digital, social, radio and print activity to maximise reach and message retention. This next phase is informed by six years of insights from annual Social Licence to Operate (SLO) surveys, pre-market testing, post-campaign research and learnings from the 2024 pilot and 2025 Forest Growers NZ campaign. These findings underpin the long-term strategy of the 2026 campaign, prioritising continuity, emotional resonance and authenticity. The campaign will continue to spotlight the people of our industry and forest products, the intergenerational commitment to land and community and the sector's contribution to New Zealand's economy. A continuous media presence through to December 2026 aims to shift perceptions of forestry from short-term awareness to lasting trust and credibility.	**$701,150**
Website development and maintenance Websites are a central communications hub, providing forest growers with timely information, industry news, resources and advocacy tools. This project funds ongoing	**$25,000**

maintenance and development of the Forest Growers New Zealand website, keeping it secure, current and user-friendly. Funding covers monthly software updates, security patches, bug fixes and the development of new features driven by user feedback, such as improved resource libraries and accessibility enhancements. Regular performance tracking will guide improvements, boost engagement and amplify sector messaging. This ensures forest growers can access critical information and make informed decisions, while supporting the sharing of information with the sector and stakeholders.

Communications tools **$15,500**

This project maintains the core communications tools that enable the Promotions Committee to deliver timely, accurate and evidence-based communications to the forest growing sector, stakeholders and the public. Core tools include a media monitoring platform – providing real-time alerts on forestry coverage and sentiment analyses – a national press release distribution system and creative software and content production tools. These tools enable the Secretariat to respond quickly to media developments, counter misinformation and proactively share positive forestry stories using in-house resource. By maintaining these systems, forest growers and stakeholders receive clearer, more consistent information on forestry issues, supporting transparency, sector engagement and raising the industry's profile.

Agency Support **$75,000**

Flexible funding to engage specialist agencies and external experts where needed to support the 2026 Promotions work programme. These services are intended to supplement in-house capacity in areas such as graphic design, social media, public relations, campaign planning, strategic advice, resource development and print production.

Engaging external expertise ensures the production of consistent, high-quality communications and promotional materials that strengthen sector messaging, raise forestry's profile and respond effectively to reputational or policy challenges.

Discover Forestry **$220,000**

Discover Forestry delivers a nationwide forestry education and sector engagement programmes to schools and their communities. Programmes include *Wood is Good* for primary and intermediate students and *Grow Me* for secondary school students. These initiatives introduce students to forestry's environmental and economic contributions and provide hands-on exposure to forest operations, including career pathways into the sector. In 2026, Discover Forestry aims to reach over 20,000 students through 40 primary school events, 50 secondary school activities and career expos and 100 digital classroom sessions, including a new component – the *Minecraft Education Forestry Unit*.

Led by Discover Forestry chief executive Erica Kinder, the programme is supported by a team of dedicated forestry communicators who provide face-to-face engagement with schools, enhancing understanding of forestry and forest products, strengthening community connections and building the sector's reputation.

Facts and Figures publication **$33,000**

Produced annually for over 20 years, the *Facts and Figures* publication provides key statistics and insights on New Zealand's plantation forest industry. The 2025/2026 edition will produce 1000 printed copies and a digital version, detailing forest area, ownership, planting and harvesting trends, employment, wood processing data, health and safety insights, environmental performance, export information and more.

Funding enables the Promotions Committee to continue producing this resource for consumption by industry, stakeholders, educators and the media.

NZFFA-led engagement with landowners interested in trees for wise land use **$40,000**

Approximately 15,000 small-scale forest owners in New Zealand are not affiliated with an industry association. For most, forestry is a secondary interest, focused on improving land use or serving as an investment rather than a primary business.

This project supports communication and engagement efforts with small-scale forest owners and landowners interested in trees for diversified land use, led by the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association (NZFFA). Funding will be used to deliver NZFFA's *Tree Grower* Magazine, newsletters and social media to share forestry-related information, promote the benefits of small-scale forestry and improve understanding of the levy and sector issues. The project strengthens NZFFA's communication channels with small-scale forest owners, helping them stay informed, engaged and supported in managing their forests.

2026 Fieldays Forestry Hub **$30,000**

Mystery Creek Fieldays is the largest annual agricultural event in the Southern Hemisphere, offering a prime platform for forestry to engage with farmers, rural communities and policy makers, build social licence and ease regulatory pressures. Delivery of the 2026 Fieldays Forestry Hub will be a collaborative effort involving industry, the Forest Growers Levy Trust and Te Uru Rakau – New Zealand Forest Service. The Promotions Committee's investment into the event will support the production of promotional materials, foot traffic monitoring and see visitor and social listening surveys conducted to capture engagement and measure impact. These efforts will showcase forestry's economic, environmental and social benefits while strengthening connections with landowners interested in diversified land use. The project aims to attract at least 10,000 visitors to the Forestry Hub over the four days, particularly those in the agricultural sector. Securing direct engagement with political leaders to influence policy decisions affecting forestry in an election year will also be a focus.

NZFFA-led engagement with the agricultural community at Fieldays **$25,000**

This initiative will showcase forestry's strong ties with the agricultural sector, highlighting the benefits of integrating trees into farming systems at the national Mystery Creek Fieldays event in Hamilton. Funding will support the setup of a professionally staffed stall, where NZFFA representatives will engage with landowners and farmers, provide informative materials like *Tree Grower* magazines and promote the sustainable use of trees for both environmental and economic benefits.

A key offering will be NZFFA's advisory services, providing expert guidance to small-scale forest owners and farm foresters on tree planting, land management and enhancing farm

productivity through forestry. These services add tangible value to the event and strengthen the value proposition for attendees.

This project complements the broader efforts of the Fieldays Forestry Hub, contributing to greater awareness and trust in forestry practices, while fostering constructive dialogue between the farming and forestry communities.

Transport and demonstrate simulators at promotional events The Central North Island Wood Council will showcase forestry's modern, technology-driven career pathways at the 2026 Mystery Creek Fieldays Forestry Hub using forestry harvesting simulators. Funding will support the transportation of the simulators to the event, where attendees will have a hands-on experience of operating modern forestry equipment in a virtual environment. It offers a direct introduction to forestry's career opportunities, emphasising safety, sustainability and innovation. The project supports industry visibility and recruitment efforts, positioning forestry as a rewarding and forward-thinking career choice.	**$5,000**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$1,206,650**

Research Science & Technology ($4,865,900)

Portfolio Changes

The 2026 Research, Science and Technology portfolio reflects significant structural changes. The Tree Root Microbiome Programme concluded in 2025, while levy investment in the 21st Century Tissue Culture Programme will reduce by 50% as the programme develops a business case for an ongoing programme from 2027. Two of the long-running programmes will continue in 2026: the Automation and Robotics Programme (A&R), which enters its final two years of funding, and the Precision Silviculture Programme (PSP) which has another 3.5 years of funding. A key priority for 2026 will be the development of business cases for two new long-term strategic research initiatives for commencing in 2027.

Budget Allocation

The 2026 levy fund allocation of $4,865,900 is consistent with the 2025 investment of $4,807,500. Long-term programme commitments and regular activities (annual conference and FGR website forecaster calculator) account for $2,695,000 (55%), leaving $2,170,000 (45%) available for medium- and short-term ongoing and new project proposals.

Application and Evaluation Process

In August 2025, 81 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) were received from 22 organisations, requesting total funding exceeding $8.36 million. The Forest Research Committee (FRC) conducted Stage 1 evaluation in September, applying standardised criteria to rank all submissions. The evaluation considered:

- Continuation status (2025 research vs. new proposals)
- Project duration
- Collaboration opportunities between similar proposals
- Input from the Environment Committee and Forest Biosecurity Committee
- Alternative funding sources
- Alignment with FGLT priority focus areas for 2026 (below)

The five FGLT focus areas for 2026 are:

Focus 1: Industry promotion and advocacy (representation of forest grower interests) reducing the risk from ill-informed criticism and improving forestry's reputation and trust

Focus 2: Identifying and reducing wasteful compliance and unjustified regulatory burden - including improving resource management law

Focus 3: Encouraging early up-take of gene editing opportunities

Focus 4: Maintaining and enhancing biosecurity

Focus 5: Advancing industry resilience, including initiatives to improve forestry preparedness to adapt to adverse climate, market and other changes

Following Stage 1 evaluation, 35 EOIs were invited to submit full proposals. The FRC scored and ranked these submissions on 5 November, with successful candidates forwarded to the FGLT board for approval on 3 December.

Sixty percent of the recommended proposals are aligned with Focus area 5; Resilience and Adaptation, with a further 18% aligned with Focus area 4: Maintaining and Enhancing Biosecurity.

Projects within the portfolio allocation

	2026 Funding Approved
Automation and Robotics in Harvesting and Logistics (A&R) A nine-year partnership between industry and MPI that commenced on 1 January 2019. It is focused on automation and robotics post tree felling to improve the safety and efficiency of operations in the log supply chain, reduce repetitive manual tasks and make harvesting and logistics jobs a more attractive option for a new generation of workers. Projects include hauler automation, log tagging, residue management and automated log sorting and transport. The Partnership commenced on 1 January 2019 and will enter its fourth year of seven years with industry contributing 60% and MPI 40%.	**$500,000**
21st Century Tissue Culture Partnership (TCP) A seven-year partnership with MBIE that commenced on 1 July 2019. It is focused on improving the efficiency of tissue culture plant production through automated propagation systems. Building on the significant past investment in breeding and genomics this programme aims to considerably shorten the time required to deploy the best genetics from breeding programmes to the forest. It will also broaden the selection of improved genotypes that can be propagated efficiently and is a perquisite for gene editing and other genetic technologies.	**$300,000**
Precision Silviculture Partnership (PSP) A seven-year partnership between industry and MPI that commenced on 22 March 2022. It aims to drive practice change across nursery, planting, pruning and thinning processes. The programme focuses on mechanisation, precision technologies and automation to improve the financial viability of recovering thinned biomass and to reduce labour constraints in pruning. It will leverage existing innovation in remote sensing, terrestrial robotics and geospatial location, while also exploring improvements to manual processes using power-assisted and battery-operated tools, and new engineering solutions for planting and silviculture. A strong health and safety focus underpins the work, alongside the creation of new career pathways in the forestry workforce.	**$1,500,000**
Support to Rural Fire Research Programme The Rural Fire Research programme is extending current research testing the new convective fire spread theory developed by the US Forest Service to extreme fire behaviour through burn experiments in standing conifers (wilding crown fires) and heavy slash fuels (fire whirls and mass fire behaviour). It also models wildfire spread in the rural-urban interface where houses are fuels, by linking computer models for suburban wildfire spread and atmospheric turbulence with data on ignition properties of buildings and vegetation fuels. The programme of work was developed in partnership with the New Zealand Forest Owners Association, Forest Growers Research, Te Uru Rākau and other members of the Rural Fire Research Advisory Committee.	**$65,000**

Additional Programmes – Management Costs **$200,000**

Effective project management and administration are critical to delivering high-quality research outcomes. These functions safeguard levy investments, support regulatory compliance, and enable researchers to focus their time on scientific work rather than administrative tasks. The new suite of medium and short-term projects in 2026 - comprising eight continuing projects and more than fourteen new initiatives - need structured project management and administrative support. This will ensure this expanded portfolio is well-governed, compliant, and efficiently managed through to completion.

Hosting Forestry Tools **$80,000**

Forest Growers Research hosts multiple tools on its website on behalf of the industry, including the AskFGR AI assistant , the Radiata On-line Forecaster Calculator that is used by small growers and consultants to develop yield estimates and to evaluate alternative silvicultural regimes, and the Tools for Foresters site that provides resources around expanding efficient UAV use in forestry.

Forest Growers Research – Annual Conference 2026 **$50,000**

Support for workshops and conferences where the full cost recovery through fees is not possible.

2026 Youth Micro Innovation Challenge: Supporting Forestry's Next Generation of Innovators **$15,000**

The 2026 Youth Micro Innovation Challenge will engage young forestry workers, students and graduates to deliver practical innovations for the sector. Building on the successful 2025 event, it will expand opportunities for youth, including mentoring within crews. With 105 ideas and $160,000 invested so far, the Micro Innovation Challenge platform offers a proven platform for creative solutions. Participants' ideas are reviewed by an independent panel, with successful entries receiving funding, mentorship, and development support. The fast-fail approach encourages rapid learning and surfaces impactful solutions, strengthening forestry's reputation and fostering the next generation of leaders.

Historical decisions inform future Dothistroma management **$50,000**

Dothistroma is a damaging foliage disease of radiata pine, causing an estimated $19.8M in annual losses (2011). Annual copper-based spraying is guided by aerial surveillance, which now accounts for about 1/16th of control costs and has recently doubled. This project aims to develop a cost-effective Dothistroma detection method using free or low-cost satellite imagery and machine learning. Kaingaroa Timberlands will supply eight years of spatial Dothistroma surveillance and spray data. By analysing historical spray decisions and satellite imagery (e.g., Sentinel-2, PlanetScope), we will build a model to predict disease severity and inform spray decisions. If successful, a second-year project will deliver a cloud-based tool for forest managers across New Zealand.

Pre-emptive Biosecurity Research 2 (2026 – 2028) **$267,280**

Radiata pine forests in the Basque Country have suffered severe decline from needle

pathogens and pests since 2018, severely impacting productivity and timber value. For over a decade, collaborations led by Jenny Aitken and Bill Dyck have supported research with Basque partners, testing NZ and Australian seedlots for resistance to major pathogens *(Dothistroma pini*, *D. septosporum*, *Lecanosticta acicola*, *Fusarium circinatum*) and invasive pests such as pine processionary moth, spongy moth and pine wilt nematode. A biosecurity project launched in 2022 by Dr Eugenia Iturritxa, NEIKER, is reporting on growth and disease resistance in RPBC genetics, informing breeding and investment decisions. This project will introduce 3–4 new trials with NZ and Australian seedlots to support radiata pine's long-term economic value and biosecurity strategies. It also enables ongoing research on forest health solutions.

Accelerating Uncrewed Aerial Application System (UASS) adoption in forest management **$100,000**

This project accelerates the transition from current aerial and ground-based agrichemical application to precision uncrewed aerial application systems (UASS). Operating safely at low height with accurate navigation, UASS reduce agrichemical use, maximise on-target deposition and reduce off-target drift. Current barriers are the lack of rigorous performance data (efficacy, drift, productivity and cost:benefit) and modelling tools needed to optimise UASS configuration, support regulatory processes and enable performance-based regulation (setting buffers based on actual risks rather than worst-case scenarios). Improved modelling will equally benefit conventional aerial application with precision technologies such as autobooms. While focused on immediate benefits for NZ forestry, the project forms part of broader collaboration across primary sectors, the agrichemical industry, government departments and international partners, aiming to support rapid UASS implementation where clear benefits exist compared to conventional agrichemical application practices and to develop improved mechanistic aerial spray/UASS modelling tools.

Operationalisation of the RNC Digital Decision Tool **$78,000**

We aim to put the newly-developed red needle cast (RNC) digital decision support tool into practical use. RNC causes significant growth losses in radiata pine, but its unpredictable behaviour has made it difficult to manage. This first-of-its-kind tool allows forest managers to track disease risk based on weather-driven infection processes and take proactive action - whether through targeted monitoring, timely control measures or longer-term strategic planning. This project will run operational trials with industry partners to integrate the 2025 prototype tool into real forestry case studies, refine its functionality and develop training and guidance for wider use. The output will be an improved, cloud-based tool and a sustainable delivery model to ensure ongoing access and benefit across the forestry sector.

The impact of clear-cut harvesting on sediment-related stream water quality **$40,000**

Afforestation on steep, erosion-prone terrain is a key strategy to stabilise landscapes, however, these landscapes can become vulnerable following clear-cut harvesting. This study will quantify the impact of clear-cut harvesting on stream water quality in steep, erosion-prone radiata pine forests, addressing a key knowledge gap in New Zealand forestry. Using a robust Before-After-Control-Impact (BACI) design, it will measure

sediment transport during radiata pine harvest compared with unharvested native forest. Streamflow, turbidity and sediment data have been collected from two steepland paired catchments: Puruki Experimental Forest (PEF) planted in radiata pine, and an adjacent native forest. Pre-harvest monitoring provides the Before data, while over- and post-harvest monitoring supplies the After data. The results will provide evidence to guide forest management, improve environmental protection practices and support sustainable afforestation on vulnerable landscapes.

Forest Biosecurity Pest Risk Evaluation: Phase 4 **$150,000**

The Forest Biosecurity Pest Risk Evaluation Project provides the NZ Forest industry with intelligence on insect pests of radiata pine likely to establish in New Zealand. Phase 1 ranked hundreds of radiata pine insects for likelihood of establishment in New Zealand; Phase 2 modelled New Zealand spread for 28 highest ranked insects; Phase 3 (running in 2025) has estimated impact parameters for these 28 insects. In this final phase 4, we will complete the impact modelling to identify the types of high-risk insects to prepare for (e.g. surveillance, response plans, long term management plans).

Understanding efficacy of waterway-safe herbicides on wilding trees **$15,000**

This project tests the waterway-safe herbicide Diquat (Trading name – Reglone; waterway safe) for controlling wilding conifer seedlings and saplings (including *Pseudotsuga menziesii, Pinus contorta, Pinus nigra, Pinus sylvestris*), offering a potentially cheaper and more effective aerial spraying option. By reducing buffer constraints around waterways, it could improve control operations and limit reinvasion. We will measure one-year post-spray mortality, effects on ground cover and impacts on native vegetation on a pilot study established in Jan 2025. Results will guide forest managers in adopting safer, more cost-effective wilding-conifer control methods.

Endophytes against Phytophthoras **$80,000**

New Phytophthora diseases are emerging globally, causing widespread defoliation in forestry, horticulture, and agriculture. This project tests beneficial bacterial and fungal endophytes as a sustainable way to protect radiata pine from red needle cast (RNC), a Phytophthora disease that caused $40 million in losses in 2023. This project builds on trials showing the potential of natural bacterial and fungal endophytes to protect radiata pine from foliar pathogens. Developed by Jenny Aitken Biotechnologies (JABio) and Lincoln University (LU), these endophytes have demonstrated effectiveness against multiple Phytophthora species. Endophyte-treated trees are expected to show improved foliar health, enhanced growth and reduced reliance on agrichemicals. Working with industry (JABio, ArborGen and Timberlands) and research (BSI and Lincoln University) partners, the project will deliver scalable solutions to boost forest productivity, strengthen biosecurity and provide practical, near-term benefits for New Zealand's forestry sector.

Tracking the long-term impacts of wind damage on wood properties **$80,000**

Cyclone Gabrielle caused severe wind damage at the Rangipo Accelerator trial, highlighting gaps in understanding internal tree damage. While external damage could be

assessed visually, internal defects such as compression wood and compression failure were often unpredictable yet have major implications for timber quality and stand value.

This project aims to use detailed individual tree data previously collected on an annual basis from the site to model wind-induced stem defects, identify high-risk trees for sampling and validate predictions through physical analysis. By linking internal damage to genetics, stocking and silviculture, the project will refine the model and help forest managers reduce wind risk through informed stand management and improve post-event assessment of timber value.

Investigating snapping risk in radiata pine propagation **$300,000**

This project supports the scale-up of climate-ready clonal forestry by improving the strength and reliability of somatic embryogenesis (SE) planting stock and challenge the long-held view that somatic embryogenesis (SE) plantlets are less robust than those from other propagation methods. SE provides a pathway to produce larger volumes of elite, climate-resilient trees, but concerns about stem weakness have limited widespread adoption. Success will remove a key barrier to broadening the gene pool for future climate conditions. The project will compare three propagation methods (direct SE, SE plus micro-shoots and seedlings), develop rapid screening tools for stem strength and refine tissue culture practices to prevent structural weaknesses. The outcomes will give nurseries and forest owners confidence to deploy stronger, more resilient clonal stock - reducing early mortality and replanting costs, improving stand performance under climate and pest pressures and unlocking greater value from elite breeding material for high-yield, future-ready forests.

Pest and pathogen risks following chemical thinning **$75,000**

Chemical thinning (or e-thinning) is being adopted by New Zealand forest management companies for its major benefits over traditional thin-to-waste, including lower operational costs and improved health and safety. However, chemically thinned trees remain standing and die more slowly than felled trees, creating a stressed and gradually deteriorating resource that could provide a highly suitable habitat and breeding ground for insect pests and pathogens, both those present in New Zealand (e.g., Sirex, Armillaria) and those that might arrive in new incursions (e.g., Ips spp., Dendroctonus spp.).

This project will assess the risks and opportunities of chemical thinning by reviewing New Zealand and international literature and capturing expert opinion, conducting pilot field investigations to survey insect and pathogen attacks using field observations and traditional traps, and felling a subset of chemically thinned trees to identify emerging insects and their abundance. This baseline work will inform the design of sampling and risk modelling in years two and three to assess implications for forest health and market access.

Effective management solutions for Terminal Crook Disease **$112,423**

Terminal Crook Disease (TCD) has re-emerged as a significant challenge in New Zealand pine nurseries. While fungicides remain effective against the causal agent *Colletotrichum acutatum*, inconsistent operational practices and newly identified pathogen complexity

may be contributing to the resurgence of TCD. Understanding the relative contribution of different CA species and strains to disease and how each respond to fungicides is essential for restoring field control and optimising management of the disease.

The project aims to develop an integrated management strategy combining targeted chemical and operational practices that will improve long-term TCD control, reduce seedling losses and support more sustainable, cost-effective nursery production. Working with a nursery growers Technical Advisory Group, this project will identify 1) where the pathogen proliferates within nurseries and when it produces spores, 2) investigate links between seedling nutrition and disease susceptibility and 3) test promising treatments under operational conditions.

Understanding outdoor durability of specialty species **$46,000**

This project conducts accelerated field durability testing to evaluate the outdoor performance of specialty wood products (set up through the Specialty Wood Products programme) across a range of applications. Species under investigation include durable eucalypts, thermally modified and unmodified cypresses and Douglas-fir. Testing examines key processing options and end uses such as ground contact, decking, and cladding. Accelerated methods simulate long-term exposure in outdoor environments, providing early insights into material performance. While faster than conventional in-service testing, trials still span multiple years to ensure robustness.

Outcomes will support new application pathways for high-performing wood products and inform species-specific durability benchmarks for industry use.

Biosecurity Readiness for *Lecanosticta acicola* **$158,539**

This project will strengthen New Zealand's biosecurity readiness for the potential arrival of the pine pathogen *Lecanosticta acicola* and other emerging forest health threats. It addresses current gaps in knowledge, tools and targeted surveillance strategies, providing an opportunity to proactively prepare before any incursion occurs.

The project will 1) bring together international experts through a webinar series, 2) co-develop a *Lecanosticta* Threat-Specific Readiness Manual with New Zealand forestry stakeholders government agencies and trans-Tasman collaborators, 3) align with the Pre-emptive Biosecurity Project to support field trials and diagnostics, and 4) map potential host trees at high-risk sites to inform targeted surveillance. By building cross-sector networks and connecting with programmes such as Forest Shield, it will support a more resilient *Pinus radiata* industry and reduce reliance on reactive measures.

Gene Editing Targets for Forest Disease Resilience **$100,000**

The Gene Technology Bill will modernise New Zealand's regulation of genetic technologies, including deregulating gene-edited plants with no foreign DNA. This creates a pathway to develop disease-resistant, gene-edited trees, protecting radiata pine from current and emerging fungal pathogens. Gene editing of susceptibility genes, host genes exploited by pathogens during infection, has been shown to deliver durable resistance across numerous angiosperm species. For conifers, limited understanding of the genes controlling disease susceptibility remains a critical barrier to applying gene-editing for

disease resistance. Building on the FGR/Scion-funded "Durable Resistance to Fungal Pathogens" project, this work will use RNA sequencing from infected radiata shootlets to identify, validate and catalogue susceptibility genes. By confirming known targets and discovering novel radiata-specific genes, the project will provide high-confidence targets for future gene-editing strategies, supporting durable fungal disease resistance in New Zealand's forestry industry.

Extending Tools For Foresters **$200,000**

This project expands the Tools for Foresters (TFF) initiative by developing SOPs for using UAVs to assess pruning and derive DBH and height for *Pinus radiata.* This will *p*rovide rapid, cost-effective methods to quality control (QC) operations and reduce fieldwork time and costs. Testing the methodology on coast redwood will support growth model development and guide future species diversification. The project also leverages current work integrating TFF with the AskFGR AI tool. It will embed AI assistants trained on TFF research and SOPs, enabling secure, tailored guidance for forest managers. Together, these initiatives will enhance precision forestry tools, improve operational efficiency and deliver practical support to the forestry industry.

Quantifying the Resilience Value of Forest Cover in Reducing Storm Damage **$95,000**

This project quantifies the protective role of forest cover in reducing downstream damage during extreme rainfall events. By comparing insurance claims and damage patterns across catchments dominated by forested versus non-forested land, the extent to which forest cover on different slopes mitigates risks to homes and land downstream will be modelled. Using spatially explicit econometric analysis, insurance claim data for major rainfall events will be linked to upstream land use. This will be integrated with spatial inputs such as land cover classifications, forest age data from Hansen et al., NASA IMERG satellite rainfall estimates, and topographical variables such as slope

Outputs will include spatial risk maps, financial estimates of avoided damage and a final report for forest growers. These findings will support land-use planning, harvest scheduling, and engagement with councils and insurers, thereby strengthening forestry's role in climate resilience and equipping growers to advocate for the value of well-managed forests.

Multi-regional wind-risk prediction **$75,000**

This project will extend a proven empirical windthrow-risk framework, piloted in Gisborne, to Hawke's Bay (Cyclone Gabrielle, February 2023) and Tasman (storm in July 2025). It integrates rapid post-storm detection of forest loss using remote sensing (including satellite radar for cloudy conditions) and the construction of wind risk layers.

High-resolution imagery and LiDAR will define windthrown areas, and classification models using stand age, stand structure, topography, soils and storm attributes will produce regional wind-risk maps identifying high-exposure zones. Outputs include an immediately deployable detection method, regional windthrow-risk maps and an open-access publication documenting methodology, model accuracy and cross-regional transferability.

Delivered over one year by Scion and Indufor with three industry partners (Ernslaw One, Tasman Pine, OneFortyOne), the project will help the forestry sector reduce future losses and move towards nationally coherent wind-risk modelling.

Puruki Experimental Forest Planning **$42,092**

Puruki Experimental Forest (PEF) will be a world leading exemplar of a forest system level research trial that seeks to offer viable alternatives to P. radiata monocultures. The existing stand is scheduled for harvest in March-June 2026 and will be replanted in monocultures and mixtures of three carefully selected species. These species have been chosen for traits such as productivity, wood quality, site suitability, and ecosystem function. This unique experiment will be underpinned by an integrated research platform - soils, biodiversity, microbiome, hydrology and forest function. This project will be a first step to the creation of a platform for knowledge sharing between the forest industry and Bioeconomy Science Institute (BSI). Initially through two workshops that highlight critical science questions for PEF and a future National Experimental Forest network.

Socio-Economic Resilience in Forestry **$50,000**

The New Zealand forest industry is facing challenges from global megatrends, including shifts in global trade, geopolitical uncertainty, climate change, and social expectations. Currently, many forest growers, particularly smaller ones, lack the necessary tools and information to plan ahead or respond effectively to these changes. This project aims to enhance the forest industry's preparedness for, and adaptability to global megatrends as they evolve, enabling it to maintain and grow its margins. The work will complete a comprehensive review of the work undertaken to date to guide future investment in this area.

Proposed independent review of satellite-based forest health monitoring **$41,566**

Two proposals recommended using satellite remote sensing, particularly Sentinel-2 imagery, to monitor forest health via vegetation spectral analysis. The FRC noted the potential for a collaborative approach, and given the combined request of $185,500, recommends an independent review (potentially using Margules Groom) before any further investment is made.

Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation **$4,865,900**

Small & Medium Enterprise ($302,793)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Building code compliance for specialty timbers The objective of this project is to remove the regulatory barriers that have stifled market development for specialty timbers in New Zealand for timber construction, by producing ten Alternative Solutions for the use of key locally-grown specialty timber species. Speciality Timbers NZ have identified key timber species and applications that hold greatest value opportunities ("best options"). Some of these best options have sufficient existing evidence that demonstrate code compliance, but that evidence has not been delivered as proof of performance via Alternative Solutions. We will produce ten Alternative Solutions for our best option species, based on pre-existing test results (in particular Specialty Wood Product Partnership test results), and mechanical test results produced within this project. This will unlock building-code compliance and match our best species to their appropriate applications.	**$50,000**
Measurement of young Alternative and Contingency species sample plots Permanent Sample Plots are a fundamental forestry tool to inform growers. There are literally thousands of PSPs set up around the country that are used to produce growth models for Radiata pine, but relatively few for the dozens of other forest species. These are needed to inform potential growers about the capabilities of these alternative and contingent species on a range of soils, climate types and latitudes. The PSP database at Scion has not been collecting significant data of species other than radiata for a considerable time, but recent work by NZFFA members in this area has established which sites still exist and which have gone. A large number of new sites have been recently established to help fill information gaps. This project will allow remeasurement of some of these sites to record survival, health and vigour, which should be done annually when the trees are young. As the trees age remeasurement periods are extended to 3-yearly, and then less often.	**$30,000**
Integrated decision support with technology uptake To help improve important decisions taken by SME forest growers that greatly affect profit margins, new technology and improved data will be packaged into an existing user-friendly web tool - Treefarmer. The project will focus on supporting decisions at forest establishment and harvesting with emphasis on specialty species. New data on specialty species Nurseries and Sawmills will be added and helpful hints on how to extract better value from logs will be implemented. A new slope layer from LiDAR analysis will significantly enhance accuracy of modelling many operational costs and aid planning.	**$111,033**

Outreach programmes using webinars and seminars will demonstrate and explain the application of new technologies.

Improving Regional Alternative Forest Species Mapping by Combining Drone and Sentinel-2 Data: Wairarapa Case Study **$44,260**

Accurate alternative species mapping is a critical step in developing stronger supply chains and ultimately a more diverse, resilient forest industry. This project will test an innovative alternative species mapping technique, combining high-resolution drone (UAV) multi-spectral imagery with Sentinel-2 satellite data.

Better knowledge of the spatial distribution of the existing alternative species resource will increase the potential for more efficient, collaborative resource management and processing, amalgamation of processed timber at a regional scale, and hence regional supply chain development. This in turn will encourage future investment in growing, processing and marketing alternative species, ultimately de-risking what is currently a sector with little certainty.

Using the Wairarapa as a case-study, we aim to build a scalable, cost-effective workflow model with outputs useful to all NZ alternative species growers and other stakeholders including potential to improve NEFD data collection

Establishing the commercial timber properties of particular poplar clones **$25,000**

Poplar is widely grown on farms in New Zealand, and is well understood for its ability to provide shelter, erosion control and fodder in times of drought. This is a further stage in a long-term project to establish a commercial poplar timber industry in New Zealand. Earlier stages covered growing, managing and harvesting poplar, selecting clones with commercial timber potential, and investigating two of those for their timber properties.

In this project we plan to investigate the timber properties of three more clones. This will involve sourcing mature trees of known age and cultivar from research trial plots around the country, and milling them to establish sawing techniques, timber yields, grades, storage and wood properties.

Protecting the Kuser selection of Redwood provenance trials **$40,000**

It is now very difficult to bring genetic material into New Zealand for forestry trials. This means existing sample plots and experimental plantings are increasingly important for understanding how those species and varieties perform under New Zealand conditions. In Rotorua a stand of Redwoods was planted using varietal stock from across the full geographic range of Coastal Redwoods in California. This is part of the Kuser collection.

This stand was planted as an important trial to evaluate provenance variation. This project will ensure proper tending is done on time and that full records are kept of growth, health and form by cultivar.

Travel and Accommodation Costs for Committee members to attend meetings. Subject to approval by Committee Chair.	**$2,500**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$302,793**

Training ($160,500)

This program is managed and overseen by the Training and Careers Committee whose purpose is to consult on and support a coordinated programme on plantation forestry training delivery and training needs. The committee has representation from forest grower representatives (FOA, FFA, Ngā Pou a Tane and Wood Councils), plus, industry representatives comprising FICA, Competenz (the industry's ITO), government as well as training providers (School of Forestry, PolyTechs) to ensure the Work Programme supports standards and training solutions that deliver on current industry needs.

The committee also works together with the Promotions Committee to support the promotion of forestry careers, both directly and by working through other agencies.

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Transition to a new forest industry workplace training provider - 2026 planning and execution. This project will fund a vocational training specialist to manage the transition of Competenz's forestry division to a new workplace training provider in 2026. Government expects forestry to confirm its direction by April 2026, and industry wants to move early to retain specialist Competenz staff and maintain continuity for learners and employers. The Forestry Training Committee has completed significant due diligence on potential partners, assessing governance, financial viability, regional coverage, funding efficiency and alignment with industry needs. Primary ITO has been identified as the preferred option, with a forestry business division, ringfenced funding and strong industry governance, although final decisions are still being made. The consultant will convert this due diligence into a detailed transition plan, covering governance, structure, ownership, constitution, learner management systems, legal and regulatory requirements and learner and staff transfer plans. They will manage establishment tasks such as recruitment, budgeting and formation of an advisory group or board if required, and run regional and online workshops to demonstrate adequate consultation to the Tertiary Education Commission. Deliverables include a transition and operational plan, legal and governance frameworks, workshop reports and operational readiness for the new provider by late 2026. This work protects skilled staff and ensures learner continuity, strengthens industry control of training, reduces long term costs and mitigates the risks of delay.	**$95,000**
Forestry Training Careers 2026 website hosting and maintenance Funding to support 12 months of hosting and technical maintenance for the Forestry Training Careers website. This covers hosting, security and backups, CMS updates, routine maintenance and a small developer retainer for troubleshooting and minor improvements. The site is an important resource for showcasing forestry career opportunities and features videos of people working in roles across the supply chain.	**$4,950**

Support for University of Canterbury School of Forestry - Forest Engineering Program Support for forest engineering teaching and industry professional development. Funding will cover two summer students and a 25 percent postdoctoral appointment to develop applied teaching materials and case studies on four priority topics: slash trap design and installation, mechanised equipment stability on steep terrain, environmental effectiveness of winch assist skidders, and integration of CANBUS technology into harvest systems. The postdoctoral researcher will mentor students, publish findings, and help organise industry workshops and outreach. Outputs will include at least six professional development workshops engaging more than 120 industry participants, four topic webinars posted to the UC School of Forestry YouTube channel, and updated lecture notes and case study reports to be made publicly available. These resources will upskill graduates and current workers, improve safety and environmental practice on harvested sites, support council and contractor training, and help address skill shortages. Success will be measured by completed case studies, workshop attendance and webinars published.	**$35,500**
Tokomairiro Training Forestry Pathways Course A Level 2 & 3 Forestry programme for Tokomairiro high school students in Years 12 and 13, equipping them with foundation knowledge and practical skills for a career in the forestry industry. The programme provides a pathway for students interested in silviculture, harvesting, or forest management. Students take part in a mix of classroom learning and practical fieldwork, gaining experience in silviculture through workdays and site visits. 13 students participated in the program in 2025. It helps promote forestry as a rewarding career for young people and has provided strong support for at risk youth by offering a structured transition from school into paid employment, mainly within silviculture crews. The programme also helps address skill shortages in the industry.	**$24,000**
Training and Careers Committee travel budget Reimbursement of personal travel costs for non-salaried committee members to attend meetings.	**$1,050**
Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation.	**$160,500**

Transportation & Logistics ($68,400)

Projects within the portfolio allocation	2026 Funding Approved
Log Transport Safety Council Support: Safety/Wellbeing and membership contribution The Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC) is a pan-industry collective of transport operators, researchers, trailer manufacturers, forest owners, regulators, and enforcement agencies. It is the primary organisation responsible for log transport health, safety, and wellbeing, and works alongside the Forest Industry Safety Council. FOA/NZFFA membership ensures strong representation on the LTSC, with three Transport Committee members sitting on the Council and one LTSC Board member sitting on the Transport Committee. The LTSC maintains industry standards and best-practice guides, operates the logtruck.co.nz driver feedback system, and leads national initiatives to reduce rollovers, improve driver performance, and strengthen operator wellbeing. FGLT funding will support the operation of the driver feedback system, quarterly safety reporting, rollover monitoring, and the LTSC's wider safety and advocacy work. This support helps lift transport safety performance across the sector and contributes to maintaining the forest industry's social licence.	**$25,000**
2026 Log Transport Compliance Audits The project will fund independent contractors to conduct log transport compliance audits at all thirteen ports used for forestry exports in 2026, with follow-up visits to two additional ports. Using trained LTSC certification auditors will ensure consistent, reliable assessments of key safety requirements, including trailer lifting chain certification, load security, signage, registration, driver PPE, and over-height loads. Each visit will produce a standardised report for the Transport and Logistics Committee and LTSC, providing the industry with a clearer picture of national compliance performance. Auditing logging trucks at ports offers a snapshot of the wider log transport fleet, as most log trucks deliver to port customers. The project will replace the inconsistent, volunteer-based audits of recent years with a systematic national programme, addressing concerns about the consistency and independence of audit inspectors. The results will help identify trends, highlight areas for improvement, and guide follow-up with operators. Forest owners, LTSC, transport companies, and the wider public will benefit from stronger oversight of transport safety and improved data to support industry-wide compliance and professionalism.	**$13,250**
LTSC Contractor Certification Regional Workshops Funding will support three regional workshops in 2026 for owners of log transport companies, with the goal of enrolling at least 100 new operators in the LTSC Contractor Certification programme. Accredited auditors will guide attendees through the	**$30,000**

certification process and the steps to progress from Level One to Level Three (of five levels). The sessions will be practical and hands on, enabling operators to supply follow up documentation to move quickly through the early stages of the programme. Funding covers venue hire, auditor time and travel, coordination and materials. The workshops will prioritise smaller operators who are underrepresented in current uptake and often lack the time, knowledge, and administrative resources to get certified.

Bringing auditors and operators together regionally removes information barriers, demonstrates the audit process in situ, and provides immediate support to help trucking operators enrol and progress. Using LTSC audit templates and accredited auditors ensures consistent assessment, reduces duplication, and builds lasting capability. Expected outcomes include increased certification uptake, improved compliance and operational performance, safer roads, stronger tender credentials for contractors, and enhanced professionalism across the log transport sector. Results will be reported to the Transport and Logistics Committee and shared with the sector.

Website Hosting **$150**

Website hosting for the Forest Owners Association Road Engineering Manual

Total for projects ranked within pre-approved portfolio allocation. **$68,400**