



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

AN OPPORTUNITY TO HOST THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH PLATFORM



2022
**ASSESSMENT
GUIDELINES**

New Zealand Government



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful

MBIE develops and delivers policy, services, advice and regulation to support economic growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders. MBIE combines the former Ministries of Economic Development, Science + Innovation, and the Departments of Labour, and Building and Housing.

More information

Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website, www.mbie.govt.nz, or by calling us free on 0800 20 90 20.

Disclaimer

This document is a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice.

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Online: ISBN 978-1-99-102214-1

Published: November 2021

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FOREWORD

Tēnā koutou

Thank you for agreeing to assess the applications to Host the Infectious Diseases Research Platform. The primary responsibility of the Host will be to coordinate the development of an Infectious Diseases Research Platform plan that meets the objectives of the Research Platform.

These guidelines detail what is involved in the assessment of applications for a Host of the Infectious Diseases Research Platform and the role that you will play in that process. Informed assessment of proposals is a critical aspect of our investment process, as it forms the basis of our funding recommendations.

Panellists from MBIE and Ministry of Health have been selected based on your knowledge and experience of investment processes, the policy intent of the Infectious Diseases Research Platform, and the environment in which the Platform will operate. The names of all Panellists and their affiliated organisations will be published on our website.

The experience and expertise that you bring to the investment process is greatly appreciated. Thank you for supporting our science investment processes.

INTRODUCTION

As an Assessor, you are critical in helping us identify the proposal that has the greatest potential to meet the objectives of the Host and the Infectious Diseases Research Platform investment opportunity.

The mission of the Platform is **'To ensure New Zealand has world class research capability to respond to serious infectious disease threats.'**

These guidelines detail the assessment process and the key assessment roles and responsibilities.

We recommend that you read this document in conjunction with the Opportunity to host the Infectious Diseases Research Platform Call for Proposals 2022 and other relevant information on our [webpages](#) for this hosting opportunity.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Email Assessment queries: SSIF.investment@mbie.govt.nz

Phone 0800 693 778 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm)

PANELLISTS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following outlines the key roles and responsibilities involved in the assessment of proposals for a host of the Infectious Diseases Research Platform.

ASSESSOR

Your role as an Assessor on the Panel is to assess the proposal(s) and contribute to the Panel discussion. Your key responsibilities include:

- > Declaring any conflicts of interest and adhering to our confidentiality and privacy policies.
- > Reading and assessing assigned proposals. You should use the assessment template below to record your preliminary assessments of each proposal against the assessment criteria.
- > Attending an Assessment Panel meeting where:
 - > panellists discuss their preliminary assessments
 - > the Chair facilitates a consensus assessment on each proposal and on overall recommendations on selection of a Host
 - > MBIE staff record advice on the assessment results.

The Assessment Panel does not have delegated authority to make investment decisions.

PANEL CHAIR

The role of the Chair is to:

- > Identify and take appropriate action over conflicts of interest.
- > Allow time for informed discussion and equitable decision-making and mediate views if required.
- > Ensure that:
 - > the assessment criteria are followed, and
 - > the Assessment Panel reaches a consensus on the proposal(s) to inform a funding recommendation and to enable feedback to the applicant or applicants.
- > Approve feedback to applicants if this feedback is needed prior to a funding recommendation being made.
- > Approve a Panel Meeting Report including a funding recommendation.
- > Confidentiality and Privacy.

Confidentiality and Privacy

To ensure confidentiality, as an assessor you must:

- > Ensure the safekeeping of all proposals and related documents (e.g., workbooks, notes, etc.).
- > Destroy any remaining documentation or return it to MBIE at the end of the assessment process.
- > Not correspond with or discuss the contents or assessment of any proposal with the applicant or any other party. If an applicant contacts you about a proposal:
 - > direct them to us, and
 - > email us at SSIF.investment@mbie.govt.nz
- > Not use any confidential information for any purpose other than assessment.

Official Information Act 1982

Proposals and their assessments are confidential. Note however that we are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 therefore information relating to an assessment may be released if we are requested to do so under the Act.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

MBIE follows a rigorous process to maintain the credibility of investment decisions and to assure applicants that their proposal is fairly and reasonably appraised. All conflicts of interest must be declared to MBIE.

If you identify a direct conflict with a proposal you must decline the assignment. If you identify an indirect conflict, email us at SSIF.investment@mbie.govt.nz with the details for further discussion before accepting or declining the assignment.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

Conflicts of interest may occur on two levels; direct and indirect.

- > A direct conflict of interest would be deemed if you are:
 - > directly involved with a proposal (as a participant, manager, mentor, or partner) or you have a close personal relationship with the applicant, for example, family members, or
 - > a collaborator or in some other way involved with an applicant's proposal.
- > An indirect conflict of interest would be deemed if you:
 - > are employed by an organisation involved in a proposal but you are not part of the applicant's proposal
 - > have a personal and/or professional relationship with one of the applicants, for example, an acquaintance
 - > have or had involvement with a proposal that is in direct competition with a proposal being assessed or where the impacts proposed by a proposal under discussion may compete with your personal business interests.

HANDLING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DURING THE ASSESSMENT PANEL MEETING

If there is a **direct conflict** of interest with a proposal about to be discussed during the Panel meeting, declare the conflict to the Assessment Panel Chair. You will be required to leave the room during the ensuing assessment discussion.

The actions required for a declared **indirect conflict** of interest is the discretion of the Chair; this could be to:

- > leave the room
- > stay but remain silent unless asked to respond to a direct question
- > contribute to the assessment of the proposal.

Should the Chair declare a conflict of interest with a proposal, a Deputy Chair will be appointed for the ensuing assessment discussion.

All conflict of interest declarations and resulting assessor actions during the Panel meeting will be recorded.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Below are the key dates and an overview of the assessment process.

KEY DATES

DATE	KEY ACTIVITY
3 November until 5pm 26 November 2021	Proposal submission period
29 November	Proposals provided to Assessors
By 3 December 2021	Panel meeting
No later than 10 December 2021	Applicants are advised of outcome
December 2021/January 2022	Establishment contract period
March to May 2022	Final assessment and contracting
1 June 2022	Contracts begin

All dates are New Zealand Standard Time

TIME COMMITMENT

We envisage your involvement in the assessment process to be as follows.

UP TO	TO
Half a day	Read through these guidelines and background documents
3-4 hours per proposal	Read your assigned proposals, assign scores
Up to half a day	Attend the Assessment Panel meeting in Wellington, New Zealand or online

HOW AND WHEN PROPOSALS ARE ASSIGNED

From 29 November 2021, we will provide the proposal(s) by email. All panellists will read all the proposals received.

HOW AND WHEN ASSESSMENTS ARE RECORDED

You will record your preliminary assessment using the scoring grid below. If more than one proposal is received, fill out one grid per proposal. This must occur on or before the Panel meeting by 3 December 2021. Bring your written notes on proposals as input into the Panel meeting.

ASSESSMENT PANEL MEETING

The Assessment Panel meets in Wellington or online on 3 December 2021. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- > Discuss preliminary assessments and supporting comments.
- > Reach a consensus.
- > Agree Panel actions on the proposals.

The Panel's discussion and moderation may take into account any additional information gathered during the assessment process. Further details on this meeting will be sent to you closer to the time.

The Assessment Panel does not have delegated authority to make investment decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUNDING DECISIONS

The Assessment Panel discusses and reaches a consensus about actions to take in respect of the proposals. The two actions include:

- > If the Panel consensus is that no proposal received is suitable for funding, or that more information is needed from one or more applicants, the Panel will identify the actions needed to move to a funding recommendation. Actions could include seeking more information from applicants and/or encouraging applicants to submit a combined proposal. The Panel will set a deadline by which further information or new proposals should be provided to MBIE, and a new panel date to assess that information.
- > If the Panel consensus is that it has sufficient information to make a funding recommendation, the Panel will identify the preferred Host organisation, their consensus comments, and recommendations will inform the Panel Chair's funding recommendation report. These can include feedback to unsuccessful applicants, if applicable.

Informed by the Panel Chair's funding recommendation, MBIE's Deputy Secretary, Labour, Science and Enterprise will make the final investment decisions.

Decisions on the Host will be publicly announced in December 2021. We will provide applicants with general feedback based on the Assessment Panel's comments about the overall quality of proposals.

PERFORMING ASSESSMENTS

Use the following procedure to assess proposals.

THE ASSESSMENT STEPS

1. **Read and understand the investment objectives and principles in the Call for Proposals to host of the Infectious Diseases Research Platform 2022, and the assessment criteria and guide on page 11 of this document.**

2. **Identify potential conflicts of interest for proposals.**

If you deem a conflict of interest exists (see page 5 for details) then discuss it with the Chair, who will advise the appropriate action.

3. **Read each proposal and note your assessment and comments in the table on page 11.**

Only assess the information presented in the proposal. Applicants are obliged to present the relevant information. If a proposal has obvious gaps, reflect this in your assessment and detail the significant issues in your comments.

Independently score each proposal using the assessment criteria (see page 11 for details).

For each criterion, choose an assessment description of either: 'Excellent', 'Good but some gaps', or 'Insufficient' which reflects how well you consider the proposal meets this criterion in the context of this investment opportunity.

While certain sections of proposals specifically align with the assessment criteria, evaluate the proposal as a whole before finalising your assessment.

At the bottom of the assessment, note your overall assessment of the proposal using either; 'Has met all criteria', 'Has met or is near most criteria', 'Hasn't met criteria, insufficient, or missing information'.

Ensure that your comments are accurate, professional, honest, and correlate to the Investment objectives and principles set out in this document. Do not include names and be mindful that if requested to do so, they may be made available under the Official Information Act 1982.

Exercise your knowledge, judgement and expertise to reach clear and soundly based assessments that are fair, objective and evidence-based.

4. **Participate in an Assessment Panel meeting.**

5. **Securely destroy (or return to us) all proposals and supporting documentation when the assessment process is complete.**

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

The investment objectives of both the Host and the Research Platform are outlined below.

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE HOST	INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PLATFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Coordinate the development of a Platform Plan that meets the objectives of the Research Platform in conjunction with key stakeholders and guided by the Platform Establishment Steering Group. > Coordinate priority setting that is consistent with the objectives, principles, and themes/priorities of the Platform, and the funding and term available. > Manage a Platform Plan, once approved by MBIE, guided by the Platform Steering Group in a way that delivers the mission and goals specified above, and consistent with the principles and themes/priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Deliver an integrated research programme in partnership with researchers, clinicians, Māori, and New Zealand Pacific Peoples. > Demonstrate research excellence that builds New Zealand's capability in infectious disease research and research translation. > Contribute to international research through collaborations in infectious disease research. > Contribute to strengthened collaboration between researchers, clinicians, health agencies, Māori, and New Zealand Pacific Peoples. > Contribute to improving health outcomes and increasing equity of health outcomes. > Contribute to significantly lifting New Zealand's infectious disease response and management capability. > Addressing key gaps and creating an agile and integrated research and response system. > Contribute to increasing New Zealand's preparedness and readiness for infectious disease outbreaks.

PRINCIPLES CUTTING ACROSS ALL AREAS OF THIS PLATFORM

The principles of the platform are to:

- > Foster connection, create inter-disciplinary world-class research and create a pipeline of research capability.
- > Help fulfil the Government's Tiriti obligations.
- > Embrace novel approaches that are in addition to current capability and outputs.
- > Span research horizons; generating new ideas, develop emerging ideas, and leverage proven ideas.
- > Create a pipeline of new ideas and opportunities to inform public health, clinical policy and practice.
- > Focus on major research questions in priority areas at the frontier of the fight against infectious diseases.
- > Focus on transformative outcomes, which may involve high-risk/high-return research.
- > Contribute to growing an integrated research and response system and not duplicate existing capability.

RESEARCH THEMES

The research has two broad themes spanning public health, social, and biomedical sciences. Research conducted under the Platform must be consistent with these themes.

Theme 1: Improved prevention and control of infectious diseases. This could be achieved through research and understanding:

- > Determinants, transmission, and risk factors.
- > Preparedness in public health and social measures to prevent and control infection.
- > Vaccine research, development, and delivery.

Theme 2: Improved management of and response to infectious diseases. This could be achieved through research:

- > To develop and use a wide range of diagnostics, including genomics.
- > In surveillance and outbreak investigation and control.
- > To develop and deliver therapeutics.

MEETING THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF MĀORI

The Platform will help fulfil the needs and aspirations of Māori, and the Government’s Tiriti obligations, through:

- > The Platform co-creating an integrated research programme in partnership with Māori, including Māori researchers and communities, coordinated by the Platform Host.
- > Research seeking to increase equity of health outcomes, and specifically address infectious diseases that affect Māori communities disproportionately.
- > Research programmes expected to include Māori researchers, as well as provide opportunities to develop a diverse set of early-career researchers.
- > Potential providers required to demonstrate how they propose to incorporate Te Ao Māori in the research, delivery of the proposed outreach, and impact.
- > The Vision Mātauranga policy and objectives being incorporated into the assessment criteria (this guides the incorporation of science and innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people).

INVESTMENT OUTCOMES

The investment outcomes of both the Host and the Research Platform are outlined below.

INVESTMENT OUTCOMES OF THE HOST	INVESTMENT OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH PLATFORM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > An integrated programme of research meeting the Infectious Diseases Research Platform mission, investment goals, principles, and research themes. > A robust and fit for purpose process for developing this integrated programme. > Activities and outputs required to achieve the integrated programme such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > workshops and documentation of their outputs > progress updates and interactions with the Platform Host Steering Group and associated records > interactions with communities and their outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Workforce pipeline to develop early career, Māori, and Pacific researchers. > Collaborations between domestic and international researchers. > High quality science to contribute to the global knowledge pool and New Zealand’s international reputation. > New Zealand relevant knowledge to address New Zealand specific issues. > Policies adopted by government, community, Māori, and Pacific people’s health and social service providers. > Diverse and equitable research capability and equitable participation in research.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING GRID

Use this scoring grid to assess each proposal against the criteria and in the context of the Infectious Diseases Research Platform's Objectives, Principles, Research Themes, and Outcomes. When completing your assessments, exercise your knowledge, judgement, and expertise to reach assessments that are sound, fair, objective, and evidence-based.

Assessment criterion		Scoring
<p>MBIE's Host SSIF Assessment Panel will consider the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The proposed Host's track record in developing and maintaining good, collaborative relationships with research organisations, with specific interest in its relationships with Māori and Pacific Peoples groups and organisations. > The extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the proposed Host can coordinate and support the development of a large-scale, integrated and collaborative programme of research. > The credibility of the proposed Host's plan to carry out that coordination (taking into account past performance, credibility of the project team, and the proposed plan). > The extent to which the Host has identified partners, including Māori and Pacific Peoples partner organisations, who can provide current and future capability for a Platform of infectious disease research, and the state of those partnerships. > The experience, reputation, expertise, transdisciplinary, and diversity of people that the proposed Host identifies to lead that coordination. > The mechanisms the Host will use to identify and select research activities, with its diverse partners and guided by the Platform Establishment Steering Group for incorporation into the Platform. > The extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the Host can manage a contract that facilitates collaborative relationships, over the life of the Platform. > The extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the Host can provide services to the Platform. 	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Excellent, or > Good but some gaps, or > Insufficient 	
<p>Overall match of proposal to criteria.</p>	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Has met all criteria, or > Has met or is near most criteria, or > Hasn't met criteria, insufficient, missing information' 	



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