
Improvement activity proposals – moderation process FAQs

1. What is moderation?

Moderation is part of our step-by-step approach to assessing and prioritising land transport programmes. These are submitted as proposals by approved organisations and the Transport Agency to be included in the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). Programmes are made up of both improvement activities and continuous programmes.

Moderation of improvement activity proposals is when a working group (made up of our planning and assessment staff with observers from external groups such as the Ministry of Transport and the Transport Special Interest Group) considers all the improvement activities across their activity classes. The group makes sure that assessments of the proposals carried out earlier in the process by our transport planning assessors have been balanced and consistent.

The working group makes sure there is the best mix of activities and considers outcomes from a local, regional and national level. It reviews each activity's assessment profile, and agrees how best to prioritise them nationally, while considering how each ranks in priority. The group also takes account of regional and Crown funding and agrees on conditions of funding, such as resolving outstanding issues from previous audits.

The working group makes final recommendations on the activities, and the funding allocated to each activity class, for our Board to consider. For information about the moderation of continuous programmes read our [Continuous Programmes Moderation FAQs \[PDF\]](#).

2. What are improvement activities and continuous programmes?

Improvement activities improve the level of service delivered to our customers by the land transport system. This may mean delivering a new service or improving an existing one. Improvements have their own activity classes: state highways, local roads, walking and cycling, public transport and regional improvements. The Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) includes two new activity classes, rapid transit and transitional rail, and the road safety promotion activity class has been expanded to include travel demand management.

Continuous programmes are core activities relating to road maintenance, public transport services, road safety promotions and the Road Policing Programme. These deliver on-going services to customers.

[Government Policy Statement on land transport \(GPS\)](#)

3. What is the Investment Assessment Framework (IAF)?

The IAF is the framework we use to assess and prioritise projects and programmes for inclusion in the NLTP. It helps our investment partners to understand how projects will be prioritised under the GPS and to consider if changes will be necessary to Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs).

In GPS 2018, the government has identified safety and access as key priorities, supported by environment and value for money priorities. We have reviewed and updated the IAF to reflect the GPS and feedback from the sector.

[Investment Assessment Framework \(IAF\) \[PDF, 1.1 MB\]](#)

4. When is moderation of improvement activity proposals?

Expected timeline for moderation of improvement activities for the 2018–21 NLTP:

IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY PROPOSALS – MODERATION 2018–21 NLTP	
June	<p>Transport Agency assessment and prioritisation of submitted improvement activity proposals.</p> <p>GPS adopted (by 30 June).</p> <p>RLTPs submitted to Transport Agency (by 30 June).</p>
July	<p>IAF adopted.</p> <p>Final assessment and prioritisation of improvement activity proposals.</p> <p>Moderation sessions begin.</p>
August	<p>Final moderation sessions completed.</p> <p>Transport Agency Board makes final decisions for improvement activities to be included in the NLTP as eligible for investment funding.</p> <p>Transport Agency Board makes final funding decisions for low cost, low risk improvement programmes* (*below \$1M cost per activity).</p>
31 August	Board adopts NLTP.
September	<p>NLTP is published.</p> <p>Notification of Board decisions for low cost, low risk improvement programmes.</p>
1 September 2018 – 30 August 2021	Transport Agency decisions are made on proposals eligible for funding during period of 2018–21 NLTP.

[Overall 2018–21 NLTP timeline](#)

5. What is the assessment and prioritisation process for improvement activity proposals?

The assessment and prioritisation process for improvement activities* (*costing over \$1M), takes place both before and after the NLTP is adopted by the Board. Initially, our investment and planning assessors review a proposal's business case, to see that it is robust and fit for purpose. In many cases, full information for the activity won't be available because the business case may be incomplete. Assessors consider the proposal using the IAF to see how much it delivers the outcomes specified in the GPS (results alignment). They consider value for money, meaning the benefits of the proposed solution relative to its cost (cost-benefit appraisal). The activity is given an assessment profile so that it can be prioritised for inclusion in the NLTP.

The proposals are moderated by a working group (see no. 1) who makes final recommendations for the Board to consider the proposal as approved for inclusion in the NLTP. This means that the activity may be considered for funding during the three year NLTP period.

The responsibility for approving activities for funding during the NLTP period depends on the level of investment being asked for. This could be the Board, our Chief Executive or a senior manager depending on what level of delegated authority they hold within the Transport Agency.

Our website has more detailed information on [assessment of improvement activities](#).

6. Do low cost, low risk improvement activities have their own assessment criteria?

Yes, low risk low cost programmes* of improvement activities (where each activity has an implementation cost of under \$1M*) are assessed under our [low cost low risk](#) assessment criteria. They are put forward for investment funding approval at the time the NLTP is adopted by the Board. If approved, funding is made available and the programmes are managed by investment partners, following certain guidelines.

If funding availability is an issue across any of the activity classes, the scale of the low cost low risk programme may be adjusted based on its priority within the activity class. The allocation will also consider the quality of supporting business cases including activity management planning documents.

7. How and when are programme owners notified of the final decision?

Before improvement activity proposals are included in final RLTPs and submitted to us by 30 June 2018, our assessors provide feedback to give activity owners an indication of the quality of proposals. During moderation, assessors may contact programme owners for more information about their proposal to help inform the final moderation process and the recommendations to our Board in August 2018.

The final NLTP is adopted on by 31 August 2018. As soon as possible after this, the Board will formally notify RTCs and approved organisations of final improvement activity proposals eligibility decisions and of decisions for low cost, low risk improvement programmes final allocations.

8. Can proposals be amended after they have been included in RLTPs?

Yes, proposals and their supporting business cases can still be reviewed and amended by programme owners after they have been included in RLTPs. For the 2018–21 NLTP, this may be necessary if they were submitted before the IAF was finalised. Our assessors consider how each proposal gives effect to the GPS, through application of the IAF.

If business cases alter sufficiently to trigger the Regional Transport Committee's (RTC) significance policy there may be a need for public consultation on the change.

While the NLTP will be adopted by 31 August, it is the first stage of a continuous three year process and new or revised proposals may be developed and considered at any stage within the NLTP period through variation of RLTPs.

Our teams will work closely with our investment partners to understand how the changes will affect their communities, and explore the opportunities the draft GPS presents in bringing forward other programmes of work for NLTP funding in 2018–21.

9. Can activities put forward for the NLTP but not approved for inclusion, be re-submitted during its three year term?

Yes, but this only happens if additional information becomes available that alters the activity's assessment profile under the IAF. In this case, an individual activity can be added to and prioritised within the NLTP during its three year term provided that:

- it is eligible for funding from the NLTF
- it is already in a RLTP
- it has been assessed under the IAF as having sufficient priority for inclusion in the NLTP in the appropriate activity class
- there is sufficient funding available in the activity class for the activity to proceed.

10. Are improvement activities that were in the 2015–18 NLTP but have not been completed, automatically re-submitted in the 2018–21 NLTP?

No, proposals are not automatically re-submitted and will need to be re-submitted in an RLTP.

11. Has the final date for RLTPs been extended this year due to the new GPS and IAF?

Yes, the RLTPs and NLTP timeframes have been extended by two months. The current 2015–18 NLTP will remain in effect until 31 August 2018.

We advised the sector of the new timelines for the RLTPs to be submitted and the adoption of the NLTP in November 2017 as follows:

2018–21 NLTP DEVELOPMENT	TIMELINE BEFORE	TIMELINE NOW
RLTPs submitted to Transport Agency	30 April 2018	30 June 2018
NLTP adopted	1 July 2018	by 31 August 2018

Find out more

You can find further information in these documents or email us: nltpl@nzta.govt.nz

- [Continuous Programmes Moderation FAQs \[PDF\]](#)
- [Investment Assessment Framework \(IAF\) \[PDF, 1.1 MB\]](#) and [FAQs \[PDF, 49 KB\]](#)
- Detailed guidance and information sheets on the [Planning and Investment Knowledge Base webpage](#)