

Strategic Science Investment Fund
New Zealand Mission Operations
Control Centre Hosting Opportunity

Assessment Guidelines

2021



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

newzealand.govt.nz

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Foreword

Thank you for agreeing to assess New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre (MOCC) Hosting Opportunity proposals submitted for funding via the Strategic Science Investment Fund.

Informed assessment of these proposals is a critical aspect of our investment process, and will help inform our funding decision.

These guidelines detail what is involved in the assessment of the MOCC Hosting Opportunity proposals and the role that you will play in that process.

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

Introduction

In December 2020, we issued a call for proposals from New Zealand Universities interested in hosting a New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre (MOCC).

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a United States based not-for-profit organisation, and its subsidiary MethaneSAT Limited Liability Company (MethaneSAT LLC) are leading the development of a state-of-the-art satellite to detect global methane emissions with unprecedented accuracy (MethaneSAT mission).

The MethaneSAT Mission Operations Control Centre will be a significant investment in infrastructure that will build New Zealand's capability to operate complex satellite missions.

The MOCC will support the MethaneSAT mission by providing the physical and cloud-based capabilities for the command, control and support of the MethaneSAT satellite and future satellite missions for New Zealand.

In addition to supporting the MethaneSAT mission, the centre will be an enduring piece of national infrastructure available to all New Zealand research organisations to support future missions and enable the enhancement of New Zealand's space sector capability.

The Government is looking to invest in a MOCC that:

- > Will support New Zealand's first national official space mission as a country to combat climate change.
- > Is a significant investment in developing technical aerospace capability.
- > Will create an enduring national infrastructure capability that can be employed across multiple space missions.

You are critical in helping us identify the proposal that has the greatest potential to meet the investment goals of this opportunity. Your assessment will help to inform decisions on which proposal is successful.

We recommend you read this document in conjunction with *The Opportunity to Host a New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre Call for Proposals 2020* and other relevant information on our [Mission Operations Control Centre webpages](#).

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

Email	Assessment queries: ssif.investment@mbie.govt.nz Portal queries: imssupport@mbie.govt.nz
Phone	0800 693 778 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm)

Assessment Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the key roles and responsibilities involved in the assessment of New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre Hosting Opportunity proposals.

Assessor

Your role as an assessor is to assess the proposals and contribute to the Panel discussion. Your key responsibilities include:

- > Participating in a virtual Assessor briefing.
- > Declaring any conflicts of interest and adhering to our confidentiality and privacy policies.
- > Reading and assessing proposals.
- > Attending a virtual Assessment Panel meeting, where:
 - proposals are scored and ranked, and
 - advice on the assessment results is recorded by us.

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

Further information on attending the briefing and assessment panel will be sent separately.

Assessment Panel Chair

MBIE will chair the Assessment Panel meeting as a voting member. The role of the Chair is to:

- > Prioritise the discussion of the Panel meeting taking into account the advice from the Assessment Panel.
- > 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 Panel:
 - follows the scoring system and provide sound advice,
 - provides appropriate commentary on the proposals, and
 - forms a funding recommendation.

Confidentiality and Privacy

To ensure confidentiality, you must:

- > Ensure the safekeeping of all proposals and related documents (*e.g., workbooks, notes, etc.*).
- > Securely destroy any remaining assessment documentation that you hold 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 (ssif.investment@mbie.govt.nz), and
 - email us with the details of your contact.
- > Not use any confidential information for any purpose other than assessment.

You must agree to adhere to our confidentiality and privacy policies which apply to all personal information collected by us before you can view your assigned proposals.

Official Information Act 1982

Proposals and their assessments are confidential. We are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 therefore information relating to an assessment may be released by us if requested under the Act.

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Conflicts of Interest

We follow a rigorous process to maintain the credibility of investment decisions and to assure applicants that their proposal is fairly and reasonably appraised.

You must check your assigned proposals for any conflicts of interest. If you consider that a conflict exists, email us on ssif.investment@mbie.govt.nz to discuss the nature of the conflict.

What is Considered a Conflict of Interest?

Conflicts of interest may occur on two different levels:

- > A **direct** conflict of interest; where an assessor is:
 - directly involved with a proposal (*as a participant, manager, mentor, or partner*) or has 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; where an assessor:
 - is employed by an organisation involved in a proposal but is not part of the applicant's proposal.
 - has a personal and/or professional relationship with one of the applicants, for example, an acquaintance.
 - is assessing a proposal under discussion that may compete with their business interests.

If you are from a University or Crown Research Institute or other large organisation, you may assist in the assessment of a proposal from that institution providing you have no direct or limited indirect interest in the proposal. If in doubt, declare and discuss with us.

Reporting Identified Conflicts

All conflicts of interest must be declared to MBIE.

If you identify a direct or indirect conflict, email us as soon as possible at with the details for further discussion before reviewing the proposal.

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, or to
- > 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

The key dates and an overview of the assessment process follows.

Key Dates

16 March 2021	Assessor briefing
17 March 2021	Proposals assigned
31 March 2021	Assessment Panel meeting
early April 2021	MBIE decisions on proposals announced

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 these guidelines and background documents, and participate in assessor briefing via videoconference.
2-3 hours per proposal	Read proposals provided and prepare to discuss these at the Panel meeting.
1/2 day	Attend 1/2 day Assessment Panel meeting on 31 March 2021 via videoconference.

Assessor Briefing

Prior to reviewing proposals, you are required to attend a short meeting with us to familiarise you with the:

- > Assessment process to be followed.
- > Content of *The Opportunity to Host a New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre Call for Proposals 2020* including the structure of the application form, the assessment criteria, and the scoring guide.

Information about this briefing will be sent separately.

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The Assessment Steps

1. **We will email your assigned proposals on 17 March 2021.**
2. **Read and understand the assessment criteria, the Government’s investment goals a New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre, and the Vision Mātauranga policy.**
The assessment criteria includes the scoring guide, and notes for each assessment criterion, which provides a common interpretation to clarify and help ensure consistency (*see pages 8 and 9*).
3. **Check your assigned proposals for any direct or indirect conflicts of interest.**
If you deem a conflict of interest exists email us (ssif.investment@mbie.govt.nz) as soon as possible to discuss.
4. **Read your assigned proposals together with the assessment criteria scoring guide in these guidelines.**
When reading the proposals:
 - > Only review the information presented in the proposals. Applicants are obliged to present the relevant information.
 - > Evaluate the proposal as a whole using your knowledge, judgement and expertise so that you can reach a clear and soundly based assessment that are fair, objective and evidence-based.
5. **Attend the Assessment Panel meeting on 31 March 2021 during which you will:**
 - > Discuss your evaluations of the proposals.
 - > For each proposal, agree on:
 - a consensus assessment score based on each of the four sections of the assessment criteria and scoring guide,
 - provide commentary to support the assessment (this will also form the basis of feedback to applicants), and
 - form a funding recommendation for MBIE.

The consensus scores will be recorded by us and formally recorded in our Investment Management System (IMS).

Only assess the information presented in the proposals. If a proposal has obvious gaps reflect this in your score and detail the significant issues in your comments.

Ensure comments are accurate, professional, honest, and correlate to the score and description associated with the scoring guide.

Be mindful that if requested, comments and scores may be made available under the Official Information Act.
6. **Securely destroy all proposals and supporting documentation when the assessment process is complete.**

Funding Decisions

The Assessment Panel will provide recommendations to us which will inform the final funding decision. The final funding decision will be made by the General Manager of the Science System Investment and Performance Branch in the Labour, Science and Enterprise Group, MBIE.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome and the decision will be publicly announced in **early April 2021**. We will provide applicants with general feedback based on the Assessment Panel’s comments about the overall quality of proposals.

The Government’s Investment Goals for a New Zealand Mission Operations Control Centre

<p>The MOCC will support New Zealand’s first national official space mission as a country to combat climate change.</p>	<p>The MOCC is a significant investment in developing technical aerospace capability.</p>	<p>The MOCC will create an enduring national infrastructure capability that can be employed across multiple space missions.</p>
<p>The primary focus of the MOCC will be to support the successful delivery of the MethaneSAT mission. The MethaneSAT mission will focus on collecting data about methane emissions and will complement New Zealand’s investments in climate science and in research to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions. It will demonstrate global leadership by supporting a science mission that will directly help to fight climate change.</p>	<p>Space-enabled research has significant potential for New Zealand. Hosting a MOCC that meets MethaneSAT’s complex mission requirements will build essential capability and develop New Zealand’s international credibility in the space sector. Hosting the MOCC in a university will enable students to get close to a major satellite mission with globally significant outcomes. It will open up opportunities for structured course components and extra-curricular training opportunities. Over the long term, the MOCC will help train the next generation space scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>In addition to supporting the MethaneSAT mission there is potential to create an enduring piece of national infrastructure available to all New Zealand research organisations to support future missions. Successful MOCC delivery for the MethaneSAT mission will enhance New Zealand’s profile making us a sought after international partner for Earth science missions and continue the growth of our emerging space sector.</p>





Assessment Criteria and Scoring Guide

MISSION OPERATIONS CONTROL CENTRE HOST ASSESSMENT CRITERIA								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Weighting	SCORING GUIDE						
		Score & Keywords 1 <i>(Low quality)</i> Missing Irrelevant No potential No credibility	2 Minimal Low relevance Little potential Little credibility	3 Some Partially relevant Some potential Some credibility	4 Most Generally relevant General potential Generally credible	5 Substantial Relevant Good potential Credible	6 Comprehensive Very relevant Very good potential Very credible	7 <i>(High quality)</i> Complete Highly relevant Excellent potential Highly credible
<p>MOCC ESTABLISHMENT AND DELIVERY</p> <p>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A commitment to build a facility and acquire the specialist capability and resources required to support the establishment and ongoing operation of the MOCC including basic infrastructure, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – suitably qualified technical staff, – appropriate IT systems, and – relevant security requirements. > Access to complementary research infrastructure to support Earth observation and climate science in addition to related engineering and aerospace research and development. > Commitment to developing a comprehensive recruitment, screening and training programme for student-intern operators and MOCC staff. 	30%	Content is missing or has no credibility.	Many aspects are missing or have little credibility.	Many aspects are adequately met, but with some gaps or deficiencies.	All aspects are met to a generally adequate level.	All aspects are adequately met; with some strongly met.	All aspects are strongly met; with some met at an excellent level.	All aspects are met in a highly innovative, relevant, credible and exemplary manner.
<p>EDUCATION AND OUTREACH</p> <p>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A strong reputation in the fields of climate science, aerospace and related engineering research across government, industry, research organisations, and internationally. > A clear vision for incorporating the MOCC into a multi-disciplinary educational course curriculum developing broader outreach and education activities and relevant training programmes (e.g. MOCC staff accreditation). > A commitment to making the MOCC accessible to students and researchers from other research organisations and the broader space sector. 	30%	Content is missing, irrelevant or lacks credibility or potential in terms of delivering benefits via end-users	Many aspects are missing, have low relevance, or have little potential.	Most aspects are adequately met, but with some gaps or deficiencies.	All aspects are met to a generally adequate level.	All aspects are adequately met; with some strongly met.	All aspects are strongly met; with some met at an excellent level.	All aspects are met in a highly innovative, relevant, credible and exemplary manner in terms of delivering expected benefits via end users.

MISSION OPERATIONS CONTROL CENTRE HOST ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	SCORING GUIDE							
	Weighting	Score & Keywords	1 (Low quality) Missing Irrelevant No potential No credibility	2 Minimal Low relevance Little potential Little credibility	3 Some Partially relevant Some potential Some credibility	4 Most Generally relevant General potential Generally credible	5 Substantial Relevant Good potential Credible	6 Comprehensive Very relevant Very good potential Very credible
<p>IMPACT AND BENEFIT FOR NEW ZEALAND</p> <p>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A compelling vision for the MOCC, how it will deliver the MethaneSAT mission and MBIE objectives and what role it will play in attracting future space missions to New Zealand. > Commitment to creating an enduring national capability for the benefit for New Zealand science sector. > The ability to deliver against the principles of the Vision Mātauranga policy, and a commitment to implementing Vision Mātauranga principles in the MOCC’s operations and training programmes. 	20%	Content is missing, irrelevant or lacks potential or credibility to create benefits for New Zealand.	Many aspects are missing, have low relevance, or have little potential.	Most aspects are adequately met, but with some gaps or deficiencies.	All aspects are met to a generally adequate level.	All aspects are adequately met; with some strongly met.	All aspects are strongly met; with some met at an excellent level.	All aspects are met in a highly innovative, credible and exemplary manner in terms scale and likelihood of potential for NZ.
<p>COLLABORATION, NETWORK DEVELOPMENT, AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A strong track record of engaging effectively with domestic and international stakeholders in relevant sectors to deliver high quality research programmes. > The support of relevant New Zealand based research organisations, the New Zealand space industry and other space science and research end-users to host the MOCC. > The ability to develop networks, build connections and attract top talent to further develop and enhance New Zealand’s space sector reputation and attractiveness for international space missions. 	20%	Content is missing, irrelevant or lacks potential or credibility to create benefits for New Zealand.	Many aspects are missing, have low relevance, or have little potential.	Most aspects are adequately met, but with some gaps or deficiencies.	All aspects are met to a generally adequate level.	All aspects are adequately met; with some strongly met.	All aspects are strongly met; with some met at an excellent level.	All aspects are met in a highly innovative, credible and exemplary manner in terms scale and likelihood of potential for NZ.



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