

Strategic Science Investment Fund

Advanced Energy Technology Platform

Questions and Answers

Eligibility and Application

To be eligible, the applicant must be a New Zealand-based legal entity with established research capability. How will you define research capability?

In most cases, it will be clear that the applicant has established internal research capability (e.g., Universities, Crown Research Institutes and Independent Research Organisations). Other types of organisations will have evidence of their internal research capability and should include evidence of this in their proposal (e.g., publications in peer-reviewed academic journals). Eligibility criteria apply to the Applicant organisation, not organisations that you may be collaborating with.

Must all research be done in New Zealand?

No, not all research needs to be done in New Zealand. However, the eligibility criteria states research must be primarily based in New Zealand unless we agree there are compelling reasons not to. Consideration needs to be given to the location of the research in light of the Investment Goals particularly the goal to grow capability in the New Zealand research community.

If there are similar proposals in a particular area, will MBIE ask the different teams to work up a combined proposal rather than have numerous competing proposals?

Each proposal will stand on its own and will not be considered in combination with other proposals. We will not be involved in “working up” competing proposals.

How do you define commercial demonstration or deployment of technology?

Research focussed on the commercial demonstration or deployment of technology is not fundable through this investment. See page 3 of the Call for Proposals.

Research where the technology is being demonstrated or deployed in the relevant working environment is out of scope for this investment. Proposals should be focussed on technology concept development, experimental proof of concept and technology validation in the lab or relevant environment.

Assessment

When will you name the assessors?

We will finalise the assessors following Registration, when we know the likely number of proposals. Their names will be posted on our website as soon as their participation is confirmed.

Will there be international assessors on the panel?

There will be international assessors. The final number will be determined by the number of proposals we receive. MBIE will chair the panel and will be a non-voting member.

How will you get a mix of proposals across research areas?

Assessors will consider the quality of proposals and portfolio balance. More than one proposal may be funded in any research area. The assessors will recommend both the proposals and the portfolio mix. This process is outlined in the Call for Proposals.

Excellence

What do you mean by team excellence?

Team excellence refers to the skills and knowledge the team has to deliver the activities in your proposal. It includes leadership expertise, experience and relevant collaborations. An Investment Goal is to develop energy technology research capability in New Zealand so excellent early career researchers working on novel ideas should be considered as part of the team. The intention of the long term contract is to encourage the development of new capability.

What do you mean by transformative?

Proposed research should have the potential to create transformational change. For example, transformational change could be the potential to create an economic activity new to New Zealand, disrupt an existing sector, create a dramatic improvement in the state of the environment or create a new sustainable use, or eliminated the use, of a natural resource.

You should consider how your research is transformative under the excellence and impact criteria. Excellent research will enable exciting new and original avenues of research or lead to radically new technologies. Impactful research will help solve key problems for New Zealand and global users.

Domestic and International Collaboration

Do you expect collaboration between the Advanced Energy Technology Platform Research Programmes?

Collaboration between programmes is not a requirement; however, if it enhances research excellence, it would be reasonable to expect some collaboration.

At the core of this investment we want to encourage community building and to fund excellent science so we encourage collaboration where it adds value.

If a Programme has international collaborators, what are the requirements for funding and eligibility to access and use data?

The Assessment Panel will assess the international collaborations in the context of the research being proposed and the Investment Goals, one of which is to foster and grow international collaborations. Applicants should consider how international collaboration can help grow New Zealand energy technology research capability.

Funding may be used to bring key international researchers to New Zealand or to provide key/early researchers with international experience if it fits within the Investment Goals.

It is common practice for international collaborators to provide an in-kind contribution to the New Zealand research organisation. Contributions (cash and in kind) are welcome, but not mandatory.

International collaborations may be informal or formal (subcontracts).

Vision Mātauranga

How will Vision Mātauranga be assessed?

Vision Mātauranga experts will provide advice to the Assessment Panel. The process is outlined in the Call for Proposals and Assessment Guidelines.

What is the role of the Vision Mātauranga experts?

The Vision Mātauranga experts will advise the panel on the relevance of Vision Mātauranga and how well it has been addressed in the individual proposals. This advice will be considered during Panel's discussion. The names of the Vision Mātauranga experts will be posted on our website along with the Assessment Panel.

Decision Making

Who makes the final decision?

The final investment decision is made by the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE), of the Labour, Science and Enterprise Group of MBIE, taking into consideration recommendations from the Assessment Panel.

How will MBIE ensure that the investments made are complementary with other similar investment streams within MBIE?

Our approach would be to avoid duplication of research.

We will look across our investment portfolio (which includes Endeavour, National Science Challenges, Strategic Science Investment Fund, and Regional Research Institutes) for replication of research.

We would also expect researchers to have knowledge of research being funded within their field.

Where proposed research builds on previous work, or is complementary to currently funded programmes, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the proposed research will deliver additional science outcomes and how research is different to other programmes.

Contract Term and KPIs

What is the length of the contract term?

The contract term is seven years. We recognise that research may evolve over that time. You can describe the programme in greater detail for years one through to three, and for the later years provide a higher-level outline of research that demonstrates your strategic direction, indicative research priorities and a pathway to implementation.

KPI expectations look very high level across the years – can they change?

KPIs should be written at a level that ideally enables them to remain unchanged over the duration of the Programme. There will be flexibility in how they are worded and we will work with you to develop them. We appreciate that research may evolve in unexpected ways resulting in some KPIs no longer being meaningful. If so, they may change over the life of the programme. KPIs however cannot be changed simply because they are not being met.

Will funding be for the government financial year?

Yes. Funding will be for the July to June financial year. If you contract starts during the year funds will be pro-rated.