



OPERATING MODEL FOR THE NEW ZEALAND SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE

The New Zealand Science Media Centre (NZSMC) plays a key role in encouraging and enabling better engagement with science and technology for all New Zealanders.

This document:

- > Provides an overview of key components of the NZSMC.
- > Acts as a tool for informing the Call for Proposals and other assessment documentation.

Key interactions of the NZSMC

- > Scientists and researchers in New Zealand.
- > Media organisations and their staff.
- > Research organisations.
- > MBIE.

How will the NZSMC be funded?

MBIE provided funding of approximately \$1 million (excluding GST) in 2021/22.

What do the key costs of the NZSMC include?

Primary costs of the NZSMC relate to:

- > People and salaries.
- > Overheads (technology and premises).
- > NZSMC also incurs costs relating to training delivery.

What will the Host do?

The Host provides a legal entity for the NZSMC and may deliver overhead services to support the independent delivery of the NZSMC.

What objectives will the NZSMC work toward?

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is responsible for implementing the Government's "A Nation of Curious Minds – A National Strategic Plan for Science in Society". Supporting initiatives are funded from Vote Business, Science and Innovation: Science in Society Appropriation, including the NZSMC. The NZSMC will contribute to the outcomes set out in the Plan, by facilitating and strengthening links between the media and the science community.

The NZSMC will make the following contributions

Objectives

- > Work with the media to enhance the quality, depth and breadth of coverage of research related topics, particularly coverage of New Zealand RSI.
- > Ensure research, including Mātauranga Māori and Kaupapa Māori research, is able to be accessed by the media through meaningful and usable avenues.
- > Enable scientists, researchers and research organisations to work effectively with media by providing resources and training.
- > Encourage responsible and evidence based science news reporting from journalists by providing resources and training.

- > Maintain networks and manage relationships between the key components of the science system, including Māori researchers and Māori research organisations, and Māori media.

Impact

- > Increase public awareness about the role research, science and innovation (RSI) can play in society.
- > Inform the public when new research, science, and innovation issues emerge.
- > Improve public access to New Zealand RSI content.
- > Increase public visibility of Mātauranga Māori and Kaupapa Māori research.
- > Improve information access to diverse communities with inequitable access to RSI reporting.
- > Inform public debate on RSI issues.
- > Enhance connections between media and Kaupapa Māori researchers in RSI.

Key NZSMC activities

First port of call

Providing a first port of call for media requesting RSI information.

Proactive

Proactively providing timely information and material on RSI.

Capability development

- > Working to develop RSI reporting capability within the New Zealand media.
- > Assisting scientists, researchers and research organisation to become better able to deal with the media's queries, and to communicate their research effectively, using a range of mechanisms.
- > Assisting journalists to produce responsible and insightful research news reporting and analysis.

Relationships

Establishing and maintaining networks and managing relationships between the key components of the science system and media.

NZSMC outputs

- > Expert reaction, Q&As and briefing
- > NZSMC Picks, Scimex and Scimex Daily
- > Media hotline
- > Expert database
- > Website, newsletters and channels
- > Media tracking
- > Capability development and linking activities for research and media sectors.

Performance areas

- > Public Awareness (Media coverage of noteworthy RSI)
- > Capability
- > Diversity
- > Accessibility
- > Collaboration (Connectivity)
- > Independence.

Reporting

- > Quarterly relationship meeting with MBIE
- > Annual performance report
- > Annual workplan.

People and premises

People

- > The staff of the current Science Media Centre comprise a Director (1 FTE), and three media advisors (3 FTE).
- > The staffing composition of the NZSMC is not predetermined, but any staff employed need skills relevant to the scope of the NZSMC.
- > An Advisory Board currently comprises eight people appointed by the Host on rolling three-year terms with extensive media and science communication experience.

Premises

The NZSMC must be domiciled in New Zealand.

Host

The NZSMC may be hosted by an organisation or operate as an entirely standalone entity.

Scope

- > The NZSMC will assess the needs of the media and the science community, including Māori media, researchers and research organisations, and identify ways to improve their respective capabilities and linkages. It will structure its operations to ensure these improvements can be made.
- > The focus of the NZSMC will be solely upon matters related to RSI.
- > The NZSMC will primarily deal with New Zealand based RSI. International RSI can be included where there is relevance to New Zealand.
- > The NZSMC must add unique value over and above the activity already occurring within the RSI sector.
- > The NZSMC may co-ordinate, facilitate, enhance and/or complement but not duplicate the communication activities undertaken by other science-based organisations.
- > The NZSMC will not provide a service for the public, or for the education community, although some

resources will be able to be accessed and used by them.

- > The NZSMC will provide training and resources to assist researchers, scientists and their institutions to become better able to deal with the media's queries, to communicate their science effectively.

Independence

Actual and perceived independence is at the heart of the NZSMC model:

- > The NZSMC will operate as an editorially and operationally independent unit (where hosted by another organisation) or organisation responsible for its own strategic direction, operational matters and its communications and branding activities.
- > The Host's name and brand will not form any part of the activity that relates to the NZSMC and the NZSMC should not form part of the Host's operations.
- > The manager of the NZSMC will report to the Host's chief executive or nominee.
- > In its work the NZSMC will be editorially independent from:
 - > MBIE and any other government agency
 - > the Host (if any)
 - > from any organisation that funds, provides content to, or in any way supports the NZSMC.
- > Reflecting that public funds are invested in the NZSMC, the Host will be accountable to MBIE for the efficient operation of the NZSMC.
- > The NZSMC will ensure it does not appear to favour any particular medium, media outlet/s or institution/s.
- > The NZSMC will use an independent Advisory Group to help provide strategic guidance and editorial oversight for the NZSMC. Arrangements for operating the Advisory Group are determined by the Host but may not extend to directing the operations of NZSMC.
- > The Advisory Group will be responsible for hearing and resolving any public complaints concerning the NZSMC and the Host will be informed of any complaint received.
- > The NZSMC may draw on expertise from the Host organisation or elsewhere in the RSI sector.

Operating principles

The following operating principles inform the work of the NZSMC:

- > The NZSMC will not take any particular standpoint or position on RSI issues.
- > The NZSMC will not lobby on behalf of the government or the RSI sector.
- > The NZSMC will be neutral in matters of policy and politics. It will not act in a way that could reasonably be perceived to be supporting or opposing any aspect of government policy or any other issues subject to political debate.
- > The NZSMC will be open and transparent about its funding sources.
- > The NZSMC will operate to the highest ethical standards.
- > The NZSMC will operate in a way that is responsive and transparent.
- > These principles will apply to the NZSMC and any other activities funded by the NZSMC.
- > The Host must ensure that the NZSMC gives effect to The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi through its work programme and activities.
- > The Host must ensure that the NZSMC, as a signatory to the Global NZSMC Charter, is able to abide by the principles of the Charter.