

Why was Antarctica New Zealand chosen to develop a Platform Plan?

Antarctica New Zealand has significant knowledge of the Antarctic sector while also providing a neutral position as an agency not directly undertaking science. Managing the contract for the Antarctic Science Platform also aligns well with its existing statutory functions and mandate managing the logistics required to support science conducted in Antarctica.

Antarctica New Zealand is also in a strong position to leverage international collaborative opportunities.

Does this mean that Antarctica New Zealand will host the Platform?

Antarctica New Zealand has been contracted to host the Platform.

Developing a Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF) Platform Plan and designing science planning processes to deliver the science priorities is a new role for Antarctica New Zealand. MBIE will work closely with the agency to ensure the Platform is able to deliver to MBIE's expectations. MBIE will provide support throughout the process until contracting, and governance input thereafter.

What are the governance arrangements for the Platform?

MBIE appointed a steering group that will oversee the implementation of the Platform, provide ongoing strategic guidance and approve all funding decisions. Its members are:

- > Gillian Wratt, Chair

Independent appointees

- > Dr Helen Cleugh (Director, Climate Science Centre, CSIRO, Australia)
- > Craig Ellison (Chair, Ngāi Tahu Seafood)
- > Dr Peter McComb (Managing Director, MetOcean Solutions Ltd)

Agency representatives

- > Peter Beggs (CEO, Antarctica New Zealand)
- > Rosemary Paterson (DM, Environmental Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
- > Dr Prue Williams (GM, Science System Investment and Performance, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment)

How were the Antarctic science priorities and impacts identified?

The science priorities were identified through extensive consultation with government stakeholders and the science sector. The priorities identify research of significant relevance nationally and internationally in relation to science capability relevant to New Zealand's geographic focus on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and the Ross Sea area.

Expected impacts (for each priority) from Platform science were identified at a workshop in December 2017 involving scientists and stakeholders. The science priorities and impact statements

form the framework for workshop discussions to identify appropriate science programmes and projects.

Will relevant government and sector stakeholders be involved in the development of the Plan?

Extensive consultation has taken place to develop the research priorities and to understand stakeholders' thoughts on the role of the Platform in delivering Antarctic science.

Research programmes and projects in the Plan are being collaboratively developed with input from relevant government and sector stakeholders and Antarctic science providers.

What will be included in the Platform Plan?

A Platform Plan describes how a Platform will deliver on its research priorities using a strategic aligned approach. This includes a strategy for how impacts will be achieved, as well as descriptions of the processes, procedures, and reporting to ensure science excellence, transparency of decision-making, and appropriate engagement with both sector and government stakeholders.

Considerations during the development of this Platform Plan will include both collaborative design and contestability for funding, ensuring that decisions regarding logistics do not unduly influence science funding decisions and vice versa, co-funding and leveraging of other resources, and performance monitoring including development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

How will the performance of the Platform be monitored?

As with other Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF) platforms, MBIE will monitor the investment through annual progress reports that include performance against KPIs, annual strategic discussions, and through a review around the midpoint of the contract.

How much money is available and how will funding be allocated?

The Government is investing \$49 million over seven years in the Antarctic Science Platform.

The Antarctic Science Platform is additional to a number of other Government funding avenues that are available for Antarctic science. The Platform provides an opportunity for a large and enduring programme of strategic research aligned to Government priorities for Antarctic science, which was not possible in the previous funding landscape.

The science planning processes MBIE is introducing for the Platform means that most research programmes and projects are being developed collaboratively with input from relevant science providers and government agencies.

The independent steering group will make funding decisions, based on advice from an international science advisory panel and recommendations from the Platform host. This will help ensure transparency of decision-making, enable the platform to stay true to its strategic intent, and avoid capture by any special interests.

When will the Platform be operational and funding be available?

Following the successful development of a full Platform Plan, MBIE expects the Platform to become operational from October 2018.

What research will the Platform support?

All programmes and projects funded will support the Platform's research priorities and have been co-developed by scientists and stakeholders.

The priorities are:

- > Understanding the stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet
- > Understanding the impacts of change in the Antarctic atmosphere and Southern Ocean
- > Understanding threats to ecosystem dynamics in the Ross Sea
- > Understanding connections between terrestrial and nearshore Antarctic environments, including sea ice.

As well as research programmes designed to deliver each priority, three cross-cutting themes that also address the priorities will also be funded. These themes are:

- > building innovation and interdisciplinary capability
- > supporting/developing long term data sets
- > developing technology.

How can I apply for funding?

The Strategic Science Investment Fund operates differently from contestable funding rounds. Most of the funding will be allocated to research programmes that have been co-developed in workshops involving scientists and stakeholders. The Platform will also run some contestable processes for science funding and these will be advertised to the sector.

Why is it important to establish a Platform specifically on Antarctic Science?

A strong, internationally connected and respected Antarctic science programme is of particular scientific and strategic importance to New Zealand. A stable funding environment will enable strategic planning of what science is done and the logistics required to support it.

Scientific benefits:

- > Improved understanding of Antarctica's role in New Zealand and in the global earth system can lead to more accurate predictions of things like future climate or sea level rise, models and planning for events or long term changes.
- > Understanding of how ecosystems - that are relatively unmodified by humans - function can be applied to other ecosystems to inform restoration, resilience, planning and decision-making.
- > New Zealand can keep pace scientifically with other countries and continue to make timely, meaningful contributions to Antarctic science.

Foreign policy and reputational benefits:

- > New Zealand can maintain relationships with other key countries in order to remain influential in the Antarctic Treaty System.
- > New Zealand can meet the new science needs arising from our key role in establishing the new marine protected area in the Ross Sea.

Optimised government expenditure:

- > The Platform enables strategic planning for logistics several years in advance, which will allow optimal use of both logistics and science funding, and the ability to leverage overseas funding opportunities.

Will the Platform only fund science undertaken using Antarctica New Zealand logistics?

No. The Platform will fund science undertaken using Antarctica New Zealand logistics, science that uses other Antarctic logistics, for example the RV Tangaroa or international cooperation. The Platform will also fund relevant Antarctic science that does not require “on-ice” logistics at all, such as exploring the use of new technologies to understand the Antarctic environment.