NEW ZEALAND SPACE AGENCY

Kiwi Space Activator - Key Information to Know

Objectives & design criteria

Over-arching policy objectives	Pilot scheme design criteria	Key design choices for the pilot
1) accelerating the demonstration of space technologies **2) unlocking trade and export growth opportunities for New Zealand space tech** **3) maturing national capabilities in readiness for a national space mission.**	Strategic alignment: the programme should develop technology capabilities of interest to the New Zealand government, including supporting domestic development of a national space mission. Efficient: the programme should limit transaction costs for participants and the administrator. Time to implement: the projects should be able to be implemented quickly. Commercially driven: the programme should support projects with the greatest potential for commercial impact, including export and investment impact. Programmatic learning: the pilot scheme should provide information to support development of a larger-scale initiative. Additionality: the pilot scheme should address opportunities not otherwise eligible or suited to existing funding mechanisms and should not crowd out private funding.	**Two funding rounds** Two rounds maximise learning opportunities for the pilot and provides time for applications not yet ready for Round One to be refined. Enables evaluation of alternative application processes. **Single step RfP** Provides for funding targeted at immediate opportunities and limits administrative overhead for applicants **Scope of funded activities: Flights only (round one) Expand to payload development in round two)** Funding flights only places the greatest focus on near-to-market products. In some cases, the cost of a bus and not the flight will be the largest expense. Opportunity to examine effect of funding eligibility on demand between rounds. **Co-investment requirements: 30% co-investment; cash only in round one; in-kind considered (but cash still favoured) in round two** Co-investment requirements maximise commercial discipline from funded projects.

		Above the minimum contribution, higher contributions will receive a more favourable rating. We will adopt a flexible approach to support a wider range of potential projects in round two.

Key information to know

Funding availability

- There is $1.8M available across the two rounds.
- A project can apply for a maximum of $600K
- A minimum of $600K will be available in each round of the Kiwi Space Activator.
- Funding is exclusive of GST.

Eligibility & participation

- Proposals must be led by New Zealand–registered entities.
- There is no limit to the number of project proposals an organisation can take part in, as long as each proposal relates to a distinct project.
- Government agencies, including those posing challenges, cannot receive funding and are not project partners.
- International partners may be involved but:
    - They cannot receive funding.
    - Their contributions may count as in-kind (Round Two) or cash co-funding (Rounds One & Two) if they are investors.
- Commercialisation outcomes must ultimately benefit a New Zealand organisation.

Scope & types of projects eligible

- The programme is designed to overcome launch-related barriers to commercialisation.
- Projects must involve launch or flight testing to qualify for funding in either round.

- Demonstrations may be on:
    - Space-based platforms, or
    - High-altitude platforms (e.g., stratospheric aircraft).
- Ground-based device development is not eligible unless it leads directly to a flight demonstration in the same project.
- Pure software products using assets already in orbit are not eligible, as the fund specifically targets the cost barrier to launch.
- Projects involving payload delivery systems or space transportation technologies are out of scope.

Funding requirements & co-funding

- Co-funding is calculated as 30% of the funding awarded.
  For example: If you apply for $600,000, you should supply at least $180,000 in co-funding.
- In Round Two:
    - Salary costs may be accepted as in-kind contributions.
    - Activities supported are broader than in Round One.

Launch Expectations

- A project must be launch-ready and have a planned flight in the near term.
- Launch or flight must occur within 24 months of the date of the award.
- Only launch-related costs are eligible in Round One.
- Failure to complete a flight within 24 months may result in partial or full refund of funds.

Commercialisation pathway

- This is a light-touch process, appropriate to the scale of funding.
- Applications should include up to 800 words explaining how the project will lead to commercial products or sales.
- The level of private investment indicated is being used as a signal of commercial potential. You may include other information, for example relating to potential market size and share, and customer interest.
- International demand remains relevant to commercialisation potential - while the supply is coming from New Zealand, demand could be from anywhere.

Platforms and launch providers

- Applicants may choose any appropriate launch or flight provider.
- Working with in-orbit demonstration companies (e.g., NanoAvionics) is acceptable as long as the component launches within 24 months.
- Rocket Lab flights from New Zealand count as domestic; Rocket Lab launches outside New Zealand do not.
- NZSA has engaged with launch platform providers for awareness, but agreements are between applicants and providers.
- There are no specifics around the payload mass or volume, as long as it fits within the funding envelope/your organisations co-funding capacity.

Assessment factors

- All challenges are assessed equally; none are prioritised.
- The absolute funding amount requested is not part of assessment.
- Strength of co-funding is an assessment criterion.
- Projects will not be evaluated based on alignment with an unspecified future "national mission."

Clarification on specific challenges

- For Maritime Intelligence, innovation needs may include:
    - Reduced surveillance false alarm rate
    - Increase data download rates
    - Reduce data latency
- Proposals need only address the criteria provided—there's no requirement to map to a broader national mission.

Satellite size and mission design

- Applicants choose the size, mass, and launch provider.
- NZSA has no specific requirements for satellite size.
- No decisions have been made regarding a future national mission; the programme is intended to help build domestic capability that might inform future thinking.

Applications & future rounds

- Unsuccessful Round One applicants may apply again in Round Two.
- The Round Two application materials and any additional details will be available on MBIE's Kiwi Space Activator webpage when the call opens on 1 April 2026.
- Round Two criteria will be similar to Round One, with expanded eligible activities and acceptance of in-kind contributions.

Additional practical information

- The webinar presentation will be published on the NZ Space Agency website for public access.