

He Pukapuka Aratohu mō te tuhi Mahere Iwi/Hapū mō ngā Take Taiao

Guide to developing an Iwi/Hapū
Environmental Management Plan
(IHEMP)



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Introduction

Iwi/Hapū Environmental Management Plans (IHEMPs) are holistic planning documents created by iwi or hapū to articulate their environmental values, issues, and aspirations within their rohe, and especially in relation to identified resources or taonga to which they have a recognised traditional association.

The plans may also contain information relating to specific cultural values; historical accounts; descriptions of areas of interest (iwi/hapū boundaries/rohe); and consultation/engagement protocols for resource consents and monitoring, plan changes, and matters of significance for tāngata whenua.

In Te Taitokerau (Northland), many whānau, hapū and iwi have developed IHEMPs as a tool for their own kaitiakitanga as well as to influence council decision-making — from Ahipara in the Far North, to Whangārei and beyond. Under the **Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)**, a council is required to take into account any iwi/hapū planning document that is recognised by an iwi authority and formally lodged with that council, in planning, consenting and other decision-making processes relating to natural and physical resources.

Northland Regional Council (NRC) has committed to Treaty partnership — underpinned by the *Tāiki ē Te Tiriti* Strategy and Implementation Plan — and acknowledges kaitiaki roles as well as Treaty principles (including partnership) in its Regional Policy Statement. NRC's Regional Plan requires resource consent applicants to assess effects on tāngata whenua and have regard to relevant iwi and hapū management plans.

A well-crafted IHEMP can significantly strengthen your rangatiratanga over environmental matters. It provides a platform for **asserting your rights and values, objectives, policies and plans**, guiding both your own people and external agencies in environmental management.

This guide offers a comprehensive, generic template to help iwi and hapū in Te Taitokerau draft their own IHEMP — embedding mātauranga Māori and tikanga, aligning with NRC processes and language, and balancing strategic vision with practical action.

Grounding your plan in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and kaitiakitanga

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) is the foundational context for IHEMPs. Explicitly grounding your plan in Te Tiriti principles will reinforce the **partnership obligations** of councils, and the **rangatiratanga** (chiefly authority) of your iwi/hapū over natural resources. Many Te Taitokerau Northland iwi/hapū plans begin by affirming Te Tiriti and *He Whakaputanga* (the 1835 Declaration) as guiding documents, asserting that the iwi/hapū retains authority for managing lands, waters, and taonga in their rohe. For example, one hapū management plan's vision states that:

the Tino Rangatiratanga of [the hapū] is paramount in the kaitiakitanga of our whenua and moana.

By foregrounding such statements, you can convey the firm expectation that local authorities must engage with you in a spirit of **partnership and power-sharing**.

Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) is a core principle that you can embed throughout your plan, emphasising that your iwi/hapū has a duty and right to exercise kaitiakitanga over the environment — caring for the mana and mauri of lands, waters, coasts, and all living things for future generations. NRC’s own policies reference the kaitiaki role of tāngata whenua, so aligning your plan with this concept reinforces that role.

Mana whakahaere (authority to manage) is closely related: your plan can outline how your hapū expects to participate in environmental decision-making and management, such as asserting the desire for co-management of certain resources, or for greater iwi/hapū involvement in monitoring and enforcement.

Example:

Ngāti Hine’s environmental plan clearly states that monitoring of effects on historic and cultural landscapes in their rohe is *“the responsibility of the ahi kā and kaitiaki”*, and calls for this to be *“reflected in all relevant consent conditions”*, and for that function to be *“formally transferred to them as tangata whenua and rangatira”*.

Citing such expectations in your own plan — backed by Te Tiriti guarantees — is a way of affirming your **mana whakahaere** in practical terms.

In grounding your plan, consider including a short section on **Treaty Principles** (e.g. partnership, active protection, and participation) and how your hapū interprets and applies the principles. By doing so, you can remind the council that your IHEMP is not just another policy document, but an expression of Treaty-based rights and responsibilities. This sets a strong tone for the rest of the plan, underlining that all subsequent objectives and policies are motivated by your commitment to kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga.

Embedding mātauranga Māori and tikanga principles

A distinguishing strength of an IHEMP is the integration of **mātauranga Māori** (Māori knowledge) and **tikanga** (customary values and practices) in environmental management. One way to do this is to begin by identifying the **core values and cultural principles** of your iwi/hapū that will underpin the plan. Many plans include a section outlining these guiding values. For example, the Patuharakeke Hapū Environmental Management Plan 2014 lists values such as:

- *Whakapapa* (the interconnection of all living and non-living things)
- *Kaitiakitanga* (duty of care for ancestral taonga)
- *Whanaungatanga* (sustaining relationships)
- *Manaakitanga* (caring for people and place)
- *Mātauranga* (the importance of ancestral knowledge)
- *Mana whenua* (authority over lands)
- *Mauri* (the life-force of the environment)
- *Tikanga* (traditional customs to follow).

These concepts are **recurring themes** that shape the hapū’s view of resource management and guide the implementation of the plan.

When drafting your plan, explain each value in plain language and, if necessary, describe how it relates to environmental management.

Example:

You might write that *mauri* (life-force) is a key indicator for ecosystem health, or that *whakapapa* reminds you that your people descend from Papatūānuku (Earth) and Ranginui (Sky), reinforcing a duty to respect all elements of the environment.

Embedding such mātauranga ensures your plan reflects a **Te Ao Māori worldview** rather than just a western planning outlook. It also educates council staff and the public by providing context for **why certain issues matter** to you — e.g. a wetland might be important not only for water filtration but as the *uta* (inland) link in a whakapapa that connects to *tai* (the coast) and specific tribal stories. Local knowledge is key.

Incorporating **tikanga-based practices** is equally important. Your IHEMP can acknowledge traditional management tools like rāhui (temporary prohibitions on resource use for conservation or safety), noa/tapu protocols (to ensure activities respect sacredness), harvest ceremonies, and the use of the maramataka (lunar calendar) for planting or fishing. Where relevant, set policies that encourage these practices. For example, if overfishing is an issue, your plan might include a policy to support placing a rāhui on a depleted fishery until it recovers — a tikanga measure that councils should respect as part of their sustainability efforts.

Likewise, you might integrate **mātauranga indicators** in monitoring (discussed further below) — such as the health of certain indicator species, the appearance of particular stars or phases of the moon signalling ecological events, etc. Embedding tikanga and mātauranga throughout the plan ensures that it is not only **culturally framed**, but also prescribes culturally appropriate methods for care of the environment.

Finally, consider using **te reo Māori** terms and including karakia, whakataukī (proverbs), or pepeha that encapsulate your hapū's connection to the environment. This imbues the document with your identity. However, to keep it accessible, provide translations or explanations for any Māori terms or concepts that may not be widely known outside your iwi/hapū. A glossary is a good way of encapsulating the key reo Māori words or phrases in one place, and can be included as an Appendix.

The overall goal is a values-based, plain-language document that **speaks with a Māori voice** and can be understood by non-Māori readers. By weaving together tikanga and mātauranga with clear explanations, you create a plan that is both deeply rooted in your cultural worldview and is inviting for council planners and community members to engage with.

Aligning with legislative requirements, and NRC's planning framework & processes

While your plan should be grounded in your own worldview, it also needs to **work effectively within NRC's planning framework**. This means paying attention to structure and language so that council staff can readily interpret and use your IHEMP. One recommended approach is to frame parts of your plan in a format familiar to council plans — typically identifying **Issues, Objectives, Policies, and Methods/Actions** for each topic. Adopting this (or similar) structured format will make your plan

clear and actionable. Council planners are accustomed to this layout, and it helps them “plug in” your provisions when considering resource consents or plan changes. Using a conventional issue/objective/policy structure will make plans easier to read and use in decision-making. The trade-off is that you must balance this with your kaupapa Māori approach — it’s possible to do both by, for example, using bilingual headings (a Māori term like *Kaupapa* for “Issue”) or weaving in narrative alongside the structured lists.

Use of clear language and directives

When writing policies and methods, be **specific and direct** about what you want. Avoid overly general or vague statements. For instance, instead of saying

Water quality should be improved,

a stronger policy is:

Ensure freshwater bodies in our rohe are of a quality that sustains swimmable conditions and healthy kai awa (food from rivers) for our people.

You can then add detail such as:

Require that any discharge to our rivers does not degrade the mauri and meets at least XYZ standard.

Being explicit helps council staff understand the expected outcomes. It’s also useful to indicate **who** you see as responsible for actions — some policies will outline what *the iwi/hapū* will do, while other policies will outline what you expect *the council or other agencies* to do.

For example, your plan might state as methods:

- *Hapū to initiate a riparian planting project along the lower Waihou River.*
- *NRC to partner with hapū on water quality monitoring and incorporate hapū findings into state of the environment reporting.*

Differentiating these responsibilities makes it easier for everyone to know their role in implementation.

Integration with council processes and plans

Make it clear **how your IHEMP applies to council processes and plans**. NRC already has provisions that require considering iwi/hapū management plans in consent applications, but you can reinforce this by stating that **consultation and consent processes must recognise this plan**. For example, you might note that any resource consent application in your rohe should be assessed for consistency with the policies of your IHEMP, and that early engagement with your hapū is expected.

You might also **reference alignment of your IHEMP** with, for example, NRC’s Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plan, Pest Management Plan or Climate Action Plan, such as by noting that your plan contributes to achieving certain regional objectives or policies regarding water, biodiversity, etc. In this way, you can position your IHEMP as a supporting document. **Using similar terminology** to the regional documents (such as “significant indigenous biodiversity” or “natural character of the coast”) in relevant sections of your plan can help council officers link your content to their statutory

obligations, and will **bridge the language** between Te Ao Māori and council planning jargon, making your intentions clearly understood.

For more information on specific sections of the RMA relevant to IHEMPs, as well as relevant objectives and policies in NRC’s Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plan, please refer to Appendix 1: Legislative and regional policy framework for IHEMPs.

Obtaining iwi authority recognition, and lodging your IHEMP

The RMA requires that a planning document (in this case, an IHEMP) must be formally recognised by an iwi authority and lodged with the relevant council before that council must take it into account. If your entity is a hapū, in addition to the relevant iwi authority recognising the final document, you will need to ensure that your hapū governance entity (e.g. trust board or rūnanga) endorses it. This recognition should be referenced in the IHEMP, in a foreword and/or in an Appendix. This helps confirm its status.

The methods available for lodging the completed IHEMP with NRC include:

- Lodging the IHEMP (electronic and printed copy) with a covering letter from the relevant iwi authority recognising the plan.
- Lodging the IHEMP (electronic and printed copy) with a copy of minutes of an iwi/hapū/marae meeting where the plan was recognised by iwi authority representatives.
- Lodging the IHEMP (electronic and printed copy) at an official meeting at which Council staff and tāngata whenua entity representatives, as well as iwi representatives who recognise the plan, are present.
- Using another suitable method agreed in advance between the applicant and Council.

Structuring your IHEMP — suggested sections

Every iwi/hapū will tailor their IHEMP to their unique context, but a clear and logical structure will make the plan easier to follow for all readers.

In this section we provide a suggested template of sections and headings for an IHEMP, along with the kind of content to include under each. Using a similar structure will ensure that your IHEMP covers all relevant areas, from the high-level vision down to specific actions, and addresses both cultural and regulatory needs.

What matters most:

Anyone picking up the plan can find out: **who** is represented, **why** the plan exists, **what** the issues and goals are, **how** you propose to achieve them, and **how** others should work with you.

You can adapt this template as needed (for example, grouping some topics together, or using Māori titles for sections), but you will need to ensure the plan covers the essentials in a way that gels together well.

Mihi and foreword (Ngā mihihihi, te wāhinga kōrero)

Begin with a mihi or opening karakia to ground the document in your cultural context. This may include acknowledgments of ancestors, the land, significant mountains and waters, and a statement of kaupapa. A foreword or message from your iwi/hapū leaders can introduce the purpose of the plan in an inspiring way (reaffirming Te Tiriti commitments, kaitiakitanga, and hopes for future generations). This sets a respectful and visionary tone from the start.

Introduction and purpose (Kupu whakataki, te take e whāia ana)

Clearly state what the IHEMP is and why it's being developed. Identify the driving factors — e.g. protecting taonga for future generations, providing guidance to councils and developers, asserting mana whakahaere, and responding to environmental challenges.

Mention the **statutory context** in general terms, using plain language and without heavily quoting legislation, which includes the RMA and other relevant legislation. For example, you could note that under the RMA, councils must take relevant planning documents into account in planning, consenting and other decision-making processes relating to the taiao. Note relevant matters like updates of previous plans that are in progress. (For more information, see Appendix 1: Legislative and regional policy framework for IHEMPs).

This section can also include a brief description of how the plan was developed (e.g. through hui and research) to give it mana and community buy-in.

Profile of iwi/hapū and rohe (He whakamārama mō te iwi/hapū me te rohe)

Ensure that you provide a background on who your iwi/hapū are, and where you are located. This should include:

- an **appropriate description of the iwi or hapū** — your identity, whakapapa connections (major ancestral lines or waka, if you wish), and population or marae information — as well as a **description of your rohe (territory)**.
- a **map** of the rohe (here or in an appendix), showing key geographic features, marae, and boundaries of interest. Describe the significant mountains, rivers, forests, coastline, and sites in your area, possibly weaving in brief historical kōrero for context (e.g. important battles, settlements, or stories tied to places).

Vision and values (Ngā moemoeā me ngā uara)

Articulate your **vision (moemoeā)** for the environment and people of your rohe. This is usually a broad, long-term statement or set of statements that capture what you want the future to look like. Many iwi/hapū visions emphasise things like healthy, thriving ecosystems, the wellbeing of the people, and the continuance of culture and rangatiratanga.

Example:

Ko te oranga o te taiao, ko te oranga o te iwi — The wellbeing of our environment is the wellbeing of our people — followed by more specific vision elements.

After the vision, list the **core values and principles** that guide the plan (these were discussed in the previous section on Mātauranga Māori and Tikanga). Explain each value briefly.

Examples:

- *Kaitiakitanga* — our obligation to guard and nurture the environment as taonga tuku iho (treasures passed down).
- *Manaakitanga* — caring for all who live in and visit our rohe.
- *Whakapapa* — recognising the genealogical connections between our people and the natural world.

By laying out these guiding values clearly, you set out the philosophical, ethical and cultural rationale for all the objectives and policies that follow.

Key environmental issues and aspirations (Ngā kaupapa me ngā wawata matua mō te taiao)

This section forms the heart of your plan's analysis. Organise it in a way that makes sense for your rohe. Common approaches are:

- by **domain** (e.g. wai māori (freshwater), whenua (land and soils), ngahere (forests and biodiversity), moana (coastal and marine), air, climate, etc); or
- by **topics** (e.g. wāhi tapu and cultural heritage, waste management, climate change, customary fisheries, etc).

For each domain or topic, outline the **issues (ngā take or kaupapa)** as you see them. Describe the state or problem in plain terms and from your perspective as kaitiaki.

Example:

Our rivers have suffered from pollution and unsustainable water takes, leading to a decline in native fish (taonga ika) and unsafe swimming conditions. This degrades the mauri of the water and infringes on our kaitiaki responsibilities.

Be sure to include the **cause or context** of the issue (e.g. specific activities like intensive agriculture, forestry sedimentation, sewer discharge, or climate effects like droughts).

Alongside the issues, you can also state your iwi/hapū **aspirations or desired outcomes** in narrative form (to complement the formal objectives in the next section).

Example:

We aspire for our waterways to run clean and support abundant tuna (eels) and other kai for our people, as they did in the time of our tūpuna.

Objectives and outcomes (Ngā whāinga me ngā putanga)

For each issue or domain identified above, specify one or more **objectives**. Objectives are the **goals or desired outcomes** you want to achieve, or the condition you want to see in the future — they set the **direction** you want to move. While ambitious objectives are good, they should also be realistic.

Good objectives are outcome-focused, clear, and ideally measurable. They can be expressed in a way that resonates culturally as well.

Example of an objective for polluted waterways:

The mauri of all freshwater bodies in our rohe is restored and protected, so that they sustain healthy ecosystems and can safely support customary use for food, healing and recreation.

Objectives often reflect high-level aspirations like *environmental integrity, intergenerational wellbeing, and cultural survival*. It's fine for some objectives to be broad, but try to make each of them meaningful and relevant to the specific issues you have identified. You can also include social or economic objectives if relevant.

Example:

Our hapū has increased capacity and opportunities to exercise kaitiakitanga and gain livelihoods from the land and sea in sustainable ways.

Policies and methods (Ngā kaupapa here me ngā tukanga whakatinana)

Under each objective, list the **policies** that will help achieve that objective. Policies are guiding statements that indicate the **course of action or stance** the iwi/hapū will take (and often, that you expect others to take). They can be thought of as the “rules” or firm directives of the hapū.

For example, for a freshwater objective you might have policies like:

- *No further direct discharge of untreated wastewater into our rivers will be supported.*
- *Riparian buffers of appropriate native vegetation should be maintained or restored on all waterways in our rohe.*
- *We oppose water takes that threaten the flow needed to sustain mahinga kai and ecosystem health.*
- *Ensure that any activity that could affect our waters involves consultation with [Hapū X] and complies with this plan's provisions.*

Each policy should clearly link back to protecting a value or achieving an objective. Some IHEMPs use the term “*tikanga*” for policies — emphasising they are based on right practice and custom.

Next, outline the **methods or actions** that will implement your policies. This is where you get more specific and practical. Methods can include both **strategies for the hapū internally** and **advocacy or expectations towards external agencies**.

Example of internal method:

Establish a Water Monitoring Rōpū (group) within the hapū to carry out regular cultural health assessments of our streams and puna (springs).

Examples of external-related methods:

- *Work with NRC to develop a joint management agreement for the upper catchment forest, enabling co-governance and co-monitoring.*
- *Pursue restoration funding to plant 10,000 native trees in riparian areas over the next 5 years.*

Be as concrete as possible — include numbers, locations, timeframes where relevant, or refer to known programmes. **Differentiate responsibilities** in your methods: which actions will we undertake, and what do we need *others* to do. By doing this, your plan allocates tasks and invites partnership.

Examples:

- *Hapū will initiate X, with support from Council for Y.*
- *Council to ensure Z happens through its regulatory powers.*

A wide range of methods can be covered — from creating nurseries, conducting research, enforcing rāhui, to developing educational resources. Some plans even separate “Internal Hapū Actions” and “Advocacy Actions” distinctly. Use whichever format is clear.

Ensure that your methods cover both high-level projects and on-the-ground actions — this will encourage both policy change and direct environmental action.

Taonga species and sites of significance (Ngā momo taonga me ngā wāhi hirahira)

It is very powerful to dedicate a section to identifying your **taonga** — the treasured species, places, and resources in your rohe that require special attention. This can include native species (birds, fish, plants, etc.) that are culturally important (for food, medicine, as kaitiaki or symbolic ancestors), as well as specific **wāhi tapu** or **wāhi taonga** sites such as pā sites, burial caves, battle sites, sacred springs, old tauranga waka (landing sites), etc.

List these out with as much detail as you are comfortable providing. Often, plans will have a schedule or appendix with an inventory of such taonga. You might describe why each species or site is important.

Examples:

- *Toheroa — a shellfish once abundant on our beach and a prized food of our hapū; now in decline and needing protection.*
- *Te Roto o _____ — our sacred lake, which is central to our identity and contains urupā beneath its waters.*

Including maps or GIS coordinates for sites can be helpful, though for very sacred sites you might choose to be vague, to avoid unwanted public attention. This section should also spell out any **policies for protecting these taonga**.

Examples:

- *Protect all wāhi tapu from disturbance — activities that may affect these sites (listed herein) are strongly opposed unless led by [hapū].*
- *Support the recovery of taonga species like kiwi, tuna, and kākahi (freshwater mussels) through predator control and habitat restoration.*

By clearly naming taonga and desired protective measures, you equip the council and other agencies with knowledge — so they can, for instance, flag these sites in their planning maps or require special conditions on consents to safeguard them. Councils are required to **recognise and provide for** the relationship of Māori with taonga in their plans, so this specific information will help them to do that.

This part of your plan operationalises kaitiakitanga at a species- and site-specific level, ensuring the **cultural treasures are not lost** in broader discussions.

Customary practices and use (Ngā tikanga ā-iwi/hapū me te whakamahi rauemi ā-tikanga)

You may wish to devote a section to outlining how customary practices will be maintained and supported. This could overlap with some earlier sections, but it's worth addressing directly.

Examples of customary practices:

- *mahinga kai* (customary food gathering)
- *rongoā* (traditional medicine harvesting)
- *waiata and stories for places*
- *kaitiaki rituals* (like blessings for new projects or offerings when harvesting).

Describe the practice and its importance. Then set **policies or guidelines** around them.

Examples:

- *Ensure continued access for our whānau to gather kaimoana at traditional reefs; any marine farming or coastal development must not impede our customary access or deplete these resources.*
- *Forestry operations on our lands must allow us to gather traditional materials (harakeke, pīngao, timber for carvings) in a sustainable manner.*

If your hapū has specific **seasonal practices** (using the maramataka calendar for planting or fishing), note these and perhaps include a brief explanation or table of the seasonal indicators for your rohe.

Also consider including how you expect councils to respect these practices — e.g. by providing permits for cultural harvest where needed, or by incorporating mātauranga (like acknowledging rāhui) in their resource management.

This section is about **asserting the right to live your culture** — that environmental management isn't just about science and economics, but also about enabling your people to continue their traditional relationships with the environment. Including it in your plan helps external agencies understand the non-negotiable cultural activities and how they can support and not hinder them.

Engagement, consultation and decision-making processes (Ngā tukanga mahi ngātahi, wānanga tahi, whakatau kaupapa)

It is crucial to **guide others on how to work with you**. This section should set out your hapū/iwi's **protocols for engagement** and how you make decisions on environmental matters. Start by stating your expectations for consultation.

Example:

*Any resource consent application, plan change, or policy development affecting our rohe or taonga **must** involve early consultation with [hapū/iwi].*

Provide practical guidance on **how** to consult, including such details as:

- the point of contact (such as an environmental unit or a designated kaitiaki coordinator);
- the preferred process (written proposal followed by kanohi-ki-te-kanohi hui on the marae, etc.); and
- reasonable timeframes for response.

You might include a flowchart or step-by-step for clarity, but even a simple list of guidelines is helpful.

Example:

Step 1: Initial contact through [office or marae committee].
Step 2: Site visit with our kaitiaki representatives if needed.
Step 3: Formal response or consultation hui.
Step 4: Ongoing communication and involvement in monitoring if project proceeds.
Etc.

Also clarify any **fees or koha expectations** if you have standard policies for engaging consultants or councils — some iwi/hapū include this to avoid misunderstandings.

Additionally, explain your **internal decision-making**.

- Who in your structure has mana to speak for environmental matters?
- Is there a Resource Management Unit or Kaitiaki Rōpū that reviews consents and coordinates response?
- Should consent applications be sent to both the hapū and the iwi authority, or does the hapū have full authority on its own?
- Describe in which circumstances your hapū governance requires a full hui to make decisions, if relevant.

You can also refer to any existing MOUs or formal arrangements with councils or agencies.

Examples:

- *We are part of Te Rūnanga o [Iwi] — any issues of region-wide impact may also involve our iwi authority's input.*
- *We participate in Council's tangata whenua advisory committee, which should be utilised for early input on plan changes.*

By outlining these processes, you **educate external agencies on how to do things the right way** (according to tikanga and your preferences), which strengthens your mana in engagement, consultation and decision-making processes.

Monitoring and review (Te aroturuki, te arotake)

Include a dedicated section on how you will monitor **(a) environmental outcomes** and **(b) IHEMP implementation**. This is often overlooked, but it's vital for keeping the plan alive and effective.

a) Monitoring environmental outcomes

Begin with any **cultural monitoring framework** you have. For instance, you might:

- adopt a mauri assessment method for waterways;
- use the Cultural Health Index (CHI) developed by some iwi for freshwater; or
- create and use your own set of indicators.
(e.g. abundance of specific indicator species, the return of certain birds, water clarity observations at swimming holes, etc)

You can state that as kaitiaki, you will be involved in monitoring these indicators. You can also mention integrating western scientific methods with mātauranga.

Example:

We will monitor stream health using both our traditional indicators (e.g. the presence of kōura, the taste of the water) and scientific measures (e.g. E. coli levels, macroinvertebrate counts), and we expect support from Council to do this.

If your hapū has trained environmental technicians or is building capability, note this. You may also wish to list any citizen science programmes or joint monitoring projects you are part of.

b) Monitoring implementation of the IHEMP itself

Also outline **how you will track implementation of the plan itself**. Setting expectations is important for accountability. Plans can easily gather dust if there is no mechanism to check in on them.

Monitoring methods may include (among others):

- An annual or biennial review hui to evaluate progress on the plan's objectives and actions; or
- Preparation (e.g. by a small committee or the environmental unit) of a yearly **kaitiaki report** or **scorecard** on what has been done (e.g. number of river monitoring outings, number of plants planted, number of consents reviewed against the plan, etc.).

You might commit to a **formal review of the plan every X years** (say every 5 years) to update it and keep it relevant. Describe how that review will happen — e.g. through community wānanga, and re-lodging the updated plan with NRC. Best practice is to include **evaluation criteria**, or at least a plan for measuring success.

Example of success evaluation criteria:

- *Taonga species populations are stable or increasing.*
- *At least 80% of resource consent applications in our rohe in the next 3 years reference and consider our IHEMP policies.*

Don't be afraid to set some benchmarks like this. Not only do they motivate action, but they also provide a way to communicate to the council and your own people what difference the IHEMP is making.

By planning for monitoring and review, you signal that this plan is a **living document** — one that will evolve and adapt, just as the hapū and environment do.

Implementation plan and priorities (Te mahere whakamahinga me ngā whakaarotau)

To complement the policies and methods in the main sections, it's useful to include a short **implementation roadmap**. This could be a table or list of **priority actions/projects** with suggested timeframes.

For example:

- Year 1-2: Priority 1: Establish Kaitiaki Monitoring Group (train 5 rangatahi, develop mauri monitoring template).
Priority 2: Obtain NRC training on scientific freshwater monitoring for Hapū Freshwater Monitoring Rōpū, to develop capacity for regular scientific monitoring at [streams X, Y and Z].*
- Years 1-3: Priority 1: Riparian planting at X stream (goal: 1000 plants).
Priority 2: Enablement of fish passage between A and B locations on X stream.*
- Years 3-5: Develop Hapū Coastal Management Strategy with neighbouring hapū.*

Best practice is to **assign roles** to the projects or actions if possible (e.g. internal roles, or collaboration tasks, like "Lead: Hapū Environment Committee; Support: NRC Biodiversity team").

This kind of forward-looking plan demonstrates that you are serious about **practical environmental action**, not just policy statements. It also helps external funders or partners see where they might assist.

Additionally, list any resources or funding opportunities you plan to use or apply for — e.g. grants from NRC, funding or investment from government non-governmental agencies, or your own iwi/hapū financial, human and in-kind resources.

The implementation section of your IHEMP provides a **flexible but realistic work plan** that can be reported on and updated regularly (which ties back to the Monitoring & Review section). It bridges the gap between strategic policy and on-the-ground action, by saying what will happen next and who may be involved. This priority list of projects and actions will keep your hapū focused, and it can be periodically updated in future iterations of the plan, as needed.

Data sovereignty and information protection (Te mana raraunga, te tiaki mōhiotanga)

*He taonga te mōhiotanga.
(Information/knowledge is a treasure.)*

Ancestral knowledge, observations of tohu (natural signs), and the lived experiences of whānau in place are not simply data — they are expressions of whakapapa and identity, making these Taonga. In the context of environmental management, how that knowledge is collected, stored, interpreted, and shared must be grounded in tikanga and uphold the mana of the iwi/hapū.

NRC acknowledges the inherent right of iwi/hapū to exercise data sovereignty over all data/information related to their whenua, awa, moana, ngahere, and taonga species (among other things). Such information may include:

- mātauranga Māori
- oral histories (kōrero tuku iho)
- mapping data
- biodiversity records
- drone footage
- cultural assessments
- information held or generated in partnership with external agencies
- and other things.

The right of data sovereignty carries with it both **responsibilities and protective protocols**. Therefore, any engagement involving data must:

- Uphold the principles of whakapapa: information must be contextualised within tangata whenua stories, not abstracted from them.
- Ensure informed consent and ongoing relationships, not one-off transactions.
- Recognise the kaitiakitanga of data: hapū are not just sources of knowledge but guardians of how that knowledge lives.
- Establish clear ownership, access, use and storage agreements before any data collection or sharing occurs.

IHEMPs may contain sensitive knowledge, including references to wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga, kōrero tuku iho, and hapū strategies. Your iwi/hapū may not wish all information to be freely accessible by all external parties. With this in mind:

- You may specify when lodging your IHEMP that you wish to entirely **restrict access to the IHEMP** to exclusively internal use by NRC, or that you consent to the entire IHEMP being made **publicly available** (for example, on the NRC website).
- Alternatively, you may wish to allow **unrestricted access to certain parts of the IHEMP, while restricting access to other parts**. In this case, NRC recommends the following strategy:
 - (1) you lodge two versions of the IHEMP with NRC: (a) one version that includes all sections but identifies within the document each section that you wish to restrict access to (this document will only be able to be used internally by NRC); and (b) a second version that has all sensitive sections or data/information removed, and can be made publicly available by NRC.

- (2) With regard to the second version in 1(b) above, you store, or require NRC to store, the specific sensitive data/information in a separate document or filing system to which access is restricted.
- We recommend that you specify the protocols for approving access to, and use of, data and information contained in the IHEMP. For example, you might specify exactly who in your iwi/hapū has the authority to grant access, and that external parties must obtain formal, written permission from these authorised persons.

NRC recommends that you include a **Data Governance Statement** in your IHEMP. This may cover just the information contained in your IHEMP and its related documentation, or it may encompass all data and information that is the property of your iwi/hapū (and potentially also the IHEMP and related documentation). The Data Governance Statement might cover such matters as:

- Who has the authority in your iwi/hapū to approve access to, and use of, your iwi/hapū data and information.
- How digital and physical data/information are to be stored.
- Which types of data/information are subject to restricted access, and which are subject to unrestricted access.
- What tikanga applies to access and interpretation of data/information.
- What accountability mechanisms you require, to avoid breaches of trust occurring relating to the use or interpretation of the data/information.

To sum up, embedding your expectations regarding data sovereignty in your IHEMP strengthens not only protection but also trust — both within your iwi/hapū and with any agency you engage with. It affirms mana motuhake over your own narratives, measurements, and worldviews, and safeguards against misappropriation, misinterpretation, or inappropriate extraction.

Appendices (Ngā āpithanga)

The Appendices are the final section of the IHEMP, and should be used for presenting detailed supporting material that would clutter the main body. Appendices keep the plan readable, while storing important info that readers (or your own planners) might need to reference.

Typical appendices might include:

- **Glossary of terms** (explaining Māori terms or technical terms used, to aid understanding).
- **Maps** (rohe map; specific site maps; maps of GIS layers for taonga sites or resources — if available).
- **Historical timeline** (if you want to provide a more detailed history of environmental events or treaty settlements affecting your rohe).
- **Legislative and policy context** (a summary of relevant laws and policies). Since we recommend that you generally avoid directly quoting legislation, National Policy Statements or National Environmental Standards, or local government policies or plans in the main body of the IHEMP, you may wish to include any relevant excerpts or references here to provide the necessary context or details.
- **Consultation register** (who in the hapū was consulted, or any external stakeholders' input — if relevant).

- **Recognition by iwi and hapū governance structures.** An IHEMP must be formally recognised by an iwi authority. If your entity is a hapū, in addition to the relevant iwi authority recognising the final document, you will need to ensure that your hapū governance entity (e.g. trust board or rūnanga) endorses it. This recognition should be evidenced by signed letters or meeting minutes.
- **References or further reading** (e.g. if you cite scientific reports, or your IHEMP is accompanied by technical studies).

Making the plan accessible and empowering

An effective IHEMP should be **understandable and useful to a wide audience** — from your own kuia and kaumātua, to young kaihaka, to council engineers, to scientists, to neighbouring landowners. Achieving this breadth means paying attention to writing style and presentation.

Use clear, plain language wherever possible. While you will include Māori terms and perhaps technical terms, always explain them in context. For example, if you mention “te mana o te wai,” you might add a brief definition like “(the intrinsic authority and life-giving essence of water, which must be upheld).” Avoid dense bureaucratic wording.

Bilingual approach. Since your plan is grounded in te reo Māori concepts, consider a bilingual format where practicable. Even having section headings or important quotes in both languages can make the document more inclusive. At a minimum, provide translations for Māori quotes or pepeha so that non-Māori speakers can follow the meaning and appreciate the richness being conveyed.

Visual aids. Maps, graphs, and photographs can greatly enhance comprehension.

- Maps are essential for identifying your rohe and important sites.
- Simple graphs or tables might be used in the monitoring section to outline indicators or to show trends (e.g. population of a species over time, if data is available).
- Photographs of your hapū members engaging in kaitiakitanga (planting trees, performing karakia at a river, surveying fisheries) can also reinforce the message that this plan is about real people and actions on the ground.

Visual elements break up text and speak to those who are visually oriented. Just ensure that any images are captioned and culturally appropriate (no sensitive sites revealed without permission).

Community engagement. Although the plan is a written document, its power also comes from how it is created and used.

- Involve your iwi/hapū whānau in the drafting process — this not only enriches the content with collective knowledge, but also means the final plan will be understood by your community. You can host a wānanga to go over a draft and get feedback.
- Aim for a tone that **speaks to your own people first**. Keep the language accessible to all audiences by using clear and plain language.

Authoritative yet positive tone. The plan is both a political assertion and a solutions manual. Use a confident, assertive tone when stating your rights and policies — this is your **voice of mana**. However, maintain a constructive and solutions-focused approach. Wherever you oppose something

(e.g. a harmful activity), try to also propose an alternative or a condition under which things could be acceptable.

Example:

We do not support mining in our rohe that poses risks to waterways; instead, we encourage investment in land uses that enhance our environment, such as conservation-based enterprises or eco-tourism that our hapū can lead.

This way, the plan will be seen not as a list of “don’ts”, but instead as a platform for **opportunities and partnership**. It will be firm on protecting what matters, but it will also invite collaboration on achieving mutual goals (like clean water or sustainable development). NRC and other readers will respond better to a plan that highlights common ground and practical pathways.

Citations and knowledge base. As appropriate, support your assertions with historical, legal or scientific evidence, or traditional knowledge. This will give your statements extra **credibility**. For instance, if you claim a particular river once teemed with a certain fish, you might cite a Waitangi Tribunal claim, tribal pūrākau (story) or an early survey. If you state that a wetland is important for flood mitigation, maybe include a reference to a regional report or your own hapū’s observation of flood patterns. This adds depth that experts appreciate, showing that your plan is well-informed by both science and mātauranga Māori. Your evidence can be as simple as a footnote or an appendix reference.

By focusing on clarity, cultural authenticity, and a balanced tone, your IHEMP will be a document that **both the marae and the council can connect with**. It should educate newcomers about your worldview and priorities, and at the same time, be a handy reference for your hapū in everyday kaitiakitanga work.

Conclusion: a living document for empowerment

An Iwi/Hapū Environmental Management Plan is more than just paperwork — it is an expression of your tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga, given form on paper and in policy. In Te Tai Tokerau, where iwi and hapū are increasingly taking the lead in environmental governance, a well-crafted IHEMP helps ensure that council decisions respect and reflect hapū priorities. It also serves as a strategic plan for your own people, **bridging the gap between traditional knowledge and modern resource management**. Remember that your IHEMP should be a **living document** that can be revisited, reshaped, and strengthened over time.

This guide has outlined the key themes, structures, and approaches that have proven effective for iwi and hapū in our region and across the motu. By embedding mātauranga Māori and tikanga at its heart, aligning with NRC’s processes, articulating values and taonga clearly, and setting both high-level policies and on-the-ground actions, your IHEMP can become a powerful tool for change. It enables you to assert your rights (as guaranteed under Te Tiriti) and also to lead by example in caring for Papatūānuku and Ranginui.

An IHEMP can be used to **build relationships** — with **neighbouring hapū** (since environmental issues cross artificial boundaries), with **council staff** (so they truly understand and champion your plan internally), and with **external experts or funders** who can help achieve your goals.

You can use the plan in a variety of settings. For example, you can:

- use it when responding to consent applications;
- refer to it when engaging in council policy reviews;
- use it to help gain technical support, collaboration and funding for on-the-ground initiatives; and
- encourage your rangatahi to learn from it as a statement of who you are and what you stand for.

As each year passes, track the wins (small or large) that come from having your plan — be it a consent declined because it conflicted with your IHEMP, or a restoration project that got support because it was identified as a priority.

In doing so, you'll see that an IHEMP is not just a static requirement but a source of **mana** and practical benefit. It is your voice in the environmental space, **strategically assertive and rooted in aroha for the land and people**. By following the guidance in this document and tailoring it to your iwi/hapū's unique context, you can create a robust IHEMP that supports both your **strategic policy aspirations and hands-on environmental action**.

References and sources for further reading

The following resources offer valuable insights and can be consulted for more detailed examples and background when drafting your IHEMP.

- Northland Regional Council — Iwi/Hapū Environmental Management Plans information webpage (background information about IHEMPs, grant rounds for IHEMP development): www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/working-with-maori/grants-and-funding/iwi-hapu-management-plans/
- Northland Regional Council — List of Iwi/Hapū Plans lodged with Council (with links to those that are publicly available): www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/working-with-maori/grants-and-funding/iwi-hapu-management-plans/plans-held-by-council/
- Examples of IHEMPs:
 - Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa IHEMP: www.nrc.govt.nz/media/expnxl3t/2022-2027-1-trow-te-ukaipo-iwi-environmental-plan.pdf
All of it is good, but also specifically look at section on Cultural values, and/or environmental position statements — pages 7-9).
 - Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine IHEMP: www.nrc.govt.nz/media/capji1vw/ngati-hine-environmental-management-plan-2022.pdf
All of it is good, but also specifically look at sections on Relationships — pages 51-57; Cultural Health environmental monitoring tools — pages 65-69.
 - Patuharakeke Hapū Environmental Management Plan (2014): www.nrc.govt.nz/media/wynyiks/patuharakeke-hapu-environmental-management-plan-2014.pdf
All of it is good, but also specifically look at the values framework and policies.
 - Ngāti Whakaue ki Maketu IHEMP (not from Te Taitokerau, but a good example of an IHEMP): https://whakaue.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/1213_001.pdf?t
All of it is good, but also specifically look at sections on: How external parties are to engage — pages 81-83; Cultural Heritage protocols and processes (e.g. cultural monitoring, accidental discovery protocols) — pages 84-85; Cultural heritage inventory — pages 89-104.
- Publications:
 - Ministry for the Environment. *Three Decades of Iwi and Hapū Management Plans: An Overview*. 2022: <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Three-decades-of-iwi-and-hapu-management-plans-An-overview.pdf>
Contains analysis of common structures and themes in IHEMPs nationwide.
 - Ministry for the Environment. *Review of the Effectiveness of Iwi Management Plans*. 2004.
Provides lessons on recommended content to make IHEMPs more effective.

Appendix 1: Legislative and regional policy framework for IHEMPs

Government legislation: the Resource Management Act 1991

IHEMPs recognised by an Iwi Authority¹ provide a mechanism for tāngata whenua interests to be considered in council decision-making. Regional and district councils must always balance various competing interests. However, there are specific legislative obligations under the overarching framework of the **Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)** that require councils to take iwi/hapū planning documents recognised by an Iwi Authority — including IHEMPs — into account (see excerpts of key sections below):

Under s35A(1)(b), a council must keep and maintain a record of iwi/hapū planning documents (this includes IHEMPs) that are recognised by an iwi authority and lodged with council. Under sections 61(2A) and 66(2A), the regional council must take into account such planning documents when preparing or changing a regional policy statement or regional plan. Under s74(2A), a district council has the same obligation for its district plan.

With regard to resource consents, under s104 (1)(c) of the RMA, council, as a consent authority, must have regard to ... any other matter the consent authority considers relevant and reasonably necessary to determine a consent application. NRC considers an IHEMP to be a “matter” that is “relevant and reasonably necessary” under this section.²

Regional policies and plans

The **Regional Policy Statement** and the **Regional Plan** are developed and periodically updated by NRC. The policies and rules within these documents reflect NRC’s obligations under the RMA and other legislation, and are developed in consultation with the communities the council serves.

Selected policies and rules relevant to IHEMPs, from NRC’s regional policy statement and regional plan, are excerpted below.

The Regional Policy Statement for Northland

This document has policies that relate to the kaitiaki role of tāngata whenua, and to Treaty of Waitangi principles including partnership. These include:

- **Objective 3.12 — Tangata whenua role in decision-making**
Tāngata whenua kaitiaki role is recognised and provided for in decision-making over natural and physical resources.
- **8.1.1 Policy — Tangata whenua participation**
The regional and district councils shall provide opportunities for tangata whenua to participate in the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of plans and resource consent processes under the Resource Management Act 1991.
- **8.1.2 Policy — Regional and District Council statutory responsibilities**
The regional and district councils shall when developing plans and processing resource

¹ An iwi authority is defined as “the authority which represents an iwi and which is recognised by that iwi as having authority to do so”.

² NRC considers an IHEMP to be a “matter” that is “relevant and reasonably necessary” under this section.

consents under the [RMA]:

- (a) Recognise and provide for the relationship of tāngata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites wāhi tapu, and other taonga;
- (b) Have particular regard to kaitiakitanga; and
- (c) Take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi including partnership.

- **8.1.5 Method — Statutory plans and strategies**

The regional and district councils shall:

- (a) Engage with iwi authorities at the earliest possible stage of any review and / or change to plans developed under the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA) to agree appropriate mechanisms for tangata whenua participation and consultation; and
- (b) Include an analysis of the effects of any resource consent application on tangata whenua and their taonga, including details of any proposed measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate effects and consultation undertaken, in all regional and district council reports on resource consent applications.

- **8.1.7 Method — Advocacy and Education**

The regional and district councils shall:

- (a) Actively encourage resource consent applicants to consult with tāngata whenua as early in the process as possible prior to lodging consent applications for proposals that are likely to impact on tāngata whenua and their taonga; and
- (b) Refer resource consent applicants to any relevant iwi or hapū planning document lodged with the respective council that has been authorised by the iwi or hapū for public availability.

- **8.2.1 Policy — Support for iwi and hapū management plans**

The regional council will recognise the value of iwi and hapū management plans in decision-making under the [RMA] and the need to support tāngata whenua in the development and implementation of these plans.

In summary, IHEMP preparation is part of being involved in resource management, supporting partnership, and exercising kaitiakitanga.

The Regional Plan for Northland

As planning documents, IHEMPs have an important role in guiding assessments of environmental effects on tāngata whenua for resource consent applications. The Regional Plan has the following specific policies relating to this aspect:

- **Policy D.1.1 When an analysis of effects on tāngata whenua and their taonga is required.**
States that a resource consent application must include, in its assessment of environmental effects, an analysis of the effects of an activity on tāngata whenua and their taonga, if any of the seven listed adverse effects are likely.
- **Policy D.1.2 Requirements of an analysis of effects on tāngata whenua and their taonga.**
States that if the above analysis takes place with regard to tāngata whenua, the analysis must have regard to (but not be limited to): any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority; the outcomes of any consultation with tāngata whenua with respect to the consent application; and statutory acknowledgements in Treaty Settlement legislation.

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