

Tai Poutini West Coast 2050 Strategy

Final Draft (V4) for Consultation

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Introduction

Generations of Coasters have enjoyed the benefits of a thriving regional economy that was once the envy of the rest of the country. Our resilient spirit and strong work ethic have served us well. But right now, we are vulnerable.

Our world is changing faster than we are. Whilst we can be rightly proud of our history, identity, and assets as a region – we are not yet match fit for the challenges ahead. This ‘West Coast Economic Strategy’ strengthens our position in a rapidly changing world. It ensures that we not only tackle the challenges ahead but we also realise the enormous potential that exists in solving them.

The economic growth we have traditionally relied on is being challenged and we have much work to do in improving the wellbeing of all Coasters. We’ve known this for some time now and our community is united in the desire to chart a new course that protects everything we love about the Coast, elevates the things we do well and helps us navigate the road ahead.

This strategy comes at a good time – we are experiencing a disrupted global climate. Pressures around climate change and biodiversity collapse are increasing, a global pandemic has brought international tourism to a grinding halt, our region is dealing with the fallout from extreme weather events and the government is enacting a raft of significant reforms that will impact our communities.

All of us have been affected by these challenges differently but we have all been affected. This collective experience has served to remind us of the importance of building a resilient economy that can withstand the shocks and changes we know we will experience over time.

It’s difficult to imagine a more important time for the Coast to be clear about what we want and proactive in pursuing it. This is an opportunity for us to front foot the change required and unleash the hidden potential that exists within our communities.

This is our pathway forward as Te Tai o Poutini West Coast – a strategy that celebrates our strengths and is honest about our challenges. An opportunity to provide a collective view of the way forward, for the Coast to speak with one voice about the future we desire and to get down to work creating it.

Our journey to 2050 will require hard work, determination, and change. We know that over the course of this strategy, we will stop doing some things and start doing others as we navigate our changing world and the significant reforms we know are coming. There is no single “silver bullet” to smooth this transition but within this strategy are a range of solutions that will make a difference and offer us the opportunity to rethink and regenerate our Coast economy. Contained within this strategy is a portfolio of mutually reinforcing initiatives that collectively will make a big difference.

Our challenge is to focus on a handful of priorities that will move the dial for the Coast. We have to be careful to avoid diluting our efforts by trying to do too much and stretching the limited resources that are available to deliver. The measure of a good strategy is not the words on these pages but the action that follows them. Doing that will require unprecedented levels of collaboration, investment, and action right across our communities. We know our people are ready to get stuck in. By doing this together, we can go so much further and faster.

The reality is we will not get there alone and these outcomes won’t come easily. This is not just an internal strategy for the West Coast - it’s our message to the world about the future we are creating and the opportunities that exist here. It’s a prospectus for future residents, businesses, and investors.

This ‘West Coast Economic Strategy’ sets out our shared vision for improving the lives of all Coasters and shows us the pathway forward to achieving our aspirations as a community. The strategy:

- Articulates a bold vision and intergenerational outcomes for the West Coast
- Identifies the challenges and opportunities we face in achieving that vision
- Identifies the priority missions that we have landed on to drive that growth
- Provides the blueprint for the Action Plan that will enable the delivery of those missions and the projects that sit beneath them

This strategy focuses us on a generational shift in our economy. Rather than short term or siloed thinking, it offers an enduring blueprint that will need to be constantly updated and refreshed as we advance on the journey to 2050 and make strides towards achieving these outcomes.

As we work together to deliver this strategy, we must remind ourselves that “many hands make light work” and that if we’re all pulling in the same direction, we can achieve great things on behalf of the Coast and future generations.

Our Approach

In undertaking to deliver a strategy that is truly a “West Coast Strategy”, it was important to engage a wide cross section of the community to ensure this blueprint for the future is an inclusive document that is owned by the communities for whom it is designed.

In seeking to create a generational shift in our economic growth and prosperity, we went to young people first to seek their views on the type of future they want on the Coast and the things that are concerning them. Their voices are heard loud and clear throughout this document and in the priority actions that have been identified to advance this strategy.

The workshops that were held to shape the foundation for this strategy included businesspeople, central government, local government, mana whenua and our wider community. They represent a cross section of all the parts of our community that make this place work.

Over 150 people from across the Coast participated in the workshops held to design this strategy. We are particularly proud of the contributions of over 20 rangatahi who were instrumental in setting the direction for this 2050 strategy.

Following the workshops, feedback was received from participants on the initial draft of the strategy including directly from West Coast community leaders and organised labour (union) representatives.

The 2018-2025 Tai Poutini Economic Development Strategy would be superseded by the 2050 strategy with outstanding Actions being assessed and reassigned to mission groups and priority project streams.

Our approach to landing a 2050 strategy was simple:

1. Engage openly with the community to uncover the shared vision, aspirations, and outcomes we can all agree on and get in behind.
2. Work with existing strategies, plans and research papers to help inform the contents of this strategy and ensure that it not only complements but actually reinforces other work that is happening in the region.
3. Shape a strategy that becomes a catalyst for action and a guiding document that can be used across business and community to ensure we’re all singing from the same song sheet.

Economic Challenges

There are a number of challenges, if not addressed will shape the future of the region and aspirations of our community across people, environment and the economy.

- **Diversification** - We are facing unprecedented levels of change and disruption that will impact the West Coast economy.
- **Narrative** - There is a prevailing pessimistic outlook and perception challenge for the Coast.
- **Demographics** - We have an ageing workforce and we are struggling to retain young people on the Coast.
- **Resilience** - We are vulnerable to extreme weather events, sea-level rise and disruptions due to natural disasters.

A snapshot of Challenges

Challenge	Issues	Local Impact
Global Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Exhaustion of non-renewable resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability to sea level rise and the impact on geography and the natural environment. • Vulnerability to weather events on infrastructure and connectivity of the West Coast. • The reliance on natural resources for economic prosperity. • Changes in land and sea use, climate change, pollution and invasive species are putting pressure on our environment.
New Zealand Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low productivity • Skills shortage • Under investment in infrastructure • Housing affordability and access • A rapidly aging population • Biodiversity decline • A lack of diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have the opportunity for employers and workers to work together to increase productivity. • We have a number of skills shortages and seasonal labour challenges. • We have an export driven economy, vulnerable to global conditions. • We have a relatively low and ageing population base and modest GDP for the geographical size making it difficult to fund infrastructure. • We have poor housing quality and a lag in supply.
Regional Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance • Scale • Perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are still facing significant disruption as a result of COVID-19 including supply chain and labour market issues. • We are heavily reliant on transport infrastructure, with a relatively small “surrounding” population within driving distance. • We are a small region spread across a large geographical area which makes infrastructure challenging to fund and deliver. • Accessibility to higher education and upskilling.

Our Mission

To create a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for the West Coast that our people can be proud of and our rangatahi (young people) can look forward to.

Identified missions:

- Build confidence
- Diversify our economy
- Strengthen communities

Our Vision

To be recognised as leaders in the adoption of innovative, sustainable and regenerative economic, social, wellbeing and environmental solutions.

Our Values

- Manaakitanga – Welcoming, inclusiveness, connection, and support for each other
- Kaitiakitanga – Active guardianship of our taonga and giving back to nature
- Whanaungatanga – Our sense of collective belonging and identity
- Rangatiratanga – Courageous leadership and being in charge of our own destiny
- Pono – We are honest and sincere in everything that we do
- Kotahitanga – unity and collective action

Our 2050 Outcome

We have an innovative and resilient economy delivering opportunities and high-paying jobs for our community. Care for our people and our environment is part of who we are and what we are known for.

Our Place – Te Taiao

We care for our people and place leaving our environment in a better state than we inherited it.

Our Economy – Pūtea

Our diverse and resilient economy is fueled by a thriving entrepreneurial community and world class infrastructure. The world looks to us for solutions on conservation, biodiversity regeneration and clean energy.

Our People – Whānau

Our people are proud of their identity as Coasters and optimistic about the future. Our connected communities and culture are inclusive, caring and collaborative.

Our Leadership – Rangatiratanga

Our leadership is collaborative, future-focused and optimistic, front footing the change required to deliver practical and bold actions.

Our Collective Commitment

To work together to unlock the potential of the West Coast by carving our own path, front footing the change required and working in partnership with open minds and a solutions focus on the challenges we face.

Our Strategy

Our strategy with the promotion of social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities will deliver on the intergenerational outcomes identified. It is made up of three key missions, eleven priority projects and 23 actions.

Mission One - Build Confidence

The West Coast has a plan for the future that is inclusive and provides clarity to both the West Coast and New Zealand. Our businesses and people are optimistic and confident about the future. Our young people can see a bright future that they want to be a part of and are supported to achieve success.

Priority Project – Enhanced Regional Identity

Being a West Coaster instils pride in our people and fosters a strong sense of connection and belonging. An enhanced regional identity is a critical tool in this strategy – to build confidence and pride in our place and to attract the right people and investment to the region to realise our aspirations.

By lifting our presence and sharing more from our region, the West Coast can be seen as a desirable place to live, work and play, supporting our economic aspirations. Furthermore, active protection and guardianship of the environment can be celebrated as part of our West Coast identity.

Actions

- Develop a business and investment story and proposition for the West Coast to support business attraction and encourage start-up businesses
- Finalise and implement the Destination Management Plan with a focus on realising opportunities in high value and regenerative tourism.
- Develop a digital support programme and online shopping portal 'Shop West Coast' to increase uptake of West Coast businesses in eCommerce opportunities and profile our regional offering

Mission Two – Strengthen and Diversify our Economy

The West Coast has an abundance of natural resources that form the backbone of our regional economy. To secure our long term economic prosperity and resilience, we need to actively support the growth of emerging industries and strengthen our economic drivers by focusing on adding value.

By focusing on a more circular economic approach, we are able to increase the value of our products and deliver better outcomes for the environment. Our economic activity must actively protect and give back to the natural environment that supports our prosperity.

The West Coast has untapped potential in the green economy space – from the unrealised value of our natural resources to the knowledge economy potential that exists from our strengths in conservation and biodiversity restoration.

Priority Project - Realising our natural resources

The West Coast is 84% public conservation land, the largest proportion of any region in New Zealand. By focusing on a regenerative approach, we are able to unlock economic opportunities whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment for future generations.

Actions

- Supporting the completion of the Stewardship Land Review so new economic opportunity is enabled and environment outcomes are enhanced

Priority Project – Conservation Centre of Excellence

Our strengths in protecting and restoring the natural environment are an opportunity to build a light footprint niche economy on the Coast that develops, incubates, and shares knowledge on conservation and biodiversity restoration.

Actions

- Supporting the advancement of conservation, biodiversity and predator free work across the region
- Develop an International Conservation and Biodiversity Restoration Centre of Excellence

Priority Project – Renewable Energy Solutions

Unlocking the potential within our renewable energy sector by developing a comprehensive West Coast Energy Strategy that identifies and advances opportunities in hydro, biomass, geothermal, biodiesel green hydrogen and other energy opportunities on the West Coast with a focus on viable outcomes that create jobs.

Actions

- Develop and implement a West Coast Energy Strategy to unlock opportunities in renewable energy investment and job creation on the coast.

Priority Project – Research, Science and Technology

Supporting our applied research, science and technology businesses to grow and support our key economic drivers and opportunities to lift productivity and reduce environmental impacts.

Actions

- Investment in research, science and technology to lift the productivity and reduce the footprint of our key economic drivers.

Priority Project – High Value Engineering and Innovation

The West Coast has existing strengths in niche and high value engineering. Recognised for its innovation and collective strength, the West Coast is seen as a leader in engineering excellence.

Actions

- Form a niche engineering cluster to realise opportunities for improved resilience (local supply) and growth in the growing engineering and manufacturing sector
- Develop an innovation and R&D hub to support key economic drivers

Priority Project – Food and Fibre Sector Optimisation

The West Coast has an extensive and diverse range of food and fibre businesses drawn from an assorted cross-section of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and carbon farming, aquaculture, meat and food processing, as well as related agricultural service industries.

Actions

- Developing opportunities to support and grow our food and fibre sector on the West Coast through increased investment in innovation
- Develop a food and fibre provenance story for the West Coast that supports increased value from the sector
- Establishing partnerships for land use trials to position the West Coast as a preferred option for science and research

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Mission Three - Strengthen our communities

The West Coast is a region made up of strong and resilient communities that make this place special. Our mission is to strengthen communities which are the backbone of our economic success to ensure they are inclusive, safe and providing for the needs of Coasters.

Secure, affordable and quality housing is out of reach for too many in our community. While economic growth is a worthy pursuit, we need to be proactive in ensuring the benefits of that growth flow through equitably including those who need it the most.

Priority Project – Housing

Everyone on the West Coast has the right to quality housing and a great neighbourhood to live in. A well-functioning housing system has good quality and resilient homes that meets the needs of residents and supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities

Actions

- Implement the Tai Poutini Housing Strategy including a focus on improving the condition, security, energy efficiency and suitability of existing homes
- Increase the capacity of sustainable age care on the West Coast

Priority Project – Healthcare

Equity, availability, and access to health care across the Coast. Our healthcare services meet the needs of the community with wellbeing at the heart of our economic development.

Actions

- Develop an interprofessional healthcare facility and explore opportunities for training and education development
- Advocate for improved mental health support available from prevention through to crisis
- Advocate and enable the improved provision of healthcare services throughout the West Coast, specifically for hard to reach and disadvantaged communities

Priority Project - Community and Business Education

Accessible education that enables and enhances both the community and business prosperity, creating opportunities to evolve and grow sustainable, innovative, and creative talent.

Actions

- Develop a Future of Work programme to create career pathways for future employment opportunities, talent attraction and retention and education to employment options
- Strengthen partnerships with innovation, education, and research institutes (e.g Lincoln University, University of Canterbury, Callaghan Innovation etc)
- Establish community and business hubs in the main centres to support connectivity, remote working and career and business opportunities
- Increase business networking and education opportunities throughout the coast with an emphasis on communities not currently accessing support

Priority Project – Infrastructure, Resilience and Digital Connectivity

Enabled and connected resilient and sustainable fit for purpose infrastructure network (transport, energy and digital) that supports increased productivity, strengthens our resilience, and provides growth opportunities.

Actions

- A focused infrastructure resilience review to increase investment to support economic development and a proactive climate change adaption approach.
- Strengthening local food systems and resilience through community led initiatives that secure food supply for local communities
- Develop Zero Waste initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint and unlock revenue generating opportunities.
- Improve rural connectivity including mobile blackspots, rural and ultrafast broadband

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What does success look like?

The West Coast's aspiration is for an economy that is robust; where sustainable levels of growth are achieved over the full range of current and future industry sectors while retaining those values underpinning who we are and why people choose to be here. An economy that delivers an increasing number of jobs so that the wealth generated provides opportunities for current and future residents of the Coast.

An economy where entrepreneurs and new businesses see opportunities and existing businesses are strong. An economy that advocates high quality over quantity. Ensuring there is strength and diversity across business sectors and within sectors will help the Coast's economy withstand shocks to one sector without disrupting the economy as a whole. A resilient future economy will continue to see current sectors grow and adapt to change as well as encourage growth in other sectors. A resilient economy will provide employment opportunities that encompass all skill levels. It will support businesses of all sizes, from start-ups and small to medium enterprises through to the largest global corporations. It is an economy that is less vulnerable to, or recovers more quickly from, external shocks. Resilience also refers to income inequality and the importance of meeting the basic needs of all in society, including the resilience of the most disadvantaged to economic shocks.

The Coast's diverse seasons, wide open spaces, pace of life and the can-do attitude of its people lends itself to attracting people from far and wide to live in, do business in or visit the Coast. To do business here our people must be innovative and creative in the way they run and conduct their businesses. The nature of work is changing rapidly and many jobs that exist today will be replaced by different types of work in the future. New jobs are anticipated in research, development, engineering and energy industries and we must be positioned for this. We have a lot of talented people on the West Coast, and we can build on this – innovation breeds innovation. As our traditional industries evolve and new industries emerge, we must create an innovation ecosystem that extends our strengths and supports our entrepreneurs and innovators and attracts new industries.

To do this, we must foster entrepreneurs and enterprises small and large, helping them to compete in local, national and global markets by ensuring the infrastructure and programmes are in place to support their success. We also must develop new ways to gather and share information to grow the Coast's knowledge sector.

How the Region will Measure Success

The next phase of work will include a focus on developing success metrics, monitoring and reporting that ensures the strategy delivers improved outcomes for all West Coasters.

Ultimately, the success of the strategy will not be defined by the words on these pages but rather the investment and value add activity that results from this strategy work. First and foremost, our success will be measurable by the level of investment and positive activity resulting from this programme of work.

Our economic success will be benchmarked against wellbeing outcomes that are being developed to support economic performance and sustainability. Each priority and associated action will have agreed outcomes and targets that will be developed with the lead collaborator.

Development West Coast, as the convenors of the strategy work, will be charged with the responsibility of reporting on the progress of the strategy and measuring the success of initiatives as they are progressed.

A range of indicators will be developed to measure the overall economic success and wellbeing over the region, alongside success measures that are specific to each project priority and take into consideration key outcomes such as job creation and investment into the region.

How the region will deliver

This strategy is about delivering results and outcomes for the coast to deliver on the aspirations of our community. It's a step change in our approach and focus in economic development that will deliver a generational change required to ensure the West Coast is match fit for the challenges ahead.

The strategy will be supported by an Action Plan which will set out:

- A champion or lead collaborator for each priority action
- A pathway for resourcing and activation of this priority
- Milestones and deliverables to ensure accountability
- Measures of success to track progress

The action plan will evolve as actions are successfully implemented, new opportunities emerge, or existing actions are amended as circumstances change. All action points/projects are identified to a mission statement to confirm alignment to the vision.

Each signatory to this strategy also has a duty and responsibility to deliver on the aspirations of the strategy in their own areas of investment, activity and policy mandate. There will be many actions and projects that are delivered under the auspices of this strategy that aren't detailed in the formal document but rather form part of a wave of transformative change that is enabled by the blueprint the strategy offers and the collective commitment of the signatories to the strategy.

The priority actions set out in this strategy have all been identified as worthy of resourcing and support to enable delivery but their requirements and the maturity of the actions are all different. Some will require entirely new working groups to be established and project plans drawn up while others may be ready to take into a business case or feasibility study or even may be investment ready in their own right.

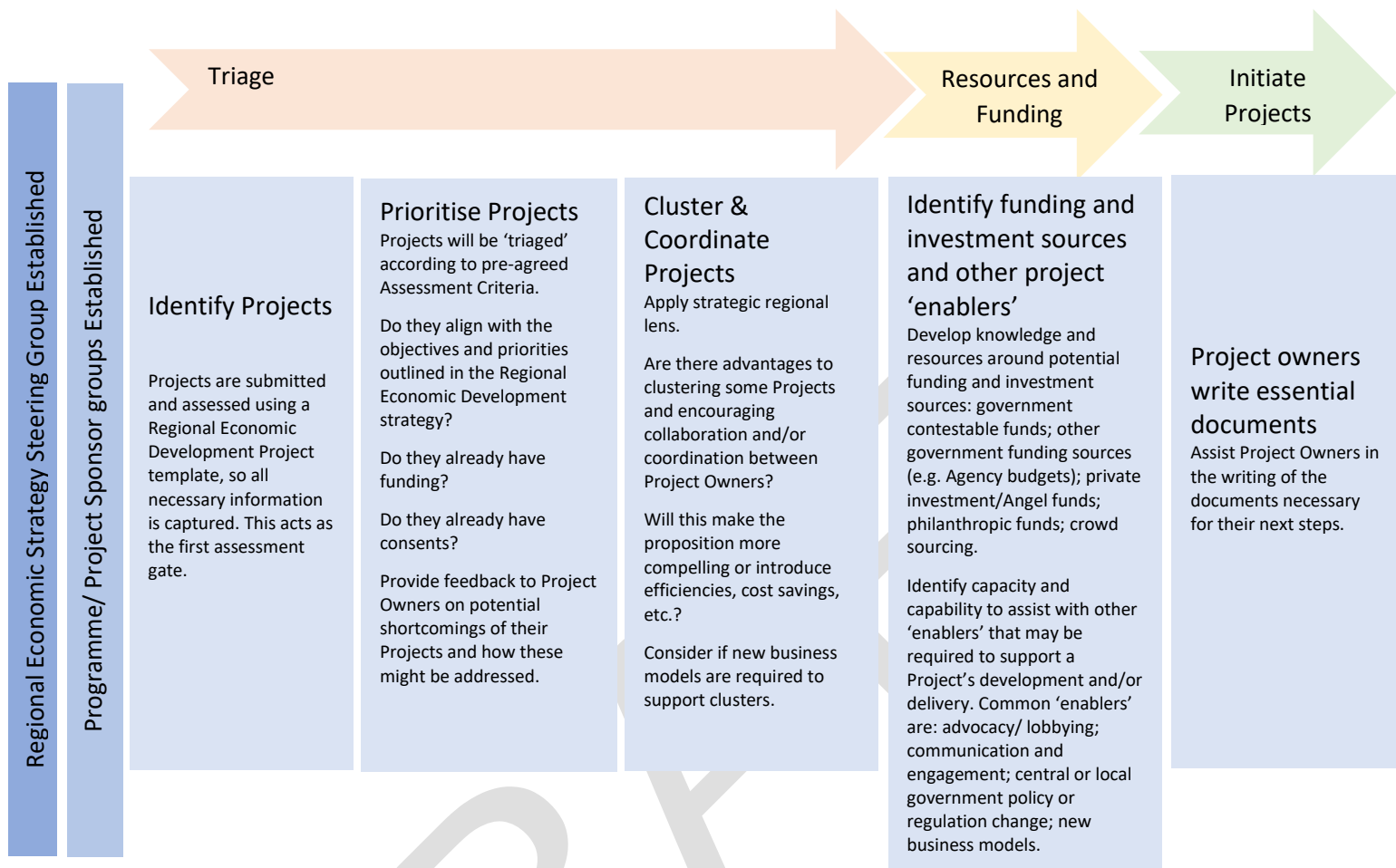
Critically, the success of this strategy will depend on the collective commitment and ability of all stakeholders to deliver against the strategy and work collaboratively on the identified missions and priority actions. For this to be a truly enduring West Coast strategy – everyone has a role to play in the success of it.

As part of the Action Plan work, a Steering Group will be appointed to monitor and guide the overall progress of the strategy and provide representation from stakeholders involved in the plan. The Steering Group will not be a governance group per se but rather the regional nexus for which updated priorities and guidance will flow to help maintain an iterative and generative approach to delivering on the strategy. The Steering Group will be responsible for collectively delivering on the strategy, updating it as required and maintaining the momentum required to ensure the strategy remains relevant for years to come.

The following diagram shows the leadership and support arrangements for delivering the action plan:



Implementation Roadmap



Regional Scan

Engage with existing networks and fora to attract Projects into the roadmap.

Stay aware of other projects being developed outside of this pipeline. How can we add value to their efforts?

Use approved detail from our portfolio of pipeline Projects to inform regional, national and sector strategies and advocacy (i.e. excluding commercial sensitivities).

Establish a regular review process, so our roadmap is agile and can respond to fast changing regional priorities.

Share progress and success of the roadmap with relevant stakeholders (excluding commercial sensitivities).

