

VMCF Question and Answers for the 2022 Funding Round

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Is the 11th of November the final date for submission of the full proposals?
 - Yes, your completed application needs to be submitted by 12 noon on the 11th of November.
- Do we need to register our expression of interest like Unlocking Curious Minds?
 - No, you can just go in and do the complete submission of your application, there is no need to register.
- What type of projects are a good fit for the fund?
 - Building capability within organisations, or within individuals. Developing new partnerships and going above business as usual for the organisations that are involved.
- What's the impact of the fund?
 - Including the 2021 investment round results, 224 projects have been funded, with a government investment of \$26.9 million since the fund began in 2013. We're seeing more successful proposals from Māori organisations each year.
- What was last year's success rate? How much funding was available last year, and how many applications did you receive?
 - Last year's success rate was roughly 20%, it is quite a competitive fund in-line with our other contestable funds.
 - \$2 million to invest in new projects.
 - We received 78 applications, of which 75 were eligible for assessment, a significant increase from previous years.
- How many projects can you fund?
 - This will depend on how much people ask for, last year we could fund up to 16 projects at \$250,000.
- How many new applicants were successful last year?
 - The success rate for new applicants was about 10%. New applicants often struggle to fill out the proposal as well as applicants who know the system, that's why we hold a webinar to help everyone make the best proposal possible!
- What is the success rate for Māori organisations?
 - The success rate for Māori organisations has been increasing since 2013, with 5 of our funded proposals last year from Māori organisations. Note that all of the proposals must have a Māori organisation.
- Is there an opportunity to make a presentation post application?
 - No, you need to ensure that you're putting your best foot forward and telling the narrative as well as you can as part of your application.

- Does MBIE provide support for applicants to put proposals together?
 - No we don't because this is a contestable fund and it wouldn't be fair, we can't provide you individual advice on your proposals. The support we provide includes this webinar where we try and answer your questions in general terms and make sure that everyone has the opportunity to attend. We put it up on the website afterwards for you to refer back to and help in entering your proposal into the portal.
- Can an organisation make multiple applications?
 - Yes they can.
- What happens if there are any separate competing but overlapping projects, do you do any matchmaking?
 - No, we assess each project on its own and fund or don't fund them based on that individual project itself.
- Will you be sending an email alert about panel members and was an email alert sent regarding this webinar?
 - Yes, and we've sent two about this webinar. If you haven't received these email alerts please make sure you sign up to our mailing list on our website, when we announce these things, because we do announce them to our VMCF mailing list.
- Where can I subscribe to mailing list?
 - You can subscribe to the MBIE emails for VMCF [here](#).
- Can you submit your application in te reo Māori?
 - Yes, you can submit your proposal in te reo Māori. If you do so, we ask that either you provide a separate translation in English alongside your application, or we will arrange for a translation of the proposal using our approved translation service after you have submitted it.

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

1. LEGAL ENTITY

- Is there any restriction on the type of legal entity? E.g., commercial, not-for-profit, charity, education?
 - No, as long as it's a New Zealand based single legal entity that is a Māori organisation, Research organisation, or individual researcher.
- Does the Māori organisation need to have a business number, what if you're a trust or Māori corporation?
 - No, you do not need to have a New Zealand business number, but you do need to be a single legal entity to be eligible to receive money from us. The quickest way for us to identify your organisation is via a New Zealand business number. If you do not know this we require a minimum of the name of your organisation, the more information you give us the quicker we can identify your organisation and set you up on our system. We also check other registers to see if you're a registered trust or a charitable trust.

2. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Can only one organisation apply?
 - No, it has to be a partnership between two organisations (with at least one Māori organisation) or between a Māori organisation and an individual researcher.
- Can you have more than one research organisation, i.e. three or more 'partners'?
 - Yes, you can have more than one research organisation involved or more than one Māori organisation involved. There can be a number of partners in the project, but the minimum is that it has to have one research organisation or individual researcher and one Māori organisation.
- Can you define the status of a Māori organisation, please?
 - A Māori organisation is by self-determination, therefore if the organisation has said that they're a Māori organisation that is considered to satisfy MBIE's eligibility check.
- What constitutes a research organisation? I'm assuming it's wider than CRIs and Universities.
 - It might be a University, CRI, individual research organisation, or an individual researcher. For example, the University of Auckland, Scion and BRANZ, are all considered research organisations, but that doesn't preclude anyone who's an individual and has the capability internally to carry out research to be an individual researcher.
- Can the Māori organisation have a research component if it is still partnering with another research organisation
 - Yes, absolutely.
- Can you clarify if the Māori organisation can be the application lead i.e. not the research agency?
 - Yes, the Māori organisation can be the lead, as long as they're single legal entity.
- Can Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) be research partners?
 - Yes, they can be a research partner. However, you also don't have to have a CRI or University as a research partner. You could also have an individual researcher as a research partner or a smaller research organisation.
- Are polytechs considered government agencies?
 - No, polytechs can apply for funding through us.
- Is there a growing preference for Māori led proposals, of the numbers last year, how many were Māori led?
 - Of the 16 proposals that we funded last year, five of those proposals were led by a Māori organisation. I wouldn't say there's a growing preference, we do encourage new organisations and particularly new Māori organisations to apply, but we also encourage you to lean on the experience of your research organisation partner if you need additional help in preparing your application.

- Will the team be allowed to have co-leadership by individuals from different organisations Māori and non-Māori? One organisation holds the contract?
 - Yes, one organisation will hold the contract, but every proposal is between partners so it doesn't matter which of the organisations holds the contract. One will always be the partner organisation, whether that's the research organisation or the Māori organisation.
- Do the research organisations have to be CRIs or universities, we have some of our staff with postgrad qualifications?
 - This indicates that you have internal research capability, so I think, in that case you could be classed as a research organisation.
- Can a government agency be a research partner?
 - No, one of our eligibility criteria is that Government departments can't be a part of the project as they can't receive funding from this fund. If you want to work with another agency like MfE, you could contact the agency directly and look for what kind of funding opportunities they have available.
 - Government departments can't get any money or be an official partner in the project. However, if some aspect of the project requires you to interface with a government department and talk to them to find out things about the project, you can still do that.
- Can individuals not associated with an organisation apply?
 - The eligibility criteria for the application must be from a single legal entity, so you would need to be a sole trader if you're doing this as an individual. In those instances you should contact VMCF or IMS support and we can help you through this particular instance. It might be easier in terms of eligibility for your partner organisation to be the one that is the applicant organisation.
- Can the outcome mainly be of benefit to one Māori-owned company?
 - The outcome of the project needs to be building capability, we want to see capability built within both partners. The project outcomes need to be beyond a single party benefit, we want it to be a multi-party benefit.
 - Also great to see dissemination of findings as well. That's one of the things the panel recommended from last year, they would like to see how we're disseminating the findings of our projects.

3. VISION MĀTAURANGA THEMES

- What counts as health research? What is the difference between health and wellbeing outcomes?
 - Addressing hauora means that the main benefits to your project will be to the health system. This includes research that is related to illnesses, disease, or other ailments. If in doubt, give us a call and we can talk through it together.
- Just to confirm, you can solely address oranga social well-being, but you cannot only address hauora?
 - Yes, if you address the oranga theme you can address it just by itself and not the other ones, but it must be in a social well-being sense, it can't be with a hauora focus.

- What was the name of the hauroa fund?
 - The Nga Kanohi Kitea grants from the Health Research Council (HRC)
 - Please visit: <https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/funding/maori-health-research/ng-kanohi-kitea-full-project-grants>
- Would you consider Māori Health Workforce Development solely health focused?
 - Yes we would. What we want to see is research, science and technology capability being built. If the capability is built around Māori health, that's not within the scope of this fund.

4. NO FULL-TIME-TERTIARY STUDENTS

- The definition of a student?
 - It's any full-time student, including PhD students. The reason we have this is because we aren't an educational fund. Our fund is a research and science fund, focused on building capability. Because of the way this funding is provided we are not funding education, nor students' stipends.
- Am I eligible if I want to develop an app to be used by students?
 - Yes, if the main outcome relates to the development of the science capability to make the app, rather than the implementation of the app in an educational setting. Remember, the funding is all about building science capability, not providing educational outcomes. The reason we need to do this, is because our funding is specifically for science, and there are other sources of funding for education.
- Students, I see the rule precludes full time tertiary students but does that imply this year that a part time tertiary student could be involved in a project?
 - Yes, the strict wording of the eligibility criteria is to not include any full time students.

CONNECT SCHEME

- Can the Connect be up to \$250,000 for two years, the same as the Placement?
 - Yes, it can be.
- What if it isn't a new connection, but it is a new and expanded project area that's beyond business as usual, but with an existing partner?
 - As we outline, you are still eligible to apply if it's not a new connection and a new relationship, but you should clearly outline the new capability that's going to be built. The narrative is around how this is going above and beyond what's already being built and the relationship that's already been built between the organisations.
- Do we need two organisations to partner for the Connect scheme?
 - Yes, all the applications must be between two organisations, a research organisation or individual researcher and a Māori organisation.
- Is the requirement for the new relationship mainly an emphasis for the Connect scheme?
 - No, it's actually an emphasis for both of the schemes. Our fund is all about building capability and we often find that proposals that have existing relationships don't score very well because the capability and the connection is already built. If you

want to have an existing relationship for either the Connect or the Placement, you really need to show how you're going above and beyond business as usual and building capability for both organisations or for that individual.

- With the connections focus, can it be focused upon development in a certain skills area or does it need to be a specific research topic question?
 - With the Connect scheme it's about building capability between and across both organisations, so if it's more around developing a particular skill set that might be something better suited for a Placement.
 - The thing to keep in mind is that this is a capability fund and we're looking for how that capability is built and the vehicle by which we do it, is by asking for the recent proposal. The research proposal is the narrative and what we're looking for is how the capability is going to be built and how that's going to deliver benefit to the organisations involved, and to the science and innovation system more broadly.

PLACEMENT SCHEME

- With the Placement scheme, how does that get funded and who is to foot the 10% co-funding contribution?
 - Like the Connect scheme, we ask that one of the partners in the project either the research organisation or the Māori organisation contributes 10% of what is requested from MBIE. For example, if you request \$200,000 from MBIE, then one of the partners has to provide \$20,000 minimum of co-funding and can either be cash or in-kind co-funding.
- Can it fund more than one individual?
 - Yes. When we're talking about the placement scheme you can have more than one individual doing a placement between organisations, you can have two people go from one organisation to another organisation or one person from each organisation to others.
- In the Placement Scheme, is eligibility for Māori students or scientists?
 - There is no specific requirement for Māori heritage, the placement individual will need to be someone who is not a full-time student. You can't have any full-time students on your project team, they're not eligible to be the placement.
- Multiple placements going in different directions
 - Yes, you can have multiple placements on the project. It doesn't have to be only one person. You can have multiple placements and they can go from either the research or the Māori organisation, into the other.
- What kind of reporting is required to document the placements and exchange of knowledge?
 - We do ask for both a mid and final report. These reports will document how the placements are going and your findings, and how you're going to disseminate them. As part of the application, we ask you to explain if there's going to be a placement, what the mentoring arrangements for that placement will be, and who will be providing the mentoring to the placement. We do ask that the placement individual is named as part of the application.

- For the placement – do you have to have already identified the individual for the placement?
 - Yes, we ask that you name the individual who's going to be your placement, because that's a really important part about assessing your proposal. We need to be able to assess that person and how their capability is going to be built, and you can name them in the project team section of your proposal.
- Why do I have to name the person who is going to be the Placement?
 - We need to be able to assess that person's skills that they'll be able to bring to the project. The Placement Scheme is focused on building the Placement's expertise, so we need to be able to know who will be a part of the project.
- Would a placement of a researcher into a Māori start-up be considered?
 - Yes, if you can clearly demonstrate that you have both a research organisation and the Māori organisation and that you're going to build capability and contribute to the aspirations of the Māori organisation and into their benefits of RS&T.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS)

- Can we establish an IMS portal login now?
 - Absolutely, yes. There are how-to-guides on our website and that will take you through it. It can take a few days, and it's really, really helpful for you to go in and check out the portal so you know what you have to fill in before you get to the last day. You don't want to go in and realise it's actually a ton of work. So please, please, get your IMS login now, we'll talk through that a little bit later on, but there's also guidance on our website.
- If your organisation may have applied for IMS in the past, but the individuals have left with access info, do you need to re-register and are you still able to have access to the history of the organisations in those previous applications?
 - Yes, if your Super User or organisation has in the past has access to IMS that information is stored there, including previous contracts. Your organisation will need to nominate a new Super User and the person to do that is someone of authority from your organisation, such as a CEO, director, or someone of authority, by contacting IMS support. They would give us the information of the organisation and request a new Super User to be added and we can remove the old Super Users as well.
- Does MBIE accept video recorded narratives as part of the application process?
 - No, guidance is provided in the Call for Proposals (p. 13-20) about what you're able to submit and not submit in each section. You'll see a narrative in the CfP that says, please no video or hyperlinks. Ultimately videos a strict no because the IMS system just won't hold everyone's video recordings, they're just too big.
- Can images and diagrams be submitted through the IMS web portal?
 - No, guidance is provided in the Call for Proposals (p. 13-20) about what you're able to submit and not submit in each section. We understand that this is a really useful way to communicate messages visually but it became an issue of fairness for both the applicants - in terms of being able to get more words into an image - and also for

our assessment panel members. This would actually put a large amount of mahi back onto them, not only would they have to read the words in the proposal, they would also have to read and understand the images which could contain quite a lot more detailed information.

- Does funding for personnel and the partner organisation appear in the subcontract line?
 - No, personnel (such as your staffing and internal spend) is different. In IMS there's a separate section for subcontracting

PAST PROPOSALS

- There's a couple of questions here about past proposals?
 - We list these on our website. There is a page that says "Funded Projects", in there we've got a list of all the proposals that were funded last year. At the bottom of the page there's a PDF for each of the years going back to 2013 that lists all the proposals and their public statements.
- When you ask if an organisation has previously access to funding, did you mean only the VMCF here?
 - Yes, you don't need to acknowledge all other previous MBIE Funding that you have received. Only VMCF projects and particularly ones that are relevant to the project that you're submitting here.
- Previous VMCF projects with different iwi partners?
 - Yes, when we ask for past proposals what we're looking for is for you to outline your past proposals and whether they were successful. Then it's for us to see what areas of overlap exist and that helps the assessment panel in determining how this goes above and beyond business as usual for your organisations.

PROJECT TEAM

- Guidance around seniority of project leads - how senior does your project lead have to be?
 - When we look at a project team, it helps us figure out your ability to deliver. It's really about the whole project team overall, and if you have younger people who are in your team, you want to see those are being mentored quite well. Same with placements. You want to make sure that they have really good mentors that are coming in and giving them the time they need to be mentored in their placement.
- In the case of an individual researcher what do you need as a demonstration of capability to do that research?
 - We'd look at things like: do they have research qualifications, have they published peer reviewed reports, or contributed to articles.
- Does a university degree demonstrate individual researcher capability?
 - The answer depends on the university degree. If there's a research component as part of that university degree and it's reasonably significant and sustained, then yes, for example, qualifications like a PhD or a Masters with a thesis component. A university degree at a bachelor's level, in general is not considered to show evidence

of research capability. It doesn't have to be a research qualification in order to demonstrate the ability to undertake research, it could also be contribution to peer reviewed and published work, you just need to be clear on how this capability has been met.

- Can I work with people that I've worked with before?
 - You can work with people that you have an existing relationship with, but typically established relationships don't score well in our assessment criteria.
- Can researchers conduct the research, can a postdoc be involved?
 - Yes.

BUDGET

- Can the total funding requested be split in uneven amounts per year? In other words not a 50:50 split?
 - Yes.
- So regarding the budget – 10% contribution is on top of the VMCF funds and is added onto your budget?
 - The income for your project will be the VMCF funding you request plus your co-funding. For example you request \$200,000 from MBIE, you provide \$20,000 of co-funding, which can be completely cash or it can be completely in-kind, or it can be a combination of both. Then your total budget for the project is \$220,000. In your budget you'll need to then allocate how that \$220,000 is going to be spent. And it doesn't matter whether your co-funding is in-kind or cash, as long as you're providing it.

CO-FUNDING

- Does time or overheads count as co-funding?
 - Yes, personnel time counts as in-kind co-funding, and you can pay overheads.
- With CRI's doing SSIF, can that be counted as cash?
 - You would need to be very clear about what are the areas of overlap, because we don't fund things that are already funded by a government agency. We would ask you to be very clear about what the project that you've been funded to do by SSIF is and how this differs.
- What's the thinking behind the co-funding not being split between the partners?
 - We don't allow the co-funding to be split between partners because we want to show that there's a clear buy-in from the partner organisation into the proposal. Both partners can contribute co-funding, but one of the partners on its own, must be able to meet the 10% percent requirement.
- Can the organisation that holds the contract, be the partner, contributing to the co-funding as well? So can the co-funding be from the organisation that's the applicant?
 - Yes, but it will still need to meet the requirements. It's more common not to be the partner holding the contract, but either partner can contribute, you just need to meet that minimum 10%. What we don't want to see is an organisation, who holds the contract and has applied, not putting any of the resource into the partner

organisation. So we expect that the research proposals are developed together between both organisations and that both organisations are getting benefit out of the proposal and the work program.

- Why is there a 10% minimum co-funding and where does this go?
 - This demonstrates a commitment between the partners. Co-funding goes into your budget to spend on the proposal. So if you apply for \$200,000 and the partner provides \$20,000, which is the minimum 10%, then your overall budget for the proposal is \$220,000 so that money doesn't come to MBIE, it's used for your project.
- Can both organisations provide co-funding?
 - Yes, provided, one of the partners has to meet the minimum by themselves.
- Can the lead organisation or Māori organisation provide the co-funding?
 - Yes.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

- Who owns IP?
 - The Contract holder owns all the IP, but you also can make an IP management plan with your partner.

ASSESSORS

- Who are the assessors?
 - This year we have 10 assessors, their names and bios will be posted on the VMCF website.
- How many assessors for each proposal?
 - Last year there were 4 individual assessors per proposal, we aim to do the same this year.
- How do you measure success of the program as a whole?
 - The independent assessors score your proposals against the four assessment criteria in the VMCF Fund. The success of funded projects is monitored over time through the midpoint and the final reports.
 - Please see the Assessment Guidelines for more details on the criteria you will be assessed against
- And do we see the criteria of what the panellists are choosing from before we apply?
 - If you go on to our website, you can have a look at the document called 'Assessment Guidelines'. This document contains all the criteria your proposals will be assessed against. The assessment panel members are not from MBIE, have experience in Vision Mātauranga and are either scientists or have business expertise or work in the Community.

REPORTING

- How clearly does the research question need to be articulated, can the development of the research question be a part of the project?
 - No, because we need to clearly assess your project against the assessment criteria. If the scope of your project isn't clearly defined, then it will be difficult to assess and we won't be able to see how capability will be developed and assess ability to deliver if we don't know what you're delivering against.
- Are publications an expected output for this fund?
 - No. As part of the funding proposal we'll ask you to talk about what are the expected outcomes one, two, and five years after receiving the funding. Publications might be an output but aren't expected.
- Is there a timeline for the outcomes of the project?
 - You'll need to answer in the proposal, what the outcomes will be one, two, and five years after your project.
- Must raw data for research projects be declared to MBIE?
 - No. We need to see a summary from your data findings not the raw data.

OTHER

- Any guidance on creative arts research?
 - For creative arts, you'll still have to meet all of the exact same themes and assessment criteria. So, if you really strongly meet one of the Vision Mātauranga outcomes, you'll need to tell that story in your proposal. Make sure that you answer each of those assessment criteria really well. Again, we're looking for building capability networks and connections in research, science, and technology.
- Are there support organisations to support Māori?
 - Both partners in the project should be supporting each other. If there's any resources that the research organisation or individual researcher has that they're able to offer the Māori organisation as a part of supporting the project, that's one of the best ways that you can get support.
- Experience - if you're an applicant who doesn't have as much experience with your application.
 - We still expect the same standards of those who might have a bit more experience because our fund is a contestable process, so we fund the best proposals that we get every year. Everyone who's applying needs to meet the criteria, meet them well and submit a good application because that's how they're going to get funding.
- Planning to work with tohunga Māori, are they classed as researchers, or is it only researchers from Universities?
 - Providing that their partner has research capability or there are people in that organisation that have individual capability to undertake research, then they're eligible. It doesn't have to be people just from universities.

- What if the project is about the maramataka Māori moon calendar? There isn't anyone that has research capability in all aspects of the maramataka as it is new research territory that's very extensive in its application and covers many aspects of the tiho.
 - There doesn't already need to be research capability in there. What we would be looking for is that there's still that partnership and that a joint project has been developed between a Māori organisation and individual researcher or someone who has the capability to undertake research, so the same thing applies. It's fine to be looking into an area that hasn't been looked into deeply before. We understand that there might not be expertise in that particular area, but that is what the capability fund can be about.
- For researchers that are interested in doing Māori related research but don't have a partnership with a Māori organisation, for example, it could be the case for early career researchers, will MBIE be providing matching workshops in the future?
 - That's something we hadn't considered and not something we have the capacity to do currently. But we do encourage you to reach out to organisations that you might want to work with and approach them to partner with you. This comes through really strongly to the assessment panel members when projects are genuine in terms of their partnership and it's clear when the resources put into both partners and the project.
- Are there any residency visa limitations?
 - If you are in the country, we don't look into people's visas during the application process. The eligibility criteria is that the majority of the work be undertaken in New Zealand.
- Would VMCF fund more focused on Māori matauranga based development and innovation, can it be used for purely science based projects partnering with Māori and science providers?
 - Yes, it can. What you need to be clear about is how does it build on the aspirations of the Māori organisations involved and do you have the mandate to undertake the work. In the past our proposals have been more in the matauranga space but it doesn't exclude you from doing a science project provided it's been co-developed with your partner organisation.
- For Māori led proposals if there are consortia with iwi and hapū does this level of detail, need to be explicit. And how much background checking does the assessment panel and MBIE undertake itself with the lead Māori partner?
 - From the MBIE side we don't look into the detail. A Māori organisation is by self-determination, therefore if the organisation has said that they're a Māori organisation that is considered to satisfy MBIE's eligibility check. The assessment panel may look in more detail and providing narrative around the iwi/hapū/partners involved can be useful so they can get a sense of who is doing the mahi and whether the project team is appropriate.
- Can you explain the relationship between SfTI project funding and VM funding?
 - SfTI is a national science challenge that has a specific amount of money to invest in this particular area, VMCF is a separate fund. We aren't entirely familiar with the

requirements of SfTI's funding scheme and suggest that you have a look at those to decide which fund fits your needs the best.

- Are there any future plans to increase the available funding?
 - Not at the moment.
- Māori organisations preferred as applicants versus research organisations?
 - There isn't a preference on who is holding the contract as such and that is something that the assessment panel can answer themselves.