

CROWDFUND WITH MILLION METRES

**A guide to fundraising
for your planting project**



INTRODUCING MILLION METRES

The basics

The Million Metres Streams Project (Million Metres) is New Zealand's online fundraising platform for waterway planting projects.

Million Metres is an initiative led by the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) in partnership with the Department of Conservation.

Million Metres helps individuals, landowners and community groups to fund the planting of the edges of their local stream, river, lake, wetland, or estuary (riparian areas).

When you crowdfund on Million Metres (www.millionmetres.org.nz) you're part of a larger story. Together with others around the country you are helping to replant one million metres of NZ waterways.

What Million Metres does

Million Metres provides support and advice along each step of the crowdfunding process. We:

- **Manage the web-platform** to share your project and receive donations
- **Help you run a great crowdfunding campaign** and provide guides and templates
- **Market and promote** your project through our social media networks
- **Actively fundraise** for your project to secure individual and business donations
- **Provide updates** and communicate regularly with your donors
- **Share your story** with a national audience
- **Provide connections** to people and resources to help achieve your project goals.

How Million Metres differs from other platforms

- We provide a lot of fundraising assistance and want to see 100% of projects successfully meet their goal. 15% of the funds raised go to Million Metres for the services we provide.
- If you don't meet your target, you still receive the money donated. We work with you to scale back your project or extend your fundraising deadline.
- You don't have to offer gifts to your donors.

Before getting started

Just a couple of things to cover before you dive in.

Are you working with a Field Partner?

All Million Metres' projects work with a Million Metres 'Field Partner'. They have experience and expertise in waterway or riparian planting. They are usually your regional council. They can help create or review your planting plan to make sure it is ecologically robust and appropriate for your region. If you are not already working with a Field Partner, get in touch and we will connect you.

Have you reviewed the Project Terms and Conditions?

Before we can create a fundraising page for your project on the website, you will need to review and agree with the Project Ts&Cs.

They include things like:

- You have a credible planting plan with the right plants in the right places
- You won't profit from the funds raised, and you'll use the funds for the planting project only
- If the project is on private land, you won't sell or subdivide for five years
- You will help us update your donors by sharing photos and progress updates
- You will report back on how your planting project is going each year for 5 years.



01

**PLANNING
YOUR PROJECT**

01 | PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

The specifics

Talk to your Field Partner for help developing your planting plan and estimating the costs.

Some key questions:

- What length of waterway are you planting?
- Which plant species, and how many will you need?
- What preparation and post-care will be needed?
- Who will do what jobs, and what will it all cost?

Nail your story

All the projects on Million Metres' website are raising funds to plant waterways, so you need to make your project stand out. What makes your project unique?

Consider:

- Your local area, the history of the waterway and the pollution or land use challenges it is facing
- How your planting project will help with those challenges
- Your knowledge of and passion for the waterway and planting
- Special native species in the area
- The involvement of well-known public figures
- Any quirky, funny or outrageous elements of the project.

These special features will become 'your story' and your distinctive selling point later on.

Successful crowdfunding campaigns nail their pitch to potential supporters.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Is there a compelling story behind the project site or waterway to help explain why your project needs support?
- How does the project contribute to your community?
- Why would someone want to give money to this project?
- Can this site be seen from the road or accessed easily by the public?
- Do you want to have public planting days?

Use your responses to create your project's key messages. Weave your key messages through your fundraising page, your social media posts, press releases, etc.

Working out your fundraising goal

Million Metres is not liable for any unexpected costs of your project. Make sure you understand your costs and have the resources to cover them.

Get a number of quotes for plants and associated costs, and try to keep the costs as low as possible. Remember to factor in the Million Metres admin fee (15% of all funds raised).

If you are new to crowdfunding, we recommend a goal between \$10,000 and \$30,000. Raising more than \$30,000 requires more effort, comprehensive promotion and widespread media coverage.

If your project is going to cost more than \$50,000, we recommend you break it up into sections and crowdfund and plant over a number of years.

You can set a higher fundraising goal, but you need to be very confident that you can put together a large-scale campaign and gain widespread support.

Timing and length of your campaign

Decide when you want to run your crowdfunding campaign and for how long.

We recommend that your campaign run between one to three months. Longer timeframes run the risk of lacking a sense of urgency, which is a great motivator for donors. They also require more work.

If you have a small crowdfunding goal (<\$10,000), run your campaign for 30-60 days. If you have a larger funding goal (>\$20,000), run it for three to six months. If you're struggling to meet your deadline, we're happy to extend it out a bit so that you can reach your goal.

We recommend crowdfunding well in advance of your planting. Make sure you will have time to order plants from the nursery. Also consider when others will be available to help out with the fundraiser.

Your team

There needs to be at least one person committed to running your crowdfunding campaign.

Ideally you will spread the effort among a team of people who have different skills to offer. It is essential that you have at least a few people committed to promoting the fundraiser and inspiring people to donate.

You will need people who:

- Really care about planting waterways and believe in the project
- Have great networks
- Can identify potential supporters
- Can make a great video to engage supporters and inspire them to donate
- Are great on the phone
- Are great on email and/or social media
- Are great with fundraising ideas and pulling off fun events or stunts to draw attention
- Have media connections and know how to get your project media attention
- Can write or create great updates and promotional materials.

What will your supporters get?

Being able to show potential donors what they will get out of supporting your project provides an incentive for them to donate. Planting waterways has numerous public benefits – such as clean water and healthy fisheries. This is a gift in itself!

The Million Metres platform does not require gifts for donors.

Instead of gifts, we provide updates to your donors in the form of bi-monthly newsletters, and updates and photos of the project they supported.

Consider what you can give to your donors. For example, you could organise a planting day or open day. This would give supporters the chance to see what they've donated to and get involved in a hands-on way.

Remind your donors that there are tax benefits for individual and corporate giving.

Individuals can claim a 33.33% tax credit for all donations over \$5.

Marketing and promotion

Make a marketing and promotion plan.

Initially it might just be a few rough ideas, but the more planning you do the more success you will have.

You can start by listing all the people each person in your team knows, their family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. This is the first set of people you ask to support your crowdfunding campaign.

Think about what media (telephone, newspaper, email, social media, etc.) you are going to use to tell people about your project.

See section 03 on promoting your crowdfunding campaign.



02

**CREATING
YOUR
FUNDRAISING
PAGE**

02 | CREATING YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE

Once you have a rough plan for your project and campaign, the next step is to provide Million Metres with the information to create your fundraising page on the website.

It is the public face of your crowdfunding campaign – it introduces you (or the organisation), the planting project, and why people should support it.

We will provide you with a **Project Listing Form** to fill in. Once you complete the form, we will create your project page. What we need is:

- A written description including key details about the project and what makes it special
- A video introducing your project and asking people to donate
- A photo of your planting site from a permanent photo point
Note: A permanent photo point is taking a photo of your site from a position that you can go back to each year to take a new photo. The photos will be used to show your donors how the planting is progressing each year.
- A thank you note and thank you photo.

The best crowdfunding campaigns connect people with their story and the people involved.

You will win supporters over with your passion and vision for the waterway you are restoring. Use your written description, video and photos to tell your story.

Writing your project description

Come up with an original and catchy name for your project!

It still needs to be relevant and should avoid words such as 'fund' or 'money'.

For the main text, cover the following:

- Who you are and what the project is all about
- Where you are and where the planting is going to happen
- What happens in the area – Is it urban or rural? Farming? Recreation?
- Why planting is needed – What is the current state of the waterway? What does it look like? What will change once you have planted?
- What your project aims to do – Talk about the overall vision but also explain the planting plan and what the money will be spent on
- Why someone should donate
- The 'Ask' - where you ask your reader to donate.

Writing tips

- Keep your written description brief. Use headings so it's easy to follow.
- Keep your sentences short. Use plain language. Include just one idea per sentence.
- Write as if you are writing to a single person. Focus on convincing that one person to support your project.
- Always proof read your work! Reading it out loud to yourself can really help.
- There is no perfect length. Aim for something between 500-1000 words. People will want to know the details, but won't want to read something too long.

ACTION

Ask a couple of people to read your description and watch your video. Then ask them to explain what you are doing, how you will use the donations, and if they would donate. You can adjust your text and video based on their comments if you want to. The more people you ask, the better idea you will get of how your audience will view your project.

Creating your crowdfunding video

Video is the most effective way to connect with your crowd and share your story.

Your video is one of the first impressions people will get of your project. It should encourage them to go from being interested to actually donating to your project! Projects with videos are 20% more likely to succeed.

The following guidance will help you make a great crowdfunding video. However, get in touch with the team at Million Metres if you are struggling. We can help.

Content

Great crowdfunding videos have three key ingredients: YOU, your passion, and your project.

Telling people why you care about the planting project is the best way to engage them in caring.

In your video you need to include:

- Who you are
- What you are doing
- How you will spend the funds raised
- The 'Ask'

The 'Ask' is when you ask your audience to donate to your project. You might feel a bit weird about asking for money. We understand, most of us feel that way! Be humble, positive and grateful.

Only ask your audience to do **one thing** – this makes them more likely to do it. You are asking them to donate, so don't ask them to do a bunch of other things as well.

Think about how to make your 'Ask' in a way that will engage the type of people you expect to support the project. Are they local businesses? Farmers? Young urbanites? People who grew up around the river? Here's an example:

"We love our river. Planting here will benefit the whole community. The trees will hold back soil, they will shade the stream and provide habitat for birds and fish. Help us clean up the river by donating today. Thank you for your support!"

Top tips for great videos

- Make your video short (less than 3 minutes) and immediately engaging. Viewers will decide whether or not to watch the full video in the first 15 seconds. It needs to be catchy!
- Everyone's story is unique, so be yourself. Be funny if you're a funny person. If your passion will engage people make sure that shines through.
- If you can, think up an original, quirky approach to your video.
- Make your video personal. The project is about the people making it happen. You (or they) need to be in the video.
- Include as many people involved in the project as possible – the more people seen to be supporting the project the better.
- Engage viewers in your project. Show them the planting site or the plants growing in the nursery. Show them the issues along the waterway. Show them what you hope to protect by planting (e.g. species or the harbour downstream). Introduce them to other people in the area who care.
- Inspire your audience with your vision for your waterway.
- Remember to acknowledge people who have agreed to support your project.
- Make sure you have permission to use any music, logos, and images that are not your own.
- If you're crowdfunding for a lot of money, consider employing a professional videographer.

ACTION

Watch some other crowdfunding videos. What do you like? What do you dislike? Would you donate? Why/why not? Then make a plan for your own video. Check out our website for some great crowdfunding video examples.

Filming tips

- Your video doesn't have to be fancy or expensive looking, but put some effort in. Make sure your camera is still and don't let it wobble around. Use a tripod, or something to keep your camera steady. If you are using your smart phone you can create a make-shift tripod. Google "make-shift tripod for smart phone" for examples and 'how to' videos.
- Make sure you have good lighting.
- Pick a friendly, inoffensive background.
- Look good! Take time to dress nicely and represent who you are really well. Project confidence, competence and success!
- Look directly into the camera lens while filming. This can take a bit of practice, but making eye contact is a great way to connect with your audience and build trust.
- To get the best audio recording:
 - use a microphone whenever possible
 - film people speaking indoors (less background noise) whenever possible
 - listen before you record and see if you can decrease noises – find the source of hums; close windows; and ask people around to be quiet.
 - if you are outside, make sure to listen to your footage for background noise when you get back in the car. If the background noise is too loud you can reshoot before you head home for the day.



Plan for your filming day

Put together a rough plan for the day. Make a note of what you will film, the key points you want to cover, and the key shots you need to get on the day.

Example shot	Example audio	Your shot (fill in the specific shots you'd like to include in the video)	Your audio (what key messages do you want to cover off with each shot)
1. Emily speaking to camera 2. Pan over the project site	Introducing herself, the group and the plan for the project site		
3. Emily speaking to camera 4. Shots of a bare stream bank and planted stream bank highlighting the benefits of planting (i.e. shots of birds or fish, etc.) 5. Shot of a local person that cares	Talking about why we need to plant, what the benefits will be, and the impact the project will have		
6. Jon speaking to the camera 7. Shots of people engaged in planting 8. Shots of key species/special characteristics	Talking about what makes this project special (e.g. the huge community support, important swimming sites, or special species)		
9. Emily speaking to the camera 10. Shots of the plant nursery and people growing them	Talking about why the money is needed (e.g. lack of funding or huge scale and cost) and what you will do with the funds		
11. Emily speaking directly to the camera	The 'Ask' – humbly asking people to support the project by donating on millionmetres.org.nz		

Editing your video

Once you have filmed your video you will need to edit it.

If you have Windows, Windows Movie Maker is a simple, free option that will give you good results.

Apple computers have a similar free programme, iMovie.

Editing is relatively simple, but will take some time. Both free editing programmes have Help sections to learn how to use them.

Photos (including a fixed photo point)

We need a photo of the planting site from a 'fixed photo point'.

This is a position overlooking the planting site that you will go back to each year. Take a photo before you start crowdfunding, then again after you plant, and once a year for five years. Million Metres will use these to update your donors with progress on the planting.

Photos help to engage your audience and tell your story. They help the Million Metres team to promote your project.

Take lots of photos of your site and your project in progress. Share these with Million Metres and use them in your social media and email updates.

Do your best to provide good quality images at a reasonable resolution. For example, files sizes of 2-5MB per photo.

Thank you note and thank you photo

Your donors will automatically receive a receipt and thank you note when they donate on the website.

You will need to provide Million Metres with a personalised thank you note and photo.

Your thank you photo should include people involved in the project. Remember to look happy, motivated and excited. Get everyone together and smiling.

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a black jacket, is holding a small plant with green leaves and yellow flowers. The plant is in a dark pot. The background is a blurred green landscape. A large white number '03' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

03

**PROMOTING
YOUR
CROWDFUNDING
CAMPAIGN**

03 | PROMOTING YOUR CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

During the campaign everyone on your team should be looking for opportunities to spread the word about your project.

Don't be shy about telling people about your project and asking for a donation.

The people who support your project want to donate. They want New Zealand's waterways to be restored and protected. Being generous makes people feel good!

Only ask for money once – in your video. Then focus on getting people to visit your project page. Minimise asking for money each time you make a Facebook post or send an email.

Your project will directly benefit the public good.

The funds will protect and enhance New Zealand's ecosystems for all New Zealanders. When someone donates they are supporting healthy waterways for themselves and their descendants.

Four steps to promoting your campaign

1. Identify your crowd

Your network of supporters already exists!

It is all the people that you and everyone on the project team knows – your family, friends, old classmates, colleagues, teachers, acquaintances, friends on social media, local businesses, and everyone in your community.

When people like what you're doing they will donate to your project. They will tell other people about it.

Not everyone will want to give to your project. People give to projects they identify with and value. It's important not to aim too broadly with your message. Target people who are more likely to give to your project.

2. Decide how you will promote your campaign

Great crowdfunding campaigns know how to get the word out there.

Think about what media (telephone, newspaper, local radio and TV, email, social media, etc.) you will use to tell people about your project.

Use communication tools you are comfortable with. If you need to go outside your comfort zone, Million Metres can help support you with advice on ways to use new communication tools.

Social media

Social media is one of the most powerful tools for successful crowdfunding.

It's best to focus your efforts on just one or two social media channels.

First, identify which social media channel your target audience is most likely to use.

- Facebook is an effective way to share your project. It works well with photos and videos. It is popular among a wide range of ages.
- Instagram is ideal for sharing images. It is growing in popularity.
- Other social networks to consider include: Twitter, LinkedIn, Neighbourly, Pinterest, Tumblr, Google+, YouTube, and Snapchat.

ACTION

Make a list of all the people that you and your team members know. This is your first list of people to contact about your crowdfunding campaign.

Make a list of all the types of people you think might support your campaign, and why they might support it. Who are most likely to be your biggest supporters?

One group most likely to support your planting project is all the people, businesses or community groups that have some kind of connection with the stream or river.

Tips for social media

Update your friends and followers regularly but don't nag or overload them. Try a couple of posts a week and post more frequently when something exciting is happening (e.g. the opening and closing of the fundraiser, or an event).

- Experiment to see what frequency and type of post works best.
- Vary the type of posts. Use a mix of photos, videos, and text with project updates or quotes.
- Try to keep text as short as possible. Short posts tend to get much wider reach.
- Short videos are great! Upload the video directly to Facebook to get the most reach.
- Grow your network. Connect with other groups who may be interested in your project. Most community groups and businesses will have Facebook pages – look them up. Introduce yourself and share the link to your project page with them.

Email

Emailing people personally is more effective than group emails.

Million Metres will provide you with template emails that you can personalise.

Legal and privacy

Make sure you are working within the rules of the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act 2007.

Permission to email is really important. You need to personally know the recipient, or the person must have agreed that you can email them.

The option to unsubscribe must be included in your emails. If they unsubscribe, take them off your list.

Use BCC. BCC stands for 'blind carbon copy' and you can use this to email large groups of people, so that their email addresses are not exposed to each other. Enter the email addresses in the 'BCC' field instead of the 'To' field. This respects people's privacy.

Phone

Get on the phone and call people!

Tell them about your project, what you're doing, and ask them to visit your project page and consider donating to your project. Win them over with your enthusiasm and passion.

In-person networks

Tell your friends and neighbours casually as you see them day to day. Throw events and parties. Hold an open day at the planting site. Make sure to share the web address of your project page so they can donate if they wish.

Traditional media

Your local paper, regional paper, radio, magazines, television and their online outlets are all great ways to get the word out about your project.

- Be in touch with the key traditional media outlets for your area.
- Send them a media release when your fundraiser starts (Million Metres has a media release template).
- Pitch other stories related to your project, such as the personal story behind your project, or fundraising events or stunts that you will run.
- If you are planning an event at the planting site, try adding a good public relations element. Ask your Mayor, or another well-known local, to do a ceremonial tree planting. Or take a huge group 'selfie' with the local school. These images with a brief story are great for traditional media outlets and social media.
- When you send out your media release, email it to each media outlet individually with a personalised letter.
- Remember that journalists are more likely to run your story if there is a strong local news element and a good story to tell. Make sure you (or your spokesperson) are available if they have any questions.

3. Make a promotion plan

Plan how you will promote your project and who in your team will do each job.

The plan will include activities to spread the word about your project over each week of the campaign. A promotion calendar is a great way to visualise your plan. Activities to include in your plan:

- Emailing everyone on your list about supporting the project and sharing it with their networks
- Regular social media posts throughout the campaign
- Making videos or taking photos to share widely (via email and social media for example)
- Setting up social media accounts or pages for your project
- Media releases
- Asking people that might be key supporters to donate and spread the word
- Contacting groups (council, community groups, organisations and businesses) and asking them to share a link to the fundraising page with their networks
- Launch event and/or campaign closing event
- Mid-campaign fundraising stunt or event to keep up momentum
- Final week of campaign promotion. For example, a countdown stunt (e.g. photos of you with large countdown posters each day), countdown emails and updates.



Use the following worksheet to create a promotion plan for your campaign

Task / Activity		Who leads on the task?	Due date for the task	Complete (✓)
PRE-LAUNCH	• Identify your crowdfunding team • Start building a list of everyone in your network • Facebook post that the campaign is coming soon • Draft media release • Identify key businesses and organisations that might donate or spread the word • • •			
LAUNCH	• Email everyone in your network with a link to your fundraising page announcing the launch of the campaign! • Facebook posts launching the campaign (and share Million Metres' posts) • Circulate media release • Provide your key messages to people that have offered to spread the word and promote the project • • •			
MID-CAMPAIGN	• Host a mid-campaign event • Keep those emails and Facebook posts going (the work you do now will pay off at the end of the campaign) • Plan a stunt to re-energise the campaign • • •			
CAMPAIGN CLOSE	• It's all hands on deck for the end of the campaign. Make sure your whole team are reaching out to their networks! • Plan Facebook posts and emails for 1 week to go, 48 hours to go and 24 hours to go • • • • •			

4. Let everyone know about your project

Before you go live

Build interest in your project. Tell your networks about it before you launch on the website. Personally ask a number of people you think will be key supporters to donate as soon as you go live. It really helps to get a few runs on the board straight away to help build momentum early on.

Once you go live

Announce the start of the crowdfunding campaign throughout your network. Share the link to your project page and ask your network to watch and share your video.

Make social media posts about the launch of your campaign and include the link to your project page and video, and interesting photos, etc.

Keep the momentum going

Ideas to keep the momentum throughout your campaign:

- Celebrate donations. Talk about how many metres of stream planting have been funded so far and thank your supporters personally by tagging them on Facebook.
- Provide regular updates. Some update examples:
 1. Talk about a special type of bird or fish species that will benefit from the planting.
 2. Ask for a comment from a local ecologist about the planting project and likely impacts.
 3. Film a supporter doing a fundraising stunt (jumping in the river for donations) and how much money they raised for the project.
- Don't nag. Make updates like small parts of a story you are telling rather than simply asking for money. Share something interesting. Direct them to the project page. Remember, your audience will watch your progress, but might only donate in the final week of the campaign.
- Contact people individually. Individual contact makes a huge difference. If you have time, personalise your emails instead of sending one to a large group.
- The final week or two of your campaign is critical. Everyone on your team needs to be ready to help out. Call on everyone in your network and all your potential and actual supporters to donate before your campaign ends.

Ideas for updates

Update your supporters throughout your campaign.

Million Metres will provide email updates to your donors throughout the fundraiser. You can also do this yourself via social media and email, etc.

We create better updates if you can provide us with regular interesting information and photos.

You can include:

- preparation of the planting site
- ordering your plants with the nursery
- if you are growing your own plants, updating your supporters on how the plants are doing (take pictures or video and share them)
- anything interesting happening at your planting site (wildlife, facts about the waterway)
- events to promote your fundraiser (take photos or video to share)
- media attention (update your crowd every time you get any media attention)
- people who love your project (take a photo and update your crowd whenever you meet a local personality, or just someone who really loves and endorses your project)
- fundraising stunts such as a jump in the river, walk or kayak the river, etc. (take photos and video and update your crowd)
- when something goes wrong, or it's not working out, tell your crowd what has happened, and how you are going to carry on.

Make social media posts about the launch of your campaign and include the link to your project page and video, and interesting photos, etc. Updates can be written, but don't have to be. Take photos and add a short sentence to explain the update, or make a video.

You can also upload audio recordings to a service such as Soundcloud and then share with your crowd like podcasts.

Thank your supporters once you've finished

Once you've finished your campaign let everybody know how it went.

Million Metres basically takes care of this for you. Once your campaign is finished we send out a thank you email to all of your donors. Afterwards, we continue to update them on the progress of your project.

You might also want to do your own thank-you to anyone you know personally, or businesses or organisations that sponsored or gave your project in-kind support.

If you have any questions or want to be in touch, contact:

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A huge thank you to our partners and supporters:



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