

## Kiwi Space Activator - Key Information to Know

### Objectives & design criteria

<b>Over-arching policy objectives</b>	<b>Pilot scheme design criteria</b>	<b>Key design choices for the pilot</b>
<p><b>1) accelerating the demonstration of space technologies</b></p> <p><b>2) unlocking trade and export growth opportunities for New Zealand space tech</b></p> <p><b>3) maturing national capabilities in readiness for a national space mission.</b></p>	<p>Strategic alignment: the programme should develop technology capabilities of interest to the New Zealand government, including supporting domestic development of a national space mission.</p> <p>Efficient: the programme should limit transaction costs for participants and the administrator.</p> <p>Time to implement: the projects should be able to be implemented quickly.</p> <p>Commercially driven: the programme should support projects with the greatest potential for commercial impact, including export and investment impact.</p> <p>Programmatic learning: the pilot scheme should provide information to support development of a larger-scale initiative.</p> <p>Additionality: the pilot scheme should address opportunities not otherwise eligible or suited to existing funding mechanisms and should not crowd out private funding.</p>	<p><b>Two funding rounds</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Single step RfP</b> Provides for funding targeted at immediate opportunities and limits administrative overhead for applicants</p> <p><b>Scope of funded activities:</b>  <b>Flights only (round one)</b>  <b>Expand to payload development in round two</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Co-investment requirements:</b>  <b>30% co-investment; cash only in round one; in-kind considered (but cash still favoured) in round two</b> Co-investment requirements maximise commercial discipline from funded projects.</p>

		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.
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## 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.