

The Māori Agribusiness Extension programme (MABx)

Who is MABx for?

The Māori Agribusiness Extension programme (MABx) aims to build the confidence of Māori agribusinesses, their trustees and land owners to undertake change and achieve more from their whenua.

As a point of difference with most other programmes, MABx supports Māori land trusts to do this together in like-minded groups. Groups of trusts get the chance to ask questions, bounce ideas, share experiences with others who are going through the same journey or learn from those who are well down the track. This helps trusts to develop their own ideas, understanding and plans, so they are informed and closer to taking action.

They may also explore doing business together. For example they might look at bringing together smaller land blocks that would be uneconomic to develop individually, or working jointly with others to get the power of greater numbers for activities such as purchasing supplies.

A MABx group – known as a cluster:

- Will have a common interest, purpose or outcome in mind
- Could be at a similar stage of development, OR
- Will be looking to collaborate or collectivise.

What does MPI want from cluster participants?

To participate in MABx, you will:

- Be interested in exploring new options for your whenua or other agribusiness asset
- Be willing to work with other trusts and go through a group learning process – committing time, effort and knowledge to make it work
- Be willing to make changes that apply good environmental practices
- Have whenua administered for the benefit of Māori and administered under a formal ownership structure
- Have a functioning governance group and be able to obtain trustee agreement to participate.

How does it work?

We are flexible about how a cluster comes together: trustees may already be working with other trusts to explore a common opportunity or resolve a common issue, or MPI staff may bring together people who have been asking similar questions or have similar aspirations.

Your point of contact is your local MPI Māori Agribusiness advisor. They will work with you to document some key points about your possible project. This will help to make it clear how realistic it would be as a MABx project – or if another programme might be more suitable. If it's looking promising as a MABx project, the advisor will take your project idea to the MABx Panel for consideration.

If MPI accepts a MABx proposal, the advisor will work with the trust group to formally set up the cluster. This includes appointing a facilitator who will work with you to plan activities and make them happen. The planned activities could include field trips, field days, advisor input, workshops, wānanga or commissioning reports.

How can I express interest?

If you would like to know more, please contact an MPI Māori Agribusiness regional advisor by emailing: **maoriagribusiness@mpi.govt.nz**

Me haere ngātahi tātou – Let's go together

Some questions to consider:

- What kinds of things would we like to achieve for the owners and our wider community, for today and for the future? What drives our aspirations – social, economic, environmental, cultural? Do we need to discuss and document them? Or, have we moved on from when we last did this, and do we need to re-visit it?
- What would we like to achieve with our whenua (or other agribusiness asset) to head in that direction?
- Could agribusiness activity (such as farming or growing) achieve these? Do we want to explore this?
- What knowledge would make us more confident to undertake (more) agribusiness activity on our whenua?
- How do we make decisions?
- How do we like to obtain or receive information?
- Would we be willing to be part of and commit our time to participate in a MABx cluster to help us make change for today and for our mokopuna, tomorrow?
- Do we know any other groups of trustees who are in a similar position to us?
- Are there other groups of trustees we already talk with or work with who might be interested too?