



West Coast Tourism

Major Regional Initiative

Outcomes Evaluation Report



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Confidential

West Coast Tourism Major Regional Initiative Outcomes Evaluation Report

Prepared for West Coast Tourism Major Regional Initiative Steering Group

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Contents

Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	10
1.1. Background and evaluation focus	10
1.2. Evaluation objectives	11
1.3. Methodology	11
1.4. Evaluation team	12
1.5. Quality assurance and ethics	12
2. Results	13
2.1. Approach	13
2.2. MRI outcomes	13
2.3. Summary	17
2.4. Projects	18
2.5. Summary	30
3. Conclusion	31
3.1. Stakeholder feedback and lessons learned	32
4. Future considerations	34
References	35
Appendix A: Interview participation – fieldwork	38
Appendix B: Survey Results	39

Abbreviations

BDC	Buller District Council
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DWC	Development West Coast
DOC	Department of Conservation
GDC	Grey District Council
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MRI	Major Regional Initiative
NZTA	New Zealand Transport Agency (merged from former Transit NZ and Land Transport Safety Authority)
NZTE	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
PMT	Project Management Team
RTAG	Regional Transport Advisory Group
TNZ	Tourism New Zealand
TWC	Tourism West Coast
WDC	Westland District Council

Executive Summary

West Coast Tourism Major Regional Initiative (MRI) Steering Group has sought to independently evaluate the progress towards the MRI outcomes from the many funded projects. Given the importance of tourism to the West Coast, and New Zealand, the MRI is of strategic significance. Development West Coast (DWC) is the lead agency for the MRI. Evaluation Consult was contracted to provide this independent evaluation. The findings presented in this report are derived from the fieldwork conducted between 10 and 25 March, 2010. The fieldwork comprised of interviews with 46 key stakeholders, project personnel and community members; a survey; observations; and a document scan.

The West Coast Tourism MRI evolved into a multiple-project initiative spanning the West Coast region. The concepts and approaches underpinning this MRI were based on international best practices in tourism, i.e. destination management planning. Emphasis was placed on supporting community-initiated projects, extending tourism activities in the north of the West Coast and contributing to the planning and management of the icon destinations.

The MRI was implemented by the MRI Steering and Project Management Groups which have proved to be effective collaborative forums for stakeholders. The lead agency was DWC. Support from Tourism West Coast (TWC) has increased recently. The Department of Conservation (DOC) has made a significant contribution at strategic and operational levels, extending the project inputs and providing leadership within this MRI.

MRI outcomes

The emerging progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes demonstrates the value of this West Coast Tourism MRI being undertaken. This MRI has established effective collaborative forums for stakeholders and initiated projects which have resulted in mostly relevant project outputs. The value of these outputs will only be realised by providing ongoing support to most of these MRI projects in the short to medium term.

However, the extent of progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes, and their long-term sustainability, are at risk, given the current level of support, and lack of plans for ongoing support for some projects.

MRI projects

Overall, this evaluation found that most project stakeholders are satisfied with the relevancy and standard of the Destination Management Plans and other project outputs at this stage.

The icon destination projects have laid the foundation for coordinated development in the major destinations of the West Coast with the development of Destination Management Plans or Strategies. Additional expertise and support is required to implement these plans or strategies, otherwise the key outcomes and the value for money will not be realised. Both Shantytown and Denniston also require additional expertise with business planning and implementation to assist outcomes progress and sustainability.

The community-based (e.g. Ross Goldfields and Oparara Walkway) and review projects (e.g. Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review) are complete and are already resulting in some positive changes for their communities and areas. The current i-SITEs developments are an extension of the review projects. The smaller projects (e.g. Ecotourism and Birding) are expanding and appear to be self-sustaining.

Key findings

- Implementation of projects evolved and key lessons were learned.

Overall, stakeholders were satisfied with the key project outputs from 21 projects spanning from Haast to Karamea. Appropriate interventions were undertaken by DWC and project personnel when challenges were encountered during implementation. Some key lessons were learned by the Steering Group, particularly in relation to community consultation, involvement of key stakeholders, use and management of external consultants, and the importance of follow-through from the MRI.

- The MRI Steering Group and Project Management Team are effective collaborative mechanisms for stakeholder communication and planning.

Key relationships are being developed between stakeholders, resulting in improved project outputs and emerging outcomes. Stakeholders consider that these forums and DWC's support provide the "glue" for collaborative tourism planning on the West Coast. DOC is making a significant contribution to the positive MRI results at both the strategic and project levels.

- Some MRI outcome progress is emerging, including:

- Increased economic benefits (e.g. Oparara, i-SITEs, Ross Goldfields)
- Strengthened West Coast tourism brand (e.g. Denniston, Oparara, Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review/i-SITE network)
- Increased promotion of underdeveloped tourism attractions (e.g. Denniston, Ross Goldfields, Oparara, Ecotourism and Ornithology)
- Increased product development/expansion initiatives (e.g. Buller District Destination Marketing Strategy, incorporating Buller Promotions Association's contribution)
- Increased alignment of workforce development to (tourism-strategic) objectives (e.g. Glaciers, Ross Goldfields, Mountain Bike Franz Josef)
- Increased growth of partnerships with industry, local, Māori and central government (e.g. Oparara, Old Ghost Road)
- Input into the increased effectiveness of the working relationship between West Coast key stakeholders (e.g. i-SITE network DOC information centres, NZ Transport Agency, councils (emerging))
- Increased support to existing businesses to expand and improve profitability (e.g. Ross Goldfields, Oparara, Shantytown, Mountain Bike Franz Josef)
- Increased business assistance for well-advanced projects (e.g. Denniston, Oparara)
- Increased information management technology (creative inputs and heritage) (e.g. Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review/i-SITE network)

- Regional Tourism Office – stakeholders commented that the effectiveness of Tourism West Coast as a destination marketing organisation is increasing. However, additional support and resources are required to continue and extend progress (i.e. leading the development of a West Coast Tourism Strategy).
- Increased collaborative planning for growth in emerging destinations (e.g. Denniston, Naming of the Highway, Old Ghost Road, Signage Strategy).
- Some MRI outcomes are showing limited progress and need support, including:
 - Increased cooperation with Māori tourism organisations. There appears to be limited involvement at project level with Ngāi Tahu, but there are some emerging business ventures being planned with Rūnanga.
 - Improved business practice and performance (e.g. Shantytown, Haast World Heritage Area, Punakaiki).
- Current level of project support is a significant risk to the extent and sustainability of MRI outcomes. Additional targeted support is required by the MRI Steering Group and DWC in order to ensure that implementation, value for money and sustainability of projects are achieved. Support (i.e. communication, marketing and project implementation) is strongly requested by stakeholders for the Destination Management Plan (DMP) projects as these plans contain multiple recommendations with implications for stakeholders.
- Project action groups are required to assist with the implementation (and sustainability) of the Destination Management Plans. Shantytown and Denniston projects also require specialised business expertise.
- Recommend the continuation of the roles and responsibilities of the MRI Steering Group and DWC. Ongoing support from DWC with regard to tourism development is considered to be critical by stakeholders. This will assist with the sustainability of the collaborative forums and the full realisation of economic benefits from the MRI projects. The forums and selected projects provide an effective mechanism for DWC to make a significant contribution to West Coast tourism development, enabling increased opportunities for jobs and improved economic benefits for West Coast communities.
- Stakeholders report more support and funding is required for TWC to enable its development into a lead tourism agency. Currently, the West Coast tourism strategy is the Regional Tourism Organisation's (TWC) strategic plan which outlines the planning, coordination, and implementation of West Coast tourism development.

- Since the disestablishment of Venture West Coast there has been no regional development agency on the West Coast. DWC undertook the role as the lead agency for the MRI. DWC agreed to take on the responsibility to facilitate the management of the MRI projects in conjunction with the MRI Steering Group and Project Management Team; and to administer the projects through to completion or until another regional development agency was in place. Tourism support is not DWC's core business; and it has limited capacity for the role. The need for on-going "DWC support" (often referred to in this report) must be read in context of which entity might best be suited for the role in the future. There is also the need for DWC to always meet its objectives under its trust deed.

There are several important key considerations for stakeholders to action, which will assist this MRI to complete its intended pathway. These actions will assist with realising the value for money from projects and extend the economic benefits for communities, the West Coast region and New Zealand.



West Coast coastline near Greymouth. A map of the West Coast region. A view of the Punakaiki coastline.

Recommended action points

It is highly recommended that these action points be given serious consideration by the MRI Steering Group and DWC Board.

1. **Identification of projects requiring project action groups to assist with implementing recommendations.** Projects identified during the evaluation as requiring additional support include Glaciers, Haast, Punakaiki, Moana, Shantytown and Denniston. This will involve meeting with communities to discuss the status of projects and confirm the next steps. Additional expertise, combined with DWC support, is required for this role.
2. **Provision of specialised business expertise and support (financial and marketing) to Denniston and Shantytown is recommended.** Both projects require assistance with business modelling. The evaluation team considers that further funds provided to Shantytown are at risk until there is a sustainable business model in place.
3. **Confirmation of ongoing commitment of DWC to facilitate the MRI projects until their handover to an agency and/or their respective communities.** It is suggested that the MRI Steering and Project Management Group, district councils and communities are kept informed by the DWC Board on how this will be actioned e.g. development of a new structure and mandate for the MRI Steering and Project Management Group. This option should be discussed with key stakeholders.
4. **Addressing of resourcing for TWC.** The funding is currently inadequate for the role required, given the strategic importance of the region for tourism and for the economy of New Zealand.
5. **Further development of the Regional Tourism Organisation's tourism strategy for the West Coast region.** With additional funding, this should be coordinated by TWC.
6. **Improvement of monitoring and reporting of projects.** With clarification of key outcomes at the higher and projects levels, the progress monitoring and reporting could be enhanced. This will enable tailored support to be provided to projects when required.

This West Coast Tourism MRI has laid the building blocks for ongoing collaborative planning and project management. The MRI Steering and Project Management Groups are effective forums for key stakeholders to coordinate plans and develop projects. These groups enable the development and implementation of projects that improve the economic benefits and lives of West Coast communities. It is important that these groups are retained and evolve with a new mandate and structure.

The role of DWC as a lead agency is highly valued by key stakeholders and is seen as critical to ensure the continuation of these groups and development projects; or alternatively, another entity is set up to facilitate this type of development. The emerging outcomes from this MRI are directly aligned to the DWC goal of contributing towards improving the economic benefits for West Coast communities. In addition, with an increased role for TWC and the ongoing support of key stakeholders, the economic benefits from tourism and other associated activities will continue to grow for the West Coast region and New Zealand.

1. Introduction

The West Coast Tourism Major Regional Initiative (MRI) Steering Group has sought to independently evaluate the progress towards the MRI outcomes from the many funded projects. Given the importance of tourism to the West Coast and New Zealand, the MRI is of strategic significance. Development West Coast (DWC) is the lead agency for the MRI.

Evaluation Consult was contracted to provide this independent evaluation. The aim of this external evaluation is to inform regional stakeholders, such as Tourism West Coast (TWC), Department of Conservation (DOC), Ngāi Tahu, local district councils, and other funding partners, on outcomes progress. This evaluation will assist with internal accountability and will be used for planning purposes. It is also intended that this evaluation will enhance the ability of DWC to leverage public/private funding for additional tourism business and infrastructure development.

The audience for this evaluation includes DWC, Ngāi Tahu, local councils, DOC, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), Ministry of Economic Development (MED), Ministry of Tourism, stakeholder funders (i.e. Solid Energy, Holcim), and stakeholder project groups (i.e. Oparara Valley Trust, Denniston Trust and Ross Goldfields Information & Heritage Centre Inc).

1.1. Background and evaluation focus

The focus for this outcomes evaluation is the West Coast Tourism MRI, which commenced in 2006 and concluded in June 2010. The MRI projects were designed to enhance the West Coast's national and international competitiveness as a visitor destination. Under this initiative, many projects were implemented throughout the West Coast. The 21 projects covered in this evaluation fit into a range of categories, including pan-regional, icons, facilities, product development and some others. Project funds were received from NZTE, DWC and DOC, with contributions from local groups and organisations.

An MRI Steering Group, consisting of key stakeholders (and extended to include district councils), has overseen the direction and management of the MRI. A project management group was responsible for overseeing the progress of the projects. DWC personnel were responsible for coordination, contracting consultants and providing business advice to projects on behalf of the MRI Steering Group.

Many of the projects were started in association with community organisations (e.g. Oparara Valley Trust, Ross Goldfields Information and Heritage Centre) and others were identified by MRI management and governance personnel. Other projects were planned to contribute to the development of tourism and other commercial opportunities. The projects were all intended to contribute to the MRI outcomes (e.g. sustainable tourism) in key tourism areas/destinations, including the Glaciers and Punakaiki. The icon destinations had multi-staged projects aimed at managing sustainable growth.

1.2. Evaluation objectives

This evaluation has three objectives:

1. **Process-related:** to describe the implementation of 21 MRI projects.
2. **Outcome-related:** to assess the progress from multiple projects towards the MRI outcomes.
3. **Lessons learned:** to document lessons learned.

This evaluation did not include research on the implementation of the uncompleted MRI projects.

1.3. Methodology

This outcomes evaluation used Rapid Evaluation and Assessment Methods (REAM)¹, which included a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The method components of this outcomes evaluation included:

1. **Development of a visual draft outcomes framework².** Outcomes information from background documents was used to draft an MRI outcomes framework prior to the evaluation team arriving to undertake the fieldwork. This approach assisted in the identification of the key outcomes to be the focus of the evaluation. The outcomes framework has been given to DWC to use in ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities.
2. **Stakeholder outcomes workshop.** A workshop was held to discuss and confirm key outcomes at the MRI portfolio level.
3. **Interviews.** Thirty-five group or individual interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders (either face-to-face or by telephone) to discuss progress, key outcomes, successes and issues.
4. **Data and document scan.** Existing data and documents were scanned for outcomes information.
5. **Short survey.** There were 43 responses from a 10-question survey completed by key stakeholders.

Table 1 (over page) shows the links between the evaluation objectives and research methods.

The following limitations are noted for this evaluation:

- Research on the implementation of the uncompleted MRI projects was not included due to time constraints.
- Research on the private investment stakeholders (i.e. Holcim, Solid Energy) was not included due to budget and time constraints.

¹ Mc Nall, M. 2007. Methods of Rapid Evaluation, assessment and appraisal. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 28(2), 2007, pp. 151–168.

² Using an outcome framework in evaluation is recommended good practice. Refer to State Services Commission and The Treasury. 2008. *Performance Measurement*, pp. 31–36.

Table 1. MRI outcomes evaluation objectives and associated evaluation activities.

Evaluation objectives	Information objectives	Evaluation activities							
		Development of MRI/WCDS outcome framework	Key informant interviews	Stakeholder outcomes workshop	Data and document scan	Interviews with project personnel	Short survey	Community interviews	Analysis
7. Process related: To describe the implementation of MRI projects.	Set up for the projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Implementation of the projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Outcome-related: To assess the progress towards outcomes from MRI projects.	Intended project outputs and outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Progress towards outputs and outcomes		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Lessons learned	Project set up, implementation and outcome progress		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Key	Information or data source ✓								

1.4. Evaluation team

The evaluation team consisted of two experienced evaluators with project management support. The evaluation team members and their roles were:

Kate Averill (Director, Evaluation Consult) led the evaluation and was involved in all aspects.

Michelle Simpson-Edwards (Director, Simpson-Edwards & Associates) was involved in all aspects of the evaluation.

Paula Smith (Evaluation Consult) was involved in all aspects of the project management for the evaluation.

Jan Hains (Consultant) was involved with reporting.

1.5. Quality assurance and ethics

Kate and Michelle belong to the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES). Kate is also a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) and the American Evaluation Society. Michelle is also a member of the New Zealand Market Research Society. They adhere to the codes of practice of these associations. All aspects of the evaluation were subject to internal peer review.

2. Results

This section of the report presents the key progress towards MRI outcomes as identified by this evaluation. The MRI outcomes were evaluated and reported at the following two levels:

1. MRI tourism outcomes – including MRI building block and higher-level tourism outcomes.
2. MRI project-level outcomes – including project-specific outputs and outcomes.

2.1. Approach

As a first step in this evaluation, a document scan of existing MRI and tourism outputs and outcomes was conducted. The scan identified that an MRI outcome framework had not previously been developed, and that there had been some inconsistency with identifying key outcomes and MRI progress.

In light of this, an MRI outcomes framework (refer Figure 1) was drafted by the evaluation team in order to document outcomes progress. Going forward, we recommend that this draft MRI outcomes framework be further discussed with stakeholders and a more robust project monitoring system be put in place in order to be able to systematically collate outcomes progress from projects in the future.

2.2. MRI outcomes

It was intended that the West Coast Tourism MRI projects would contribute towards a range of building block MRI outcomes leading to enhanced West Coast tourism outcomes. Another less well articulated intention was to increase the level of tourist activities in the north of the West Coast and extend tourist stays on the West Coast as a way of increasing economic benefits for communities.

This evaluation found that the communication of the intention to focus on the northern area for MRI projects, the implementation of community consultation processes and the inclusion of stakeholders (particularly district councils) varied during this MRI.

The progress towards the MRI tourism outcomes is highlighted in the diagrammatic outcomes framework (Figure 1, over page). Outcomes showing progress, and those where the evaluation found the MRI had contributed towards this, are highlighted green. Outcomes showing limited progress, and those where some concerns were noted by stakeholders, are highlighted orange. Outcomes where no evidence was available, or where no change was evident, are not shaded.

The next table (Table 2) provides a summary of the MRI outcomes (as identified in the outcomes framework) and evidence gathered from this evaluation of progress made towards each outcome.

Figure 1. MRI and tourism outcomes framework – displaying progress based on evaluation findings.

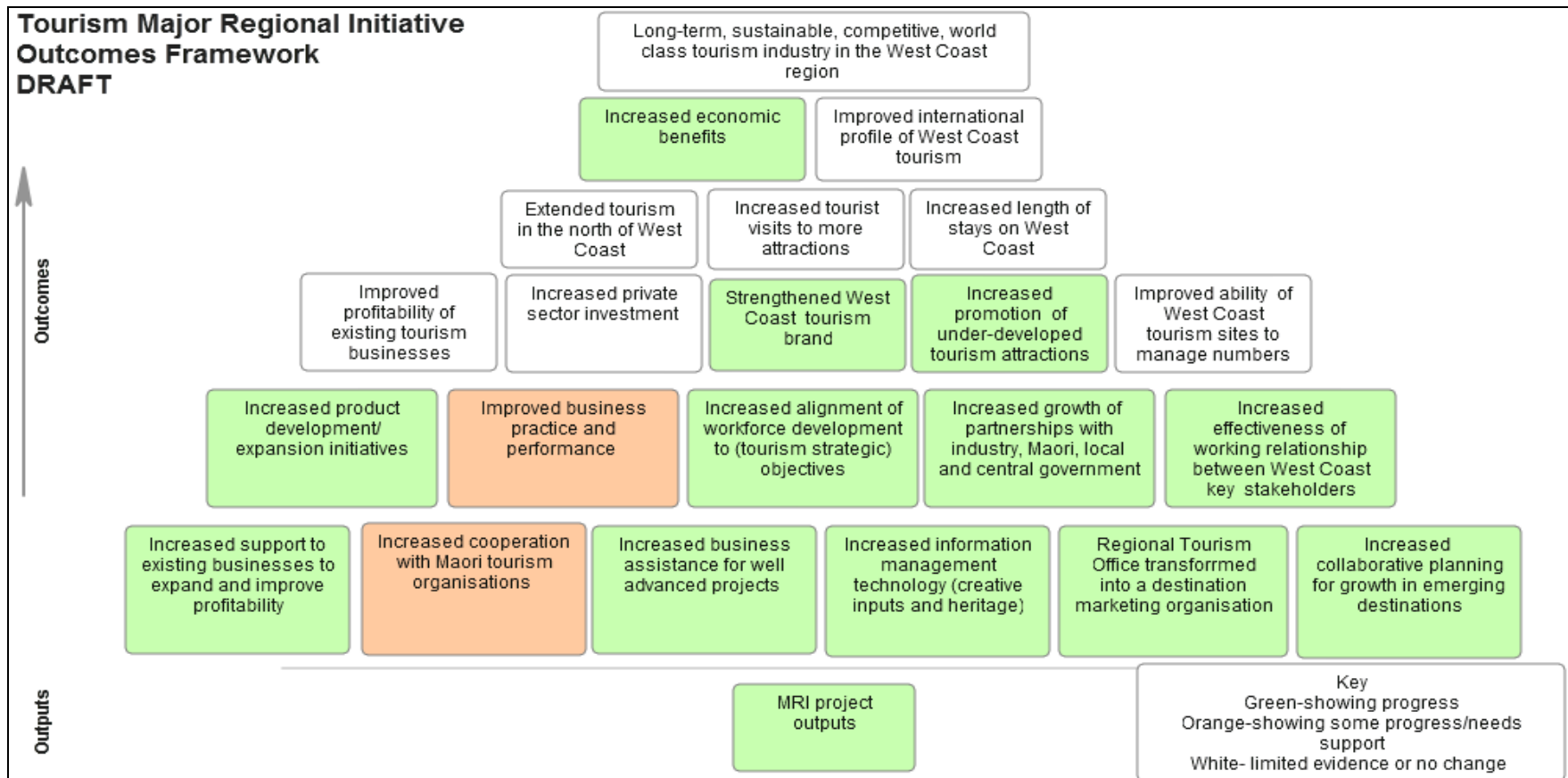


Table 2. Summary of progress towards MRI and tourism outcomes.

Outcomes (from outcomes framework)	Evidence
Increased support to existing businesses to expand and improve profitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (75%) reported the MRI has provided an increase in the support to existing businesses, or there had been some progress towards this, e.g. Ross Goldfields, while one in five (19%) reported this was not the case. ■ Some participants commented on how the support received provided direction/ catalyst for going forward, e.g. Denniston. Conversely, some stakeholders raised concerns regarding the business advice and support received from DWC. ■ Others reported using the documents/reports as a platform for further development.
Increased cooperation with Māori tourism organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Only one in five participants (21%) reported the MRI has increased cooperation with Māori tourism organisations, while the remainder (79%) reported this was not the case or were unsure.
Increased business assistance for well-advanced projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two out of three participants (65%) reported the MRI has increased business assistance for well-advanced projects, e.g. Oparara, while the remainder (35%) reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Some participants commented on how the business assistance enabled some projects to "get across the line". Others commented on the value of the overall support provided to tourism operators.
Increased information management technology (creative inputs and heritage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three out of five participants (61%) reported the MRI has increased investment in, and use of, information management technology while the remainder (41%) reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Increased investment in IT was clearly evident in the regional visitor strategy i-SITESproject.
Regional Tourism Office transformed into a destination marketing organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Half of all participants (54%) reported the MRI had contributed towards the transformation of Tourism West Coast into a destination marketing organisation. One in three (37%) were unsure.
Increased collaborative planning for growth in emerging destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (77%) reported the MRI has increased collaborative planning for growth in emerging destinations, e.g. Denniston, while the remainder (23%) reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Many participants described collaborative planning activities as annual meetings, regular planning meetings, and the coordination of several projects. ■ Other participants commented on the strength of council support, greater collaboration with councils, the support provided by DWC, and a strong community partnership with DOC. ■ Some participants also commented on the strengthened relationship with Tourism West Coast.
Increased product development/expansion initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (79%) reported the MRI had increased product development/expansion initiatives, e.g. Ecotourism and Ornithology/Bird Watching, or there had been some progress towards these, while the remainder (21%) reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Many participants commented that the MRI process had identified and provided the catalyst for further development.
Improved business practice and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two out of three participants (65%) reported the MRI has resulted in improved business practices and performance, or some progress towards these had been made, while one in three (35%) reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Some participants described a significant change in staff attitudes and employees becoming more commercially focused. This was particularly the case for i-SITES. ■ Others commented on training sessions being conducted, the development of new skills, and the upskilling of their workforce.

Outcomes (from outcomes framework)	Evidence
Increased alignment of workforce development to (tourism-strategic) objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two out of three participants (65%) reported the MRI has assisted in increasing alignment or achievement of workforce development objectives, while the remaining one in three (35%) reported this was not the case or were unsure.
Increased growth of partnerships with industry, local, Māori and central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (86%) reported the MRI has increased the growth of partnerships with industry, Māori, local and central government, or there had been some progress towards this, e.g. Denniston. Only 14% reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Evidence of growth in partnerships was the achievement of political buy-in, and councils working well together to achieve something strong. ■ Some participants also commented on achieving effective working relationships across most organisations.
Increased effectiveness of working relationship between West Coast key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (88%) reported the MRI has increased the effectiveness of working relationships between West Coast key stakeholders, e.g. DOC, NZ Transport Agency, district councils. Only 12% reported this was not the case. ■ Many participants described greater effective working relationships as having closer relationships with other stakeholders, working together as a team, increased level of community enthusiasm, and an improved level of communication per se. ■ Some participants commented on the MRI being a catalyst for bringing people and communities together and forging relationships, e.g. Denniston. ■ Some also commented on the development of more effective working relationships between district councils.
Improved profitability of existing tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More than half of the participants (56%) reported the MRI has resulted in an improvement of the level of profitability of some of the existing tourism businesses, while one in three (30%) reported this was not the case, and a further 14% were unsure.
Increased private sector investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants' opinions were polarised regarding whether or not the MRI has had the effect of increasing private sector investment. Half (49%) reported this was increased, or some progress was made, while 23% reported no progress had been made, and a further 28% were unsure. ■ Some participants commented on an increased ability to attract, and obtain, investors and contractors. ■ Some also commented on the level of DOC's investment (e.g. DOC's investment in Denniston etc.), and investment provided by Solid Energy. ■ Conversely, one participant commented that there had been zero public investment.
Strengthened West Coast tourism brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (74%) reported the MRI had achieved some progress in strengthening the West Coast tourism brand, while the remaining 25% reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Many participants commented on now having a more coherent view, and a coast-wide or regional approach to tourism. ■ Some participants also commented on how the knowledge and perceptions of tourists about the West Coast were starting to change.
Increased promotion of under-developed tourism attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most participants (72%) reported the MRI has increased promotion of under-developed tourism attractions, or some progress had been made towards this, e.g. Denniston, Ross Goldfields. The remaining 38% reported this was not the case or were unsure. ■ Many participants commented on seeing evidence of a greater regional approach to marketing. ■ Some participants commented on how the MRI had increased their knowledge and understanding of marketing and has led to a greater awareness of the role of media.
Improved ability of West Coast tourism sites to manage numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants' opinions were polarised about whether or not the MRI had contributed to an improved ability of West Coast tourism sites to manage increased tourist numbers. Only one in five (21%) reported this had been achieved, and a further one in three (35%) reported some progress had been made towards this. A further 21% reported no progress had been made in this regard, and the remainder (23%) were unsure.

Outcomes (from outcomes framework)	Evidence
Extended tourism in the north of West Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More than half of participants (56%) reported the MRI has increased tourism in the north of the West Coast, e.g. Oparara, while 14% reported this was not the case. A further 30% were unsure whether or not any progress had been made. ■ Some participants reported that tourists were now demonstrating a greater awareness/knowledge of activities in the north of the West Coast. ■ Some reported the level of bookings for hotels/motels is higher. ■ Other respondents commented on visitor numbers being steady.
Increased tourist visits to more attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More than half (58%) reported the MRI had achieved increased tourist visits to more attractions, while the remaining 42% reported this was not the case or were unsure.
Increased length of stay on the West Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants' opinions were also polarised about whether or not the MRI had resulted in an increase in the length of stay on the West Coast. Slightly less than half (47%) reported this had been achieved, or some progress has been made towards this, while the remainder (53%) reported this was not the case or were unsure.
Increased economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two-thirds of participants (68%) reported the MRI has increased the economic benefits to their area, e.g. i-SITES, Ross Goldfields and Oparara while one in four (26%) reported this was not the case. ■ Some participants reported an increase in the level of takings/turnover ranging between 25 and 60 per cent.
Improved international profile of West Coast tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two-thirds of participants (68%) also reported the MRI has achieved an improvement of the international profile of West Coast tourism, while a further one in four (26%) reported this was not the case.

2.3. Summary


The emerging progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes demonstrates the value of this West Coast Tourism MRI being undertaken. This MRI has established effective collaborative forums for stakeholders and initiated projects which have resulted in mostly relevant project outputs. The value of these outputs will only be realised by providing ongoing support to most of these MRI projects in the short to medium term.

However, the extent of progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes, and their long-term sustainability, are at risk, given the current level of support and lack of plans for ongoing support for some projects.

2.4. Projects

A results chain approach was used to establish the results for the multiple MRI projects. This included identifying the project inputs³, outputs (products or services) and outcomes (changes). The recommended next steps for projects are highlighted. The following project summary tables cover twenty MRI projects⁴.

Buller Promotions Association; and Buller District Destination Marketing Strategy

<p>Before the development of the Buller District Visitor Strategy, the focus was more on potential rather than on performance. Now the focus is on both.</p> <p>The Buller District Council has just imposed a promotion and development rate on ratepayers to fund an employee to implement the Buller District Destination Marketing plan.</p> <p>There is a real sense of keenness to move the district forward and to improve relationships throughout the region.</p>		
Area	Progress	
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DWC \$20,000: Final. Buller Promotions Association received the funds to produce and action the Visitor Strategy 2006-2011. ■ DWC \$3,594.09; NZTE \$10,782.26: Final. Buller District Destination Marketing Strategy 2009-2015 ■ 5-year Visitor Strategy identified. ■ 18-month employment of visitor strategy officer achieved. ■ Marketing of new facilities and presentations/road shows were undertaken. 	
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quality Tourism Development (2006). <i>Buller District Visitor Strategy 2006–2011</i>. ■ Quality Tourism Development (2009). <i>Buller District Destination Marketing Strategy 2009–2015</i>. ■ An updated tourist operators' database and promotional DVD have been produced. ■ The website was refreshed and content updated. ■ The Destination Marketing Strategy is building on the Visitor Strategy incorporating activities already underway in the Visitor Strategy. 	
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A permanent position is now established to implement the Destination Marketing Strategy. ■ The knowledge/perception of the West Coast is starting to change to an awareness of a regional feel and identity. ■ Tourists now have increased product knowledge, the level of hotels/motels bookings is higher and tourists can book a whole holiday before leaving home. ■ Event tourism is emerging as a visitor attraction. 	
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is important that the delivery of the unique identity of the district continues. This should be supported by a marketing toolkit for operators that helps overcome barriers and misconceptions, and positively promotes the region. ■ It is recommended that the marketing of key attractions is supported along with strategies to sustain them, e.g. Oparara and Denniston. ■ It would be a positive move to create new experiences and events that will appeal to niche markets and provide visitors with more reasons to visit. 	

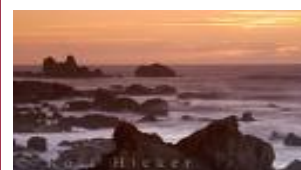
³ Financial source: DWC financial accounts produced as at 31 January, 2010.

⁴ There is no summary table for the Heaphy Track Survey due to insufficient information.

Cape Foulwind

Cape Foulwind is a unique destination and home to a fur seal breeding colony. This was reason enough to carry out a study to identify possible commercial possibilities.

However, the many opportunities put forward in the consultants' report have not been followed through.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWC \$3,100; NZTE \$9,300: Final. DOC financial involvement. Consultants engaged; and community consultation undertaken.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Resource Consultants (2008). <i>Cape Foulwind Commercial Tourism Opportunities: Final Report</i>.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some stakeholders now have an awareness of the potential to develop initiatives.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions should be reached on future development of potential opportunities (outlined in report), with appropriate meetings with community and stakeholders. Follow-through is suggested on increased private sector investment, e.g. gift of wetland and walkway by Holcim.

Denniston

Denniston is emerging as a jewel in the MRI portfolio of projects.

There is strong community support and stakeholders are working well together, resulting in the site nearing physical completion. Future challenges relate to the appointment of a manager/contractor and the development of regulatory procedures.

There is major interest in this addition of a heritage attraction to West Coast regional tourism.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWC \$135,385.21; NZTE \$40,368.20 (project ongoing). Commitment and financial involvement of DOC, Solid Energy, DWC, Buller District Council; community funding (Department of Internal Affairs). Marketing consultant involved in concept development.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car park, underground stabilisation and infrastructural development are underway. UK, USA overseas trip to assess heritage tourist sites was undertaken. Quality Tourism Development (2008). <i>Denniston Issues and Options Report</i>. Wright, L. (2008). <i>Denniston Heritage Management Plan</i>.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buller District and DOC are working well together; and there is strong community support. Tour companies are indicating interest. Solid Energy is involved, resulting in the ability to attract investors, contractors etc. Denniston is bringing heritage to life on the West Coast. The focus and momentum of Denniston projects have not been lost. DOC is the catalyst for going forward.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of the employment of a business manager for Denniston is important. It is recommended that DWC support the business/marketing operation. Regulatory procedures (Historical Places Act, council regulations, etc.) should be considered.

Ecotourism and Ornithology/Bird Watching

The Tai Poutini Polytechnic has been established as a centre of excellence in ecotourism. Three annual conferences have been held with international speakers.

Bird watching and birding tour operators, in the region just north of Franz Josef, have worked together to establish a birding website linked to the NZ Birding website, giving access to national and international operators.

Links with other regional birding areas are developing in order to create a West Coast experience.



Area	Progress Ecotourism	Progress Ornithology/Birding
Inputs	DWC \$14,235.01; NZTE \$42,704.94.	
	Ecotourism	Ornithology/bird watching
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centre of excellence in ecotourism at Tai Poutini Polytechnic proposed. ▪ Partnership with DOC developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular meetings with consultants held. ▪ Project manager appointed. ▪ Research/content for bird directory provided by DOC. ▪ Partnership approach developed by local operators.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing funding established. ▪ Database of ecotourism operators achieved. ▪ Distance learning option established. ▪ Ecotourism NZ brand developed. ▪ Annual conferences with international speakers and industry presence held. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing plan completed with input from consultant. ▪ Brand developed and implemented. ▪ Website developed and launched. ▪ IT training given to volunteer website coordinator to provide ongoing input of content.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attraction of international students is being achieved. ▪ Initiation of partnerships between providers is being taken seriously by the sector. ▪ An effective relationship with community and tourist operators is being achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional operators are beginning to join the network. ▪ Promotion of brand/marketing is being achieved through collaborative relationships with operators. ▪ Businesses are achieving credibility through links on the website.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patience will be an advantage when establishing credibility of the centre and the brand. ▪ Support is recommended for conference administration. ▪ Support from outside the Polytechnic should be built on and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International marketing/promotion is suggested via British Bird Fair. ▪ Assistance is recommended with marketing strategies and ongoing resources for website management. ▪ Group meetings are important to maintain positive working relationships.

Glaciers

Key relationships are being built within the business community by those keen to progress and improve the infrastructure and resources in the area. The MRI support produced a Destination Management Plan (DMP) but resources to implement the plan have not been made available.

The incentive and motivation to improve the region has resulted in the establishment of the Franz Josef Development Society Incorporated.

However, although the will to succeed is certainly evident, real advances will only be made with additional support.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DWC \$55,934.99; NZTE \$99,748.83: Final. ■ Consultants' meetings with business owners. ■ Community meetings; brain storming ideas and presentation of initiatives.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tourism Resource Consultants in association with Boffa Miskell (2007). <i>Glacier Country – Issues and Options for Product Development and Growth: Report.</i> ■ Tourism Resource Consultants in association with Boffa Miskell and Quality Tourism Development Ltd (2009). <i>Glacier Country – Destination Management Plan.</i>
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Franz Josef Development Society Incorporated (Franz Inc) has been working with the business community to improve the infrastructure and resources in the area. ■ Key actions in the DMP have been initiated independently of MRI funding through collaborative business relationships, e.g. construction of a childcare facility. ■ Franz Inc has completed a survey of staff housing.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is suggested that the lead agencies provide more support and invest funds to progress DMP actions complementing the initiatives of Franz Inc. ■ A development plan to enhance the town centre would be a positive step forward. Westland District Council has passed a resolution to support this. ■ The community would benefit by the appointment of an upskilled, paid, full-time person to coordinate and implement actions/initiatives.

Haast World Heritage Area

Haast offers almost entirely nature-based tourism comprising four National Parks, with many natural breathtaking attractions from the mountains to the sea.

Key stakeholders in the region express disappointment when commenting on the lack of progress of the Tourism Development Strategy, which the community endorses.

There hasn't been any significant progress on any of the major priorities as listed in the most recent report. Survey comment (2010).



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWC \$21,776.18; NZTE \$65,328.45: Final. Community meetings held. Consultants developed an understanding of community and its stakeholders.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Resource Consultants in association with Boffa Miskell (2007). <i>Southern South Westland Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area - Issues & Options Paper: Report.</i> Tourism Resource Consultants in association with Boffa Miskell (2009). <i>Southern Te Wāhipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area - Tourism Development Strategy.</i> Follow up meetings have been held but not all key stakeholders were present.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date no outcomes appear to have been realised.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that lead agencies make funds available to implement the Tourism Development Strategy priorities, e.g. infrastructural facilities upgrade. Setting up a project action group is suggested to ensure people work together to achieve the Strategy priorities.

Mountain Bike Project – Franz Josef

A winding mountain bike track through the beautiful glacial bush just north of Franz Josef is the result of the work of motivated enthusiasts of the sport.

A visitor attraction is now possible due to a local landowner's generosity in making the land available, the work of dedicated keen volunteers, and the MRI contribution.

This attraction has the potential to draw in more tourists to Franz Josef and the surrounding area.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWC \$5,000.00: Final. The concept was identified, and a club and incorporated society formed. A contract was developed for use of the land.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cycle track is nearing completion. Discussions are taking place with DOC to investigate management contracts for further sections of land.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are further opportunities for development. The project is being achieved on a small budget. There is interest from a sports magazine and ideas for expansion of uses for the track, e.g. people are already using it as a walking track.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be an advantage to develop a marketing strategy to find ways to promote and increase awareness of the attraction regionally/nationally and achieve more community involvement. The initiation of the various ideas to raise additional funds within the community is encouraged.

Naming of the Highway

The West Coast highway is rated by *Lonely Planet* as one of the top 10 scenic drives in the world.

The naming of this special highway has emerged as an outcome from several of the MRI projects and has been developed as a competition, managed by TWC.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project is ongoing and no funds have been utilised (at time of writing). ▪ TWC is directly involved in the project and it is recognised as not resource intensive. ▪ The project was listed as an outcome in several of the MRI projects.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress on the naming of the highway through the development of a competition. ▪ TWC is engaged and working through the process.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is interest from the NZ Transport Agency. ▪ No other outcomes have been accomplished as project is incomplete.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It will be important to work and communicate with all agencies throughout the regions to obtain agreement by all.

Moana

Moana is keen to market itself as a visitor destination.

The strong local community association feels disappointed at the lack of support being received in response to the strategic review.

They recognise DOC's contribution; and that of the Grey District Council (GDC) for resources to start upgrading the lake foreshore.

The association is eager to progress and invites GDC and DOC to meetings.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$8,000; NZTE \$2,000: Final. ▪ Meetings were held. ▪ Consultants visited and interviewed community members/key stakeholders.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walking tracks were constructed by DOC. ▪ Insights Consultancy (2007). <i>Moana: A Strategic Review of Tourism Potential and Constraints</i>. ▪ Project Management Team (PMT) Responses to Report Recommendations – a paper.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The community is working together and forging relationships. ▪ There appear to be no other outcomes and community frustration is evident.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to funding would improve facilities in the foreshore, jetty and picnic areas. ▪ A positive step forward would be to hold a forum. ▪ This would bring all parties together, encourage a re-look at DWC's feedback and facilitate the development of a marketing strategy with a regional approach. ▪ It is suggested that consideration be given to the business opportunities for Lake Brunner identified in the Tracks and Water Tourism Development and Enterprise document prepared by Tourism Resource Consultants.

Old Ghost Road: Mountain Bike Project – Buller

The Mokihinui-Lyell Backcountry Trust was formed by a group of interested people initially keen to build a rough-and-tumble lodge.

DOC and the Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding, after which DOC permitted the Old Ghost Road area to be cleared.

In addition to this, the Trust applied to the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism's cycle ways initiative fund. The Trust has received feasibility funding.

It is an exciting project but the cost of maintenance will be high.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$4444.44; NZTE \$4444.45: Final. ▪ DOC has contributed some funding and resourcing, and technical advice. ▪ Solid Energy is involved.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A feasibility study was completed. ▪ DOC and Mokihinui-Lyell Backcountry Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further development and links with other regional biking destinations are evident. ▪ The Old Ghost Road has the potential to be a 144km loop road if the cycleway links through to a walkway located further north. This will take in Denniston thus utilising other MRI investment.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A business case is to be prepared by 30 September 2010 for the cycle way – one of the nine National Cycle Ways as part of the Ministry of Tourism's initiative fund.

Oparara Walkway

A huge community drive by key personnel, along with support from DOC and a dedicated technical team of contractors, has produced a unique visitor experience.

The tracks have provided an opportunity for a wide cross section of ages and fitness levels to view this natural marvel at close range.

An increase in visitor numbers, both young and old, is evident.

The site is easily accessible.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$600,000; NZTE \$199,999.95; DOC \$200,000; Buller District Council \$200,000; Significant Community Based Project Fund (SCBPF) \$1,683,226 : Final. ▪ The Oparara Valley Project Trust has been involved. ▪ There was prior community participation, and the project was underway. ▪ A project manager was seconded from DOC, which also provided technical advice and a track construction team.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tracks, interpretation signage, shelter and toilet facilities are completed. ▪ Cameras are installed in the car park to monitor use. ▪ There is now a bus service to and from the track.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ability to attract tourists has improved and this is supported by the website. ▪ Training sessions have developed new skills for track workers. ▪ Cycling and triathlete events now use the track. ▪ Usage of car parking area and loop track has exceeded expectations.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is important that the community drive is sustained to maintain existing tracks and to develop the next phase.

Punakaiki

Punakaiki is the second largest tourism destination on the West Coast and is growing.


The DMP has been the catalyst for bringing together the different parties, and for achieving awareness of the various tourism opportunities that could arise if the plan is enacted.

However, it appears that at present there is no lead agency for managing the plan and this is causing uncertainty for the local community.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$89,203.87; NZTE \$53,000: Final. ▪ Consultants have produced an Issues and Options paper and a DMP. ▪ Consultation/meetings/workshops held with key stakeholders and community.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NZ Tourism Recreation Research and Education Centre, Lincoln University (2007). <i>Punakaiki Issues and Options Report</i>. ▪ DWC in association with Destination Planning Limited and Boffa Miskell Limited (2009). <i>Punakaiki & State Highway Destination Management Plan</i>. ▪ Buller District Council involvement is improving facilities/utilities. ▪ Grey District Council has accepted the DMP as a working document. ▪ Residents appear to be confused and uncertain about future development. ▪ Several agencies are involved but there is no lead role to manage the DMP. ▪ DOC is providing benefits and opportunities back to the community/business.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC and DWC have entered into a public/private partnership to advance tourism opportunities at Punakaiki, e.g. building a new visitor centre. ▪ DOC is working with the NZ Transport Agency. ▪ DMP is the catalyst for bringing the different parties together. ▪ New relationships at the right level are developing, e.g. district council, TWC, NZ Transport Agency, DOC, community. ▪ Potential social and economic contribution to communities has become evident. ▪ Buller and Grey District Councils are working together to make progress. ▪ There is a more coherent view of tourism on the coast.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that a project action group be set up, in conjunction with Buller District Council, to manage the DMP and drive it forward. ▪ Communication with the community is important to give the local residents and the wider communities confidence and to achieve their buy-in.

Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review Stage 1 and 2

<p>This project is achieving the most positive outcomes.</p> <p>Visitor centres throughout the region are becoming networked as part of the West Coast tourism i-SITE group.</p> <p>The i-SITE network is creating strengthened relationships and partnerships at all levels throughout the West Coast.</p> <p>Stakeholder support has been confirmed and this important flagship project will be a priority for uncommitted MRI funds.</p>				
Area	Progress			
Inputs	<p>Stage 1 DWC \$53,783.74; NZTE \$38,000: Final.</p> <p>Stage 2 DWC \$6,642.78; NZTE \$19,928.33 (project ongoing).</p>			
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="397 625 889 667">Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review</th> <th data-bbox="889 625 1412 667">i-SITES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="397 667 889 850"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deloitte, Destination Planning Limited (2008). <i>West Coast Visitor Centre Review</i>. ▪ Community and stakeholder consultations were held. ▪ Observations of centres throughout the region were carried out in order to identify opportunities for collaboration, synergies and investment. ▪ An analysis of domestic and international centre experience was undertaken. </td> <td data-bbox="889 667 1412 850"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review	i-SITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deloitte, Destination Planning Limited (2008). <i>West Coast Visitor Centre Review</i>. ▪ Community and stakeholder consultations were held. ▪ Observations of centres throughout the region were carried out in order to identify opportunities for collaboration, synergies and investment. ▪ An analysis of domestic and international centre experience was undertaken.
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Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To keep the momentum going, it is suggested that a coordination manager be employed to champion ongoing implementation and management of the i-SITES. ▪ It will be important to introduce and monitor staff training as required. 			

Ross Goldfields

The MRI funding complemented by the enthusiasm of the local community has changed this previously average tourist site into a professional operation. A successful partnership with DOC has resulted in making it a pleasurable experience to stroll through the historic area. The increase in visitors has seen new businesses open up and is an influence around the small township, with residents now displaying increased pride in the area.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$177,984.72; NZTE \$96,289.26 (project ongoing). ▪ There is a contract with DOC for the maintenance of the grounds. ▪ Ross Goldfields Information & Heritage Centre Inc (RGIHC) operates the Ross i-SITE. ▪ There were regular meetings, and the community identified projects and contributions of artifacts and other historical items.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A storage facility was custom built to original specifications. ▪ The i-SITE building was extended to include staff toilet and staffroom. ▪ New interpretation signage is now installed, there is a gold panning experience, and the recording of local stories has begun. ▪ A project manager is now employed.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The employment of local people has increased, complementing the strong community support. ▪ The operation is professional, with an increase in profitability through a higher level of takings and entry charges. ▪ An archives section has been established to preserve history and in response to requests. ▪ A cafe has been established nearby to service visitors to the i-SITE.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It will be important to maintain the ongoing relationships with stakeholders (DOC, DWC, Westland District Council) and the community. It would be advantageous to promote the archive section, as well as the storage and collection of products and documents.

Shantytown

Shantytown is the Grey District's largest tourist attraction. This man-made experience is struggling to maintain the success of previous decades.

Acknowledging the significant importance of this attraction to the area, substantial amounts of MRI funding, contributions from the community and from other sources have been utilised.

However, the future success of Shantytown is dependent upon the development of a workable business model, supported by a robust strategic plan. Local council backing, recognising the value of the positive economic impact on the district, is vital.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$58,701.82; NZTE \$769,986.61; Grey District Council \$200,000 (project ongoing). ▪ Strong and enthusiastic community support was evident but without the development of a solid business case. ▪ A report on the state of restoration of the collection showed that deterioration is evident. ▪ A capability analysis was carried out, covering concept design, fundraising, and the need for local investment and/or contribution. ▪ National and regional consultants have been contracted for professional services. ▪ Initial funding proposals were declined.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West Coast Historical and Society Incorporated Shantytown Redevelopment. (2009). <i>Application to Development West Coast</i>. ▪ Capability plans have been completed showing outcomes for potential sustainability. ▪ Some of the facilities and attractions are being improved.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need is recognised for local support and private sector/other investment. ▪ A review of the constitution has resulted in an improvement at governance level but the best mix of skill set has still to be realised. ▪ There are ongoing discussions with DWC, which include monthly reporting. ▪ Rigorous criteria needs to be applied when analysing project feasibility and drawing down funding.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is essential that a sustainable business model be put in place before a further significant amount of funding is allocated. ▪ Finding income-generating projects and activities to increase tourist spend would make a significant contribution.
Key challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The acknowledgement of the significant economic importance of Shantytown to the area and obtaining local council backing as a result.

Signage Strategy

The West Coast region is increasing in popularity as a visitor destination. Currently there is a tendency for signage to be inconsistent within the three council districts and this may leave visitors frustrated.

The consultant's review and strategy document on signage concentrates on achieving a fulfilling and stress-free experience for touring visitors throughout the region.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DWC \$7,943.12; NZTE \$10,718.32 (project ongoing). ▪ It applies to all state highways on the West Coast administered by NZ Transport Agency and district councils. ▪ A consultant was engaged, and workshops and discussions held in order to produce the signage strategy. ▪ Consultation with the Regional Transport Advisory Group was undertaken. ▪ NZ Transport Agency is involved.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DPL (2008). <i>West Coast Tourism Signage Review & Strategy</i>. ▪ Guidelines. (2009). <i>Regional and State Highways Tourist Signage – West Coast</i>.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A proposal, developed from the review and strategy document, aims to correct some of the deficiencies and inconsistencies present throughout the region.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is important to have the agreement from all the district councils throughout the region as currently there are three different sets of policies across the three districts. ▪ A project action group should be formed to manage the signage proposal.

Tracks and Water

The West Coast tourism opportunities created by track and water resources are varied and numerous. These are highlighted and discussed in the document referred to below.

Progressing some of the opportunities identified in this report would open up the region to another segment of tourist visitors.



Area	Progress
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tracks – Walking and Mountain Biking: DWC \$9,229.96; NZTE \$26,000.00: Final. ▪ Water – Water Activities: DWC \$15,002.22; NZTE \$8,000: Final.
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism Resource Consultants (2007). <i>Tourism Development and Enterprise Opportunities on the West Coast – associated with track and water resources</i>.
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC has completed one of the track projects, the Hokitika Gorge Short Walks. ▪ There is no other evidence of outcomes from the two projects.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is suggested that a project action group be set up to consider how to progress the five key business and six development opportunities identified in the document listed above.

2.5. Summary

Overall, this evaluation found that project stakeholders are satisfied with the relevancy and standard of the Destination Management Plans and other project outputs at this stage.

The icon destination projects have laid the foundation for coordinated development in the major destinations of the West Coast with the development of Destination Management Plans or Strategies. Additional expertise and support is required to implement these plans or strategies, otherwise the key outcomes and the value for money will not be realised. Both Shantytown and Denniston also require additional expertise with business planning and implementation to assist outcomes progress and sustainability.

The community-based (e.g. Ross Goldfields and Oparara Walkway) and review projects (e.g. Regional Visitor and DOC Centre Review) are complete and are already resulting in some positive changes for their communities and areas. The current i-SITEs developments are an extension of the review projects. The smaller projects (e.g. Ecotourism and Birding) are expanding and appear to be self-sustaining.

3. Conclusion

The West Coast Tourism MRI evolved into a multiple-project initiative spanning the West Coast region. The concepts and approaches underpinning this MRI were based on international best practices in tourism, i.e. destination management planning. Emphasis was placed on supporting community-initiated projects, extending tourism activities in the north of the West Coast, and contributing to the planning and management of the icon destinations.

The MRI was implemented by the Steering and Project Management Groups which have proved to be effective collaborative forums for stakeholders. The lead agency was Development West Coast. Support from Tourism West Coast has increased recently. The Department of Conservation has made a significant contribution at strategic and operational levels, extending the project inputs and providing leadership within this MRI.

This evaluation found that most project stakeholders are satisfied with the relevancy and standard of the Destination Management Plans and other project outputs at this stage. The emerging progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes demonstrates the value of this West Coast Tourism MRI being undertaken.

This MRI has established effective collaborative forums for stakeholders and initiated projects, which has mostly resulted in relevant project outputs. The value of these outputs will only be realised by providing ongoing support to most of these MRI projects in the short to medium term. However, the extent of progress towards the MRI and tourism outcomes, and their long-term sustainability, are at risk, given the current level and lack of ongoing planned support.

It is suggested that the MRI Steering and Project Management Group, district councils and communities are kept informed by the DWC Board on how DWC will facilitate the MRI projects until their handover to an agency and/or their respective communities. In addition, an increased level of support is required to ensure the value for money is realised from existing investments and community inputs. Stakeholders consider DWC has a critical ongoing lead agency role with tourism development and an important contribution to make towards increasing the economic benefits for West Coast communities.

It is highly recommended that the MRI Steering Group and DWC management team review project progress. The icon destination projects (Glaciers, Punakaiki, Haast, and Moana), and the Shantytown and Denniston projects require immediate additional support incorporating implementation and business performance expertise. The amount and type of expertise currently available to the MRI does not meet the requirements for these projects. The types of support that are needed include using external business expertise, with assistance from existing DWC personnel, to coordinate project action groups of relevant stakeholders (i.e. community, district councils, DOC).

Some key lessons were learned by the Steering Group, particularly in relation to community consultation, involvement of key stakeholders, use and management of external consultants and the importance of follow-through from the MRI Projects.

There are several important key considerations for stakeholders to action, which will assist this MRI to complete its intended pathway. These actions will assist with realising the value for money from projects and extend the economic benefits for communities, the West Coast region and New Zealand.

3.1. Stakeholder feedback and lessons learned

The evaluation team found that the communication of the MRI intentions, community consultation processes and the approach for stakeholder inclusion (particularly local councils) varied for stakeholders. Key lessons were learned during this MRI. However, the approaches for community consultation, communication and project follow-through are currently impacting on the outcomes' progress from projects. With additional support for some projects, the outcomes from projects will be enhanced.

Stakeholders involved in this evaluation identified the following lessons and challenges during this MRI. Due to the number of stakeholders interviewed the comments are best expressed by collating them under the following categories:

1. Project identification and set-up phase

- a. The importance of having all key partners/stakeholders involved with, and being consulted about, options for the whole region.
- b. The importance of community support in the identification and set-up of projects.
- c. The need for greater involvement of councils in projects.
- d. The need to have clear governance and vision/strategy for the initiative and projects.
- e. The importance of getting people with the right skills involved in the project.
- f. The need to invest more time at the beginning to understand community and project benefits.
- g. The importance of leadership and ongoing communication, including transparency of information to stakeholders and communities.
- h. Challenges included:
 - i. Building the capability across the region (i.e. governance, planning and project management).
 - ii. Obtaining council backing and recognition of economic impact of tourism to district.
 - iii. Achieving acknowledgement of the MRI as significant to the area.

2. Funding and stakeholder contribution

- a. The need for more consideration of sources of funding and the need for ongoing inputs.
- b. The importance of small contributions and funding, which form part of the big picture.
- c. The need for the MRI to facilitate the coordination of resources between key stakeholders.
- d. The fact that the MRI Steering Group has provided other avenues for regional cooperation.

3. Project implementation

- a. The importance of breaking projects down into smaller projects, in line with available funding.
- b. The difficulties that can arise when consultants write reports without adequate community input.
- c. The need for increased focus on the implementation phase to achieve increased efficiency.
- d. The importance of effective communication between communities, DWC and consultants.
- e. There was a view that the quality of advice from DWC was variable and insufficient at times.
- f. The need to continue to consult with people and communities during projects.
- g. The need for more administration support for projects.
- h. Challenges included:
 - i. The variability of performance of some consultants used for projects.
 - ii. The internal environment within DWC and its Board during this time.
 - iii. Dealing with parochial perspectives.
 - iv. The fact that some projects took longer than expected.
 - v. The lack of clarification at times between DWC and consultant roles.

4. Project completion and follow-through

- a. The need for adequate project follow-through plans, i.e. budget, actions groups.
- b. The need to deliver projects to completion when hopes of the community have been raised.

5. Marketing

- a. There is a need for longer-term marketing strategies for projects.
- b. Patience is required as it takes time to establish credibility and brand.
- c. There is a need to start early to obtain expressions of interest regarding marketing from commercial operators.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- a. The ability of the region to focus on achieving outcomes is variable.
- b. More monitoring and reporting on projects within districts is required.

7. Stakeholder relationships and communication

- a. The need for greater control/governance from board/groups.
- b. The importance of disclosure to stakeholders.
- c. The challenges of dealing with different people on different levels.
- d. The need for more involvement with Tourism West Coast.
- e. The importance of transparency in communications.

8. Information technology

- a. There is a need to improve computer skills.
- b. More technical information is needed about how websites and i-SITEs work.

4. Future considerations

The evaluation team considers that the following actions will enhance the outcomes from projects and will assist in the realisation of the value for money. The evaluation found that there are significant risks to achieving the value for money from many of the MRI projects if these actions are not undertaken. The lack of planned follow-through raises questions over the sufficiency of professional support and advice available to, and the governance of, the MRI. A consideration fundamental to progressing the ongoing support is for the MRI Steering and Project Management Group and DWC Board to consider which agency is best placed to assume this role and how this will be funded. In addition, community expectations were raised as a result of involvement in the projects and the stated intentions that these projects would be followed through to ensure completion and sustainability. It is highly recommended that these action points be given serious consideration by the MRI Steering Group and DWC Board.

1. Review projects and identify those that require project action groups to assist with implementing recommendations. Projects identified during the evaluation as requiring this support include Glaciers, Haast, Punakaiki and Moana. This support will involve meeting with communities to discuss the status of projects and confirm the next steps. Additional expertise, combined with DWC support, is required
2. Provide specialised business expertise and support (financial and marketing) to Denniston and Shantytown. Both projects require assistance with business modelling. The evaluation team considers further funds provided to Shantytown are at risk until there is a sustainable business model in place.
3. Discuss with key stakeholders the option of a new structure and mandate for the MRI Steering and Project Management Groups.
4. Address the resourcing for Tourism West Coast. The funding is currently inadequate for the role required, given the strategic importance of the region for tourism and for the economy of New Zealand.
5. Develop an overarching tourism strategy for the West Coast region. With additional funding, this should be coordinated by Tourism West Coast.
6. Improve monitoring and reporting of projects. With clarification of key outcomes at the higher and projects levels, the progress monitoring and reporting could be enhanced. This will enable tailored support to be provided to projects when required.

This Tourism West Coast MRI has laid the building blocks for ongoing collaborative planning and project management. The MRI Steering and Project Management Groups are effective forums for key stakeholders to coordinate plans and develop projects. These groups enable the development and implementation of projects that improve the economic benefits and lives of West Coast communities. It is important these groups are retained and evolve with a new mandate and structure. The role of DWC as a lead agency is highly valued by key stakeholders and the on-going role of DWC or another “regional development agency” is seen as critical to ensure the continuation of these groups and the development of the projects. The emerging outcomes from this MRI are directly aligned to the DWC goal of contributing towards improving the economic benefits for West Coast communities. In addition, with an increased role for Tourism West Coast, and the ongoing support of key stakeholders, the economic benefits from tourism and other associated activities will continue to grow for the West Coast region and New Zealand.

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Appendix A: Interview participation – fieldwork

Types of organisations/participants interviewed as part of the field work for the West Coast Tourism MRI Outcomes Evaluation	
	Interviewees
Consultants	9
Tourism Organisations	8
District Councils/Government Departments	10
Tourism Businesses	19
Total	46

Appendix B: Survey Results

Involvement with MRI	Frequency	Percent
Consultant	1	5%
Development West Coast/Tourism organization	4	18%
District Council/DOC	9	41%
Other	1	5%
Tourist business	7	32%
Total	22	100%

Increased support to existing businesses to expand and improve profitability	Frequency	Percent
achieved	8	19%
some progress evident	24	56%
no progress/change evident	8	19%
unsure/no response	3	7%
Total	43	100%

Increased cooperation with Maori tourism organizations	Frequency	Percent
achieved	2	5%
some progress evident	7	16%
no progress/change evident	15	35%
unsure/no response	19	44%
Total	43	100%

Increased business assistance for well advanced projects	Frequency	Percent
achieved	10	23%
some progress evident	18	42%
no progress/change evident	10	23%
unsure/no response	5	12%
Total	43	100%

Increased information management technology (creative inputs and heritage)	Frequency	Percent
achieved	12	28%
some progress evident	14	33%
no progress/change evident	9	21%
unsure/no response	8	19%
Total	43	100%

Regional Tourism Office transformed into a destination marketing organization	Frequency	Percent
achieved	6	14%
some progress evident	17	40%
no progress/change evident	4	9%
unsure/no response	16	37%
Total	43	100%

Increased collaborative planning for growth in emerging destinations	Frequency	Percent
achieved	12	28%
some progress evident	21	49%
no progress/change evident	6	14%
unsure/no response	4	9%
Total	43	100%

Increased product development/expansion initiatives	Frequency	Percent
achieved	10	23%
some progress evident	24	56%
no progress/change evident	7	16%
unsure/no response	2	5%
Total	43	100%

Improved business practice and performance	Frequency	Percent
achieved	7	16%
some progress evident	21	49%
no progress/change evident	10	23%
unsure/no response	5	12%
Total	43	100%

Increased alignment of workforce development to (tourism strategic) objectives	Frequency	Percent
achieved	5	12%
some progress evident	23	53%
no progress/change evident	12	28%
unsure/no response	3	7%
Total	43	100%

Increased growth of partnerships with industry, local, Maori and central government	Frequency	Percent
achieved	11	26%
some progress evident	26	60%
no progress/change evident	3	7%
unsure/no response	3	7%
Total	43	100%

Increased effectiveness of working relationship between West Coast key stakeholders	Frequency	Percent
achieved	16	37%
some progress evident	22	51%
no progress/change evident	5	12%
unsure/no response	0	0%
Total	43	100%

Improved profitability of existing tourism businesses	Frequency	Percent
achieved	6	14%
some progress evident	18	42%
no progress/change evident	13	30%
unsure/no response	6	14%
Total	43	100%

Increased private sector investment	Frequency	Percent
achieved	5	12%
some progress evident	16	37%
no progress/change evident	10	23%
unsure/no response	12	28%
Total	43	100%

Strengthened West Coast tourism brand	Frequency	Percent
achieved	9	21%
some progress evident	23	53%
no progress/change evident	7	16%
unsure/no response	4	9%
Total	43	100%

Increased promotion of under-developed tourism attractions	Frequency	Percent
achieved	12	28%
some progress evident	19	44%
no progress/change evident	8	19%
unsure/no response	4	9%
Total	43	100%

Improved ability of West Coast tourism sites to manage numbers	Frequency	Percent
achieved	9	21%
some progress evident	15	35%
no progress/change evident	9	21%
unsure/no response	10	23%
Total	43	100%

Extended tourism in the north of West Coast	Frequency	Percent
achieved	5	12%
some progress evident	19	44%
no progress/change evident	6	14%
unsure/no response	13	30%
Total	43	100%

Increased tourist visits to more attractions	Frequency	Percent
achieved	7	16%
some progress evident	18	42%
no progress/change evident	12	28%
unsure/no response	6	14%
Total	43	100%

Increased day stays on West Coast	Frequency	Percent
achieved	2	5%
some progress evident	18	42%
no progress/change evident	16	37%
unsure/no response	7	16%
Total	43	100%

Increased economic benefits	Frequency	Percent
achieved	8	19%
some progress evident	21	49%
no progress/change evident	11	26%
unsure/no response	3	7%
Total	43	100%

Improved international profile of West Coast tourism	Frequency	Percent
achieved	5	12%
some progress evident	24	56%
no progress/change evident	11	26%
unsure/no response	3	7%
Total	43	100%