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Submission from Te Ara Pūtaiao (Crown Research Institute Māori Leadership Group)

Background

Te Ara Pūtaiao was established back in the 1990's by Māori staff from across the Crown Research Institutes. Te Ara Pūtaiao was originally established as a support network for Māori staff and researchers who were dealing with similar issues across the CRI's, collaborating where practicable and sharing best practise.

In line with the science sector reforms in 2010, Te Ara Pūtaiao's role, focus and membership has evolved over time from a community of Māori practice within the seven Crown Research Institutes (Manaaki Whenua Landcare, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, Scion, AgResearch, GNS Science and Plant and Food Research) to providing independent strategic advice to other governmental departments regarding the alignment and provision of science to Māori.

In more recent times Te Ara Pūtaiao has aligned with Science NZ and has moved towards building relationships with both governmental agencies and industry to enhance and elevate impacts from the Aotearoa New Zealand science system to benefit Māori. It is the intention of Te Ara Pūtaiao to strengthen the original purpose whilst also maintaining the relationship and supporting Science NZ.

Te Ara Pūtaiao's membership consists of tier two Māori managers from each of the seven Crown Research Institutes.

Overview korero

Te Ara Pūtaiao applaud the Ministry for Business, Investment and Employment's proposal to extend Vision Mātauranga to develop new initiatives and policies that work effectively within and around Te Ao Māori. We also support the co-design approach to all activities in the area of Vision Mātauranga and recommend that this extends to a co-decision making approach to decide the form of the final model.

Te Ara Pūtaiao operate within the context that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the basis of the Crown Māori relationship. Te Tiriti based partnership is therefore the most appropriate form of Crown relationship with Māori in the science and research sector and RSI system influencing the Crown approach to Te Ao Māori, Mātauranga Māori, Māori knowledge systems and the implementation of the Vision Mātauranga policy and associated themes.

Te Tiriti "confirmed and guaranteed to the chiefs 'exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, a, and other properties.'" This should form the basis for the Crown approach to Te Ao Māori, Mātauranga Māori, indigenous flora and fauna research and the intellectual property rights attributed to discovery and innovation with a particular emphasis on recognition of benefits flowing to Māori communities where the Mātauranga belongs.

The first priority of the benefits of Mātauranga generated innovation belong to Māori in the first instance. To appropriate those benefits for all New Zealanders ignores the Crown Treaty obligations. Protection also means sufficient access to funding and resources to enable Māori knowledge systems and Mātauranga Māori thrives within a Te Ao Māori context.

Te Ara Pūtaiao supports the proposal but propose, in general, that the Crown also include the Treaty partner in any conversations and co-design. The approach is strongly focused towards researchers, entrepreneurs, entities and businesses but lacks a link to the Governance entities, Māori Trusts and organisations who are mana whenua in many areas CRI's are working within. We consider that the

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proposal focuses on getting responses from those who deliver research proposals rather than those who benefit from them (exception question 37).

Our submission will now address the four questions raised in the 'Towards an Extended Vision Mātauranga' the perspective of Te Tiriti and our experiences of working with Vision Mātauranga.

Question 34: Does our suggested approach to extending Vision Mātauranga focus in the right five areas? If not where should it focus?

Te Ara Pūtaiao support the suggested approach. Te Ara Pūtaiao propose that the consultation and collaboration be widened to finding out from iwi / Māori what are the barriers that stop more Māori from participating within the RSI system.

Te Ara Pūtaiao agree with the activities outlined in the proposal where Māori participation should be ensured. We think the basis of this participation should be equitable and that a pathway created that recognises the Te Ao Māori paradigm and the traditional knowledge systems that give rise to Mātauranga. Access to equitable participation should begin at an early stage in other words creating a bespoke pipeline that supports Māori engagement in RSI from an early stage.

Question 35: How can we ensure the RSI system is open to the best Māori thinkers and researchers?

Te Ara Pūtaiao consider that ensuring that the RSI system is open requires action and investment for our rangatahi who are coming through the education system. Issues such as systemic barriers to rangatahi Māori becoming involved in science need to be addressed if we are to grow more Māori scientists. This includes addressing the out of cultural context in which science education is communicated to Māori students, the necessity for students to travel away for university study therefore being separated from whanau networks, university fees that deny accessibility to higher learning and greater certainty of employment to name a number of barriers.

To encourage an increase of Māori involvement in the RSI system Te Ara Pūtaiao propose that effort is required throughout the education system. Support programmes that link primary intermediate secondary (STEM schools and academies) with Universities CRIs and Cores to create a career pathways based on Mātauranga Māori for Māori students. This can be complimented by more certainty of employment of Māori researchers within the NZ RSI system.

Māori thought leaders and research partners should be encouraged to participate in the RSI system through changes to the current funding criteria. Currently co-investment is required in funding proposals, such as the Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund, which disincentivises Māori involvement. Māori communities and Mātauranga Māori experts generally do not have the investment capital to co-fund research initiatives, whereas CRIs rely heavily on this community to provide Vision Mātauranga and Mātauranga Māori support for MBIE Endeavour fund Vision Mātauranga requirements. Te Ara Pūtaiao propose that the co-investment requirements in these should be waived or at the least the co-investment portion should be provided through SSIF in recognition of the Treaty Partnership.

Question 36: How can we ensure that Māori knowledge, culture and world views are integrated throughout our RSI system?

In seeking research investment, a major challenge for Māori and CRIs is to meet Māori aspirations in an MBIE Endeavour funding model driven by science excellence. Mātauranga research does not yet

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have the track record of “science excellence” and it seems likely that MBIE assessment panellists do not yet have experience of assessing such proposals.

As a result, research proposals that would meet high expectations of “science relevance” by showing very strong co-innovation and engagement in order to meet Māori aspirations, may not make the excellence cut.

Science excellence should be defined as Māori science excellence where a) the intrinsic and unique knowledge system of Mātauranga is recognised and or b) where kaupapa Māori lead science research is recognised and both categories fully resource in an equity model based on population.

Māori have also said that their needs may be for application of what could be considered Business-as-Usual science, rather than for “transformational” science to achieve disruption and quite new directions, as required by Endeavour Fund. This is not to diminish Māori needs for new economic and environmental approaches. But, for example, land-use options and managing environmental change may not be transformational science; yet they are often at the centre of Māori aspiration for the whenua and taiao.

CRIs invest a small portion of MBIE SSIF to Māori-related projects, however as there are competing priorities and skill shortages that means there are relatively few Mātauranga-led projects funded in this way. Te Ara Pūtaiao propose that there be an increase of investment focused towards Māori related projects by setting a mandatory minimum level of SSIF toward Vision Mātauranga and Mātauranga Māori research proposals proportional in quantum to the Māori population. This is best achieved through a funding signal from MBIE. It is less effective left to the discretion of the CRIs themselves.

Recognise that a bespoke funding pool that supports Mātauranga Māori led research programmes is one of the most effective means of including Māori in RSI. This will also enable research in successful Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund projects to advance. This will encourage Māori to participate in Māori lead and designed research programmes.

CRIs should be encouraged by MBIE to take an active approach to implementing supportive policies internally. Left to discretion Vision Mātauranga is, in some CRIs, inevitable accorded a low priority because amongst other things does not generate revenue.

Question 37: How can we strengthen connections between the RSI system and Māori businesses and enterprises?

Kaitiakitanga – Māori are responsible for their taonga (assets and cultural treasures) and exercise the role of kaitiaki over indigenous flora and fauna, land, water etc. At the centre of Māori research aspirations are their people, land, resources and environment.

Whanaungatanga and whai hua - Māori believe that they achieve more together and collaboration in business means being successful together. This is seen in how they collectivise their assets to achieve better buying power and clustering to achieve economic scale to supply offshore markets.

Increase access to science capabilities

The feedback that Te Ara Putaiao receives from Māori is that Māori have always been innovative, agile and in search of knowledge that evolves their thinking and advances Māori. However, the science and research that acts to legitimise Māori ideas to add value to their business is often priced out of reach for many Māori Trusts and Māori enterprises.

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The fee for service model in NZ is globally competitive but domestically unaffordable for most Māori. Te Ara Putaiao is concerned that this is deeply affecting Māori access to and/or uptake of NZ science services. Beyond price another explanation for this could be the intensive effort to engage and the limited funds allocated to Māori research. This business approach is less desirable by many in science because of the higher risk/lower return.

Is the fee for service model inadvertently limiting science uptake in NZ and/or pushing Māori entities/enterprise offshore prematurely? The best position for CRI's and others in the science system is to venture offshore 'together alongside Māori'. Te Ara Putaiao is observing Māori choosing the same international science capabilities over or instead of NZ science capabilities. It's not an ideal position for NZ to be displaced by international businesses for a 'like' science service and is an area that NZ should monitor.

Fair and reasonable sharing of benefits in the work we do together

Globally, sustainability and provenance is a growing trend and consumers are interested in the NZ story. As described in the 'Overview kōrero' Te Ara Putaiao acknowledges that the use of taonga/ Mātauranga Māori including the use of Māori language comes with tikanga/pre- conditions that should at all times be respectful and genuine. Māori have clearly stated that they prefer a relationship based approach to working with other organisations and this includes science services/providers and commercial partners.

This leads onto 'informed consent' or mandate which must be derived from Māori. Māori advise that organisations wishing to continue science exploration with taonga should be committed to ensuring fair and reasonable sharing of benefits in the work we do together. The strategy needs to reflect diverse approaches to working with different Māori groups and interests. There is a business need to develop innovative partnership models that recognise Māori traditional knowledge systems that are able to genuinely secure Māori rights and interests in future business endeavours.

Māori-MBIE relationship

Te Ara Putaiao recognise MBIEs effort to build its internal Māori capability over recent years. We realise that retaining director/senior management staff can be challenging. We strongly encourage MBIE to seek a sustainable model that positions Māori in management and embeds Māori roles in teams across the organisation to strengthen the connections between Māori and the Crown and to increase fluency between science policy and Māori mātauranga.

Furthermore, Māori entities/enterprises are fatigued by researchers often pushing their science ideas on Māori. Te Ara Puataiao advocates for the 'exchange' of knowledge and to seek out Māori ideas that Māori wish to explore alongside science. The treaty principle of 'reciprocation' is evoked and MBIE is pivotal to setting the tone in the science system.