Submission by

to the

Ministry for the Environment

on the

Draft National Adaptation Plan

3 June 2022

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NZTECH SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN

SUMMARY

- NZTech wishes to thank the Ministry for the opportunity to submit our views on its Draft National Adaptation Plan. We welcome in particular the invitation to provide feedback on (i) the impact of climate change on the technology sector, and (ii) the role of data and information in enabling assessment and reduction in risks from climate change.

- NZTech is willing to provide any further assistance that Ministry may need, and answer any questions it may have on this submission.

BACKGROUND

- NZTech is a member funded, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that represents 20 tech associations with over 1600 members who collectively employ more than 100,000 New Zealanders: over 10 percent of the New Zealand workforce.

- Our purpose is to help create a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous New Zealand underpinned by technology. We do this by helping our members work together to connect the tech ecosystem, promote the importance of technology for New Zealand and New Zealand technology for the world, and help advance the growth of the tech ecosystem and the New Zealand economy.

- Our members include New Zealand tech exporters, local and multinational IT firms, startups, universities, government agencies, financial service providers and large corporate users of technology.

RESPONSES TO SELECTED QUESTIONS

1. **Climate change is already impacting New Zealanders. Some examples include extreme weather events such as storms, heatwaves and heavy rainfall which affects lives, livelihoods, health and wellbeing, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services) and infrastructure. How is climate change impacting you? This could be within your community and/or hapū and iwi, and/or your business/organisation, and/or your region.**

   NZTech's members cover a broad range of industries, including those most impacted by climate change, such as agriculture, energy and transport. Such impacts are well-documented and have prompted, and continue to prompt, changes in behaviour that will likely be long-term.

   The impact of climate change is also being considered across the digital innovators within our members as they proactively consider the energy usage of various technology systems. However, as predominantly "weightless" exporters, climate change provides more opportunities than challenges for the digital technology and innovation sectors.

2. **The national adaptation plan focuses on three key areas. Please indicate which area is most important for you.**

   Focus area one: Reform institutions to be fit for a changing climate. This means updating the legislative settings so that those who are responsible for preparing for and reducing exposure to changing climate risk will be better equipped.

   Focus area two: Provide data, information and guidance to enable everyone to assess and reduce their own climate risks. This means that all New Zealanders will have access to information about the climate risks that are relevant to them

   Focus area three: Embed climate resilience across government strategies and policies. This means that Government agencies will be considering climate risks in their strategies and proposals. other? Please explain.

   Focus area two is the most important for us. Technology will be crucial to gaining the upper hand over climate change, and this work begins with a comprehensive assessment of climate risks easily accessible to all affected parties.

   Accordingly, we fully support the Ministry's plan to design and develop an Adaptation Information Portal as a national hub of all available climate change data and information, allowing New Zealanders to understand and assess their climate risk, find solutions and share best practices.

   We similarly support the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) Projections Project, working to make the global climate projections from the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (AR6 – WG1) more applicable to New Zealand, by providing regional and local climate projections data.

   Additionally, our recently published AI Forum report Artificial Intelligence for the Environment in Aotearoa New Zealand identified the importance of establishing a coherent national environmental data ecosystem if we wish to enable the use of technologies such as AI to enable improvements in environmental responses. [https://nztech.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2022/05/AI-for-the-Environment-Report-2022.pdf]

5. **The National Climate Change Risk Assessment recognised that there may be economic opportunities in adapting to a changing climate. a) What opportunities do you think could exist for your community or sector? b) What role could central government play in harnessing those opportunities?**

   (a) Climate change has highlighted the importance to New Zealand's economic future of sustainable high-value tech jobs producing goods and services with a much-reduced carbon footprint. Technology in New Zealand connects people and markets, is the pathway to tomorrow's jobs, and helps combat climate change.

   Tech sector growth is outstripping growth in the wider economy and it is estimated that over the past five years, our tech sector has grown 30 percent faster than the economy overall.

   Significantly, it is a sector that is low in emissions and high in exports, compared to other sectors, and brings new revenue from overseas sales. Jobs in the tech sector are less vulnerable to external shocks and are less reliant on natural resources.

New Zealand tech companies also have the opportunity to develop climate change technology for what will be a massive global market. A Callaghan Innovation report last year identified some great opportunities for home-grown climate tech, while at the same time finding that few local companies were as-yet exploring this area. [https://www.callaghaninnovation.govt.nz/sites/all/files/NZ_Climate_Tech_For_The_World_report.pdf]

(b) Central government could help our sector make much greater progress deploying existing or near-term climate technology solutions by developing a technology roadmap to accelerate development and commercialisation of low emissions technologies. This would also strengthen New Zealand's innovation, research and development pipeline to explore, test and commercialise future climate solutions.

We presented this proposal in our submission last year on the Ministry's discussion document leading to the Emissions Reduction Plan. Although our recommendation was not included in the final plan, we still believe that development of such a roadmap would greatly enhance the fight against climate change as clear signalling of short, medium and long-term technology opportunities will encourage private sector investment and innovation. NZTech has the capability to partner with government to deliver this.

CONCLUSION

- Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan. We are happy to engage further to discuss our submission and provide any further assistance.
- If you have any further queries do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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