

2021 Endeavour Fund Roadshow Q&As

Health-related research

1. What types of proposals with health-related outcomes are within scope of Endeavour?

A: The scope for Endeavour is Economic, Environment, and Societal outcomes. To be eligible for Endeavour, proposals must have less than 50% of the outcomes in health, defence, and expanding knowledge. Note that the eligibility criterion relates to the **outcomes** of the research, not the **type of research** than you are doing.

To test this, look at the impacts of the proposal: what are the health-related outcomes compared with the non-health-related outcomes? If the non-health outcomes are more than 50% of the outcomes, then it is suitable for Endeavour, but if the health benefits, (including cost savings to the healthcare system) are greater than the economic benefits then the proposal is likely to be more suitable for funding through the Health Research Council. This test includes proposals such as those involving public health, medical devices (eg, those that will support the response to COVID-19), and projects involving health-related clinical trials as part of product development.

2. What Government Funding is available to COVID-19 related diagnostics? s

A: The COVID-19 Innovation Acceleration Fund was a short-term fund and that is now closed. If the proposal outcomes are less than 50% health, defence or expanding knowledge then you can apply to Endeavour. If your outcomes are more than 50% health-related then you can apply to Health Research Council. If your research has previously received Government funding you may apply to Pre-Seed Accelerator mechanism such as Kiwinet or Return on Science to support commercialisation of these ideas.

Portfolio balancing

3. Are the research objective portfolio targets of 70:25:5 Economic: Environmental: Society rigid each year? If one outcomes area is heavily invested in a particular round, does it mean there is not more funding available for that area in subsequent rounds?

A: No. Research Programmes will be ending each year, so there is continual topic turnover within Endeavour. What is funded also depends on what applications are submitted, their merit, and alignment with the Investment Signals. If your proposal is in one of the areas of high investment concentration it should be of very high merit to justify further investment in this area. The Science Board has shown it has some flexibility around the targets and categories.

4. The Impact Category (Protect and add value, Transform) target of 40% Transform for the 2020 Endeavour round was exceeded in the Science Board decision. Will the Science Board look to rebalance the Endeavour investment towards Protect and add value proposals in the 2021 round to get to the 50:50 targets?

A: There are many targets that the Science Board is asked to balance across; the increase investment in transform proposals in the 2020 round is a reflection of the types of applications that were received. What happens in 2021 round depends on the applications that come in at the time, but the Science Board is still required to balance those across the portfolio targets. If we were to signal any direction that would be in the Investment Plan, but the Investment Plan for the 2021 Endeavour round is the same as the 2019 and 2020 rounds.

5. Why are you using the 2008 ANZSRC codes in the 2021 round?

A: Because they were introduced too late for us to implement in the 2021 round, and the 2008 codes align with the 2019-2021 Investment Plan. We will give you plenty of notice before

changing to the new ANZSRC codes and discuss with you what the impact of that change will be. We acknowledge the weakness of the codes and we also ask for additional classification within the application, and encourage you to fill in all the sections of the application to provide this information to us.

6. Should applicants tick that they are aligned with all the Investment Signals?

A: Tick all those that genuinely apply. The degree of alignment to these is provided to the Science Board. Note that S1 and S2 are for Economic proposals only.

7. Are proposals declined due to portfolio balancing prioritised in the following investment round?

A: No each proposal is separate and has a new stand-alone assessment process each round.

8. Where can I find the portfolio targets, and what is investment in the current portfolio prior to preparation of proposals? How can we tell which investments are ending?

A: The portfolio targets are outlined in the Investment Plan on the MBIE Endeavour website. The current Endeavour investments are also on the MBIE website. Information about proposal end dates is on the MBIE who got funded webpage. The Science Board is Independent and their decision is guided by the Investment Plan but also depends on the type and quality of the proposals submitted.

9. Can you tell us what portfolio target our proposal sits in?

A: This is chosen by the applicant when they submit their proposal and is based on their ANZSRC SEO codes. MBIE may seek to clarify this if there is some ambiguity. When you select these codes you should consider your intended incomes and work back to select this. We understand there can be multiple impacts that cross outcome areas. Are advised in the Call for Proposals, we prefer you to be clear about the main outcome of your research.

10. In assessing duplication, does the Science Board consider investment from other government agencies such a MPI?

A: They assess duplication across the entire system, both internally and externally. We will provide advice to the wider science system if there is an obvious case of duplication (these are rare). If you have an application with research that is similar and complimentary to work going on the science system make a point of highlighting why it is complementary and how it builds on existing science, it will help you to show an assessor that it is not duplication.

11. Will there be a focus on COVID-19's medium- to long-term impact on specific audiences, such as vulnerable households and small businesses in the 2021 round?

A: The Endeavour Investment Plan hasn't changed for the 2021 round and it doesn't mention COVID-19. The Endeavour Fund is open to all topic outcomes excluding public health, defence and expanding knowledge, which should be less than 50% of the outcomes of the proposal. A proposal that is going to lead to outcomes for New Zealand may include how COVID-19 has impacted New Zealand.

12. Is there a central gathering point for the latest Government strategic documents?

A: No. A good place to start would be the Government department most related to your activities.

13. Will the CRI's core investment programs details be released to help assess independent research providers to ensure that they do not duplicate?

A: There is some information publically available on the MBIE website. Once NZRIS is operational that will also be able to provide information on what's going on across a range of investment contracts.

Collaborators

14. Are we expected to include Government agency staff as part of the research team, if the specific government agency is a key stakeholder?

A: It's certainly important to engage with Government if they are a key stakeholder. You can't use Endeavour to pay for Government staff time to work on the programs. As referred to in the Endeavour 2021 Gazette Notice, individuals who are employed in a department of the public service as listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988 should not receive Endeavour Funding – check this list to make sure you're funding the correct organisations within your proposal. Involving staff from other Government departments would be a contribution from those departments (in-kind co-funding in your proposal) and demonstrates that they value the research and will use it as you go forward and that would also show good alignment with Government policy.

15. How do we articulate who 'team' is if we are not paying them - i.e., can we state who is on our team if they are just in an advisor capacity?

A: If a team member is a genuine team member they should be paid for their work and their FTE included in the application under the fully costed model we operate. If there are differences in the way some team members are being paid it's important to fully explain this in your proposal. There is no minimum FTE for team members in the "Other" category in the FTE table.

16. How much end user engagement is required for Smart Ideas?

A: This can vary because frequently Smart Ideas are earlier in the pipeline and end-users may not exist yet, or you may not know who they are yet. It's useful to ensure there is involvement from even de facto end-users to provide guidance around how the research can be implemented and considered on a case-by-case basis.

17. Can co-funding that is non-financial (for example such as cloud computing credits) be included in applications list them?

A: Yes these can be included as in-kind co-funding; they are in-kind support of the programme.

International Collaborators

18. Are International Collaborators compulsory?

A: No. Proposals should show that you are leveraging the best National and International knowledge, as appropriate for the area of work. A lot of the expertise may only be in New Zealand for a particular area – you can justify your position either way, in the proposal.

19. How can risks associated with New Zealand entry of international collaborators be included in proposals given the possibility of COVID-19 border restrictions?

A: It is important to acknowledge this risk and include a plan for it in your proposal.

20. Can the salaries and overheads of international collaborators be included in proposals?

A: Yes. Provided the project is on issues facing New Zealand and the benefits are for New Zealand.

21. How would assessors view the involvement of international industry partners in the implementation pathways compared with local manufacturers?

A: International industry partners are possible, and in some cases appropriate. The Benefit to New Zealand is an assessment criterion, so the benefit should be returned to New Zealand in the maximal way possible and should be clearly articulated.

Cancellation of the 2020 Smart Ideas

22. Can Smart Ideas Concepts from the 2020 round be resubmitted?

A: Yes. We are anticipating more Smart Ideas proposals submitted in 2021 because the 2020 round was cancelled. We recommend you update the proposal prior to submission. Resubmissions will be considered the same as new submissions and all will have new assessments in 2021.

23. Is funding from the cancelled 2020 Smart Ideas round being carried over to the 2021 round, so that more Smart Ideas proposals can be funded in the 2021 round?

A: No. The Endeavour 2021 Gazette Notice provides information about how much money is available to invest in the 2021 Endeavour round and this is the normal amount that would be invested for 2021. The funding from the cancelled 2020 Smart Ideas round was used to extend the existing Endeavour contracts that would have had their payments end in September 2020. Some of that money was also put into the COVID-19 Innovation Acceleration Fund as well. So the money is not being carried forward for future Endeavour Investment rounds.

24. What Smart Ideas 2020 Concepts would have progressed to Full Proposal stage?

A: All of quintile 1 and some of quintile 2. The cut-off is based on a rank order list of the median scores. The Science Board makes its decision on the list based on the scores, and the quintiles are added after the decision.

Assessment of Vision Mātauranga

25. Why do you specifically align Assessors with specific expertise in the assessment of Vision Mātauranga to proposals that indicated they were at least 50% kaupapa Māori, or Māori-centred? Does this occur with Smart Ideas too?

A: Because there is a limited pool of assessors with this specific expertise, we want to make sure there are specialist assessors for this area of research. For all proposals we work to ensure that the assessors we assign to proposals are best aligned in terms of expertise, skill or experience to the content of the proposal.

26. What are the attributes of a proposal if Vision Mātauranga is 'Moderately well' addressed?

A: There is additional information on strengthening your approach to Vision Mātauranga in Appendix 2 of the Call for Proposals. In proposals when Vision Mātauranga is considered very well addressed you would see the co-design and co-development with Māori. You would also see Māori involved in the project to the extent where Māori are steering some aspects of the programme, and have involvement in governance groups, or to see Māori scientists involved in the project. Vision Mātauranga that is 'Moderately well addressed' will fall below that scale and the assessors consider there is room for improvement.

General Questions

27. When is the new 2022-2024 Investment Plan likely to be published?

A: This is expected in May-June 2021. We will need to consult with the incoming Government.

28. What is the maximum subcontract value in proposals?

A: There is no upper limit, although if it is very high there may be questions about whether the subcontractor should actually be the lead/contracting organisation so you may want to address this in the application.

29. Is there expected to be a move away from CVs to ORCHID?

A: No, not in the 2021 round.

30. Can you apply for a different amount of funding each year of the proposal?

A: MBIE pays monthly in advance, with a flat payment schedule. Although, if there are other pay requirements you can discuss with MBIE once the contract has been awarded.

31. Can MBIE provide us examples of successful proposals?

A: No. MBIE isn't in a position to make full proposals available to the public. Because these are provided to MBIE for the purposes of assessment and they belong to the applicants. On the MBIE webpage there is a list of which proposals were successful. This list includes their public statements and whether they were Transform or Protect and Add Value. If you want more detail than that you would need to go to the Research Offices for the organisations, ask them to talk to the applicants, and see if you can get permission to have a look at their proposal.

32. What were the diversity balance measures for successful 2020 Endeavour Fund applications for lead and co-leads?

A: We ask voluntary diversity questions when applicants submit. These are separate to the application itself so we cannot answer this question directly because we do not collect that data. We encourage diversity and this has been a big focus for the Government and we encourage applicants to consider this in their teams. The underlying principle is that diverse teams perform better.

33. Does MBIE expect the assessors to have full knowledge of MBIE's Results Chain Pathway - will MBIE continue to be using this model?

A: The 2021 Endeavour Round is using the same Investment Plan as previous years. The Results Chain Pathway terminology may be implemented in future rounds.

34. The transform category has been increasing in the last years. Transform category might be more likely to lead to innovative solutions connected to IP and ownership. How does MBIE balance this category (being a public fund, public money) with IP and ownership?

A: The IP policy that MBIE has is to divest that IP to the applicant who is in the best position to exploit that. Our main goal is to maximise benefit to New Zealand from the taxpayers' money.

35. Who appoints the assessors (Excellence and Impact)? MBIE or the Science Board?

A: MBIE appoints the assessors. We have a College of Assessors made up of people with sufficient merit – we are constantly working to appoint new assessors to ensure we have a diverse mix of people – from that College we appoint Assessors to the proposals.

36. Is an MBIE representative part of the Science Board?

A: No, the Science Board is independent from MBIE.

37. Are proposals with co-Science Leaders funded very often

A. It's not a criterion that used in assessment; there is no discrimination between having one or two leaders. Where there are co-leaders there should be clarity regarding how it will be lead, how decisions will be made, and how it will work going forward. Rationale around why

the proposal needs two co-leaders would also be beneficial and can be included in the team section of your proposal.

38. If a proposal is creating a completely new service it can be difficult to estimate the potential size of the market, how much detail is expected in the proposal (i.e. would you expect to see business case type modelling of the potential economic impact)?

A: It depends a little on which area you are going into. If it's Smart Ideas it's well up the pipeline and there can be unknowns around the sorts of markets you're going to target, or a lack of companies already in that area. We're not looking for hard and fast estimates there; it's dependent on the state of the programme. If you are making assumptions about markets, make sure, to the extent possible, that these are justified or have evidence to back them up.

When you start moving into Research Programmes we're looking for validation of the potential need, a lot of this come through from your end users. This is likely to be different for Transform and Protect and add value. The more appropriate information you can share the more it will help assessors determine if it's a valid need for New Zealand. There is no requirement for different calculations showing that the market is there, but assessors do want to see that the market is real and exact in terms of its existence. It is useful to include a brief synopsis of competing technologies or approaches to the same issue.

39. For a Research Programme proposal, can assessors consider the benefit of supporting of previous Smart Ideas-funded research?

A: This is suitable, provided you demonstrate the novelty of the current proposal compared with the previous.

40. Are Smart Ideas Concepts is assessed on Excellence only, or Impact too?

A: Smart Ideas Concepts are only assessed for Excellence. Feedback from assessors to MBIE was that even though they were assessing Excellence if they didn't have any knowledge whatsoever about impact they found it really hard to put the science into context to evaluate it fairly and appropriately. So that's why the Concept application has a small section to provide a brief statement about impact to help assessors give you a fair assessment of your science Excellence.

41. Is it possible to submit a Research Program and Smart Idea on the same topic?

A: Smart Ideas and Research Programs have different functions and have different assessment criteria and weightings. We don't recommend simply taking the same idea and putting it in two places because it won't fit both of them equally well. If you want to apply for different aspects of a larger piece of work into the two different investment mechanisms you should clearly discriminate how they are different to prevent a perception of duplication. They should also not be co-dependent ie, you should not need to get both funded for either one to progress.

42. How does past success in receiving Smart Idea influence a Research Programme proposal? Can data from previously funded work be leveraged in a new proposal or is new data collection ranked more highly?

A: Each application is assessed independently on its merit. It is useful to demonstrate the leveraging of previous Smart Ideas investments in Research Programmes proposals.

43. Does Smart Ideas back new emerging researchers?

A: There is no specific criterion that specifies new and emerging researchers. Both the assessors and the Science Board have been encouraging of new and emerging researchers being involved in proposals, sometimes leading them. What they are looking for in a programme that's lead by a new and emerging researcher, is that they are supported and being mentored so they can deliver on the programmes aims. Be very explicit about where the support will be coming from, and how it's going to work.