

From: no-reply@mbie.govt.nz
To: [Research, Science and Innovation Strategy Secretariat](#)
Subject: Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy submission
Date: Saturday, 9 November 2019 9:11:47 p.m.
Attachments: [Online-submission-form-uploadsdraft-research-science-and-innovation-strategy-submissions2019-11-07-FoodHQ-submission-to-MBIE-RSI-final.pdf](#)

Submission on Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy received:

Are you making your submission as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Name

Abby Thompson

Name of organisation or institutional affiliation

FoodHQ

Role within organisation

CEO

Email address (in case we would like to follow up with you further about your submission)

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Which of the below areas do you feel represents your perspective as a submitter? (Please select all that apply)

If you selected other, please specify here:

Gender

Ethnicity

Name of organisation on whose behalf you are submitting, if different to the organisation named above

In which sector does your organisation operate: (Please select all that apply)

Interface of research and industry

If you selected other, please specify here:

How large is your organisation (in number of full-time-equivalent employees)?

2

Please indicate if you would like some or all of the information you provide in your submission kept in confidence, and if so which information.

Please upload your submission document here

2019-11-07-FoodHQ-submission-to-MBIE-RSI-final.pdf - [Download File](#)

FoodHQ submission to MBIE on the draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy

6 November, 2019

FoodHQ welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to MBIE on the draft Research, Science and Innovation (RSI) Strategy (September 2019).

1. Introduction to FoodHQ

FoodHQ is an open collaborative partnership involving most of New Zealand's capability in food science-based innovation, and includes public and private sector research, education and industry organisations. It is headquartered in Manawatū with extensive national and international networks.

FoodHQ recognises the opportunity to facilitate firms to successfully commercialise high value differentiated food products for export via embedding science and technology within their innovation pathways. In order to achieve this, it is essential to provide easy access to collective capability in an environment that encourages collaboration.

2. General comments on the RSI draft Strategy

FoodHQ is supportive of the RSI Strategy providing a framework to help guide investment decisions in New Zealand's innovation ecosystem.

Aspects of the Strategy that FoodHQ are particularly pleased to see include:

- The focus on an outward focused global perspective, excellent world class people and facilities and embedding innovation to provide value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.
- The explicit perspective that research and science are important components in innovation but are not sufficient in isolation - there are other essential components required to enable businesses to create valuable products, processes and services for customers and clients.
- Recognition of the importance of developing and strengthening connections between researchers, between researchers and businesses, and between businesses – both within New Zealand and internationally.
- Clear commitments to improving engagement of Māori within R&D; supporting New Zealand's R&D institutions; investing in future-focused R&D infrastructure; prioritising the development, attraction and retention of talent; and increasing diversity within the R&D community.
- Identification of the need to provide additional support to assist start-ups to more rapidly grow and achieve scale.
- The recognition of the need to identify key strategic focus areas for investment to enable New Zealand's limited RSI funding to deliver meaningful impact, and the requirement for these areas

to be ones where New Zealand has a unique opportunity or advantage. It also makes sense for these areas to be ones where New Zealand can credibly hold a globally-relevant position at the frontier of research and innovation.

Some areas that FoodHQ would appreciate being taken into consideration in further discussions prior to the finalisation of the Strategy include:

- The vision of ‘By 2027, New Zealand will be a global innovation hub, a world-class generator of new ideas for a productive, sustainable, and inclusive future’ is an attractive one. It would be even more attractive if New Zealand was not only seen as the generator of ideas but also the developer and implementor. We do not want to be generating ideas that the rest of the world then takes and creates the value from.
- We note that pg 18 of the draft Strategy states “Applied research can extend the global knowledge frontier as much as basic research”, while pg 25 makes the comment “Excellence is a term that can apply just as easily to applied research as it can to basic or fundamental investigation.” We commend these statements and hope that this perspective is retained within the final Strategy and the implementation of it. Many FoodHQ participants have experienced frustration in situations where applied research in areas such as agrifood is mistakenly considered to not create as much new knowledge or be able to be as scientifically excellent as more fundamental research or research in more ‘high tech’ areas.
- We also note that pg 11 of the draft Strategy comments that “The RSI system already makes large and significant contributions to productivity in food and beverage, agritech, digital technology, and forestry and wood processing, and we expect this to continue”. FoodHQ would like to strongly endorse the selection of Food & Beverage and Agritech as focus areas for RSI ‘At the Frontier’ investment. MBIE has already identified these two areas as priorities for Industry Transformation Plans, and FoodHQ would like to highlight the strong complementarity that would arise from having both the RSI Investments and the Industry Transformation Plans connected in these areas. The RSI Strategy will be crucial in ensuring that New Zealand’s research communities continue to be able to generate and develop the ideas that will enable us to remain at the global forefront of agrifood science and innovation, while the Industry Transformation Plans will work to ensure there is the essential absorptive capacity required to translate and drive innovation diffusion and uptake, collectively generating widespread benefits for New Zealand. Specifically:
 - These areas fit the requirements of New Zealand having a sustainable competitive advantage and where New Zealand faces a specific challenge or a specific need.
 - While these are traditional R&D areas for New Zealand, there remain considerable opportunities to further move from volume to value through targeted application of new science and technology.
 - Any additional growth in these areas through enhanced research and development has a huge multiplier effect due to the sizes of the sectors

FoodHQ understands that MBIE is currently engaged in seeking feedback on the draft RSI Strategy and that this Strategy needs to be finalised before the details of implementation and execution become the

focus. We look forward to further opportunities to engage with MBIE as the implementation pathways and frameworks are developed.

3. FoodHQ experiences and insights

FoodHQ also notes that one of the reasons we are so supportive of the draft Strategy is that it resonates with many of our observations regarding the challenges and opportunities for the RSI sector in areas such as the value of connections both within New Zealand and internationally, the importance of world-class facilities and capability in talent attraction and retention, and the need to make it easier for New Zealand food businesses to access the full value of our food science and innovation ecosystem. Indeed it was these perspectives that underpin our Partners' decision to establish and support FoodHQ in the first place, and we have had confirmation of these perspectives from a diverse range of stakeholders during the compilation of our recent PGF application.

A couple of examples of the insights obtained from discussions with our international colleagues (including Foodvalley, Wageningen University and Research, Unilever, Nestle, Arla and others) are:

- That 'magic happens' at the intersection of areas of deep expertise, and that the logical way to achieve this is to support the development of concentration and critical mass with a model that facilitates the connections of science to business in order to disperse knowledge, particularly into regions.
- There is a virtuous circle of excellence (facilities, capability, research), talent attraction/retention and funding. Once this circle gains momentum it becomes almost self-perpetuating, as high quality and exciting research attract top people from across the world, who come up with exceptional ideas, which generate impact and attract funding from both government and industry, which enables investment in gold-standard facilities and interesting and high quality research. The challenge is in getting this cycle started, which usually requires significant investment over an extended period. The amount of investment and the time frame it is needed over will vary significantly depending on the depth, breadth and calibre of the existing capability and facilities in a particular area – and food is a key area where New Zealand already has a strong foundation in place.

FoodHQ would welcome the opportunity to discuss these and other insights arising from our recent work, as well as our more general experiences of developing a new style of collaborative and connected organisation with MBIE if it would be useful.

4. Signatories

This submission on MBIE's RSI draft Strategy is provided on behalf of the FoodHQ Partners and stakeholders signing below:



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