Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

hrc nz Health Research Council of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa

2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Guidelines

August 2025

Use with the 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Form

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Part 1: The Health Research Council 2026 Projects Grant – key information and requirements

Part 1 sets out the requirements for the Project Grant in the 'Rangahau Hauora Māori' category, including:

- information about the grant, including the maximum value and duration
- information about HRC's requirements
- eligibility criteria that applicants must meet
- an overview of the application process and requirements, including key dates
- an overview of the assessment process and assessment criteria.

Parts 2 and 3 contain instructions for applicants on submitting an application, including administrative requirements and how to demonstrate that the requirements for funding are met.

1.1 Description

The Health Research Council (HRC) offers funding of $400,000 per year up to a total of $1,200,000 for research projects that have the potential to vastly improve the health of New Zealanders. Projects can cover a diverse range of areas, including biomedical, public health, clinical, Māori focused, and Pacific health research.

1.2 Health research priorities (NEW)

New Zealand's investment in health research must contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and the innovation, technology and science system.[1] The HRC is the principal government funder of health research.

For the health system, the Government is committed to improving health outcomes by providing New Zealanders with timely access to high-quality health services.[2]

A key focus for the science system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation. The Government wants to ensure that the research it funds is progressing its priorities, and that they have a clear pathway to translate new ideas into successful commercial enterprise.[3]

Therefore, it is important for researchers and research organisations to identify how research to be funded by the HRC will add value and contribute to these goals and wider system performance.

1.3 HRC Requirements (NEW)

All HRC investment must have a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

HRC-funded research must meet the following requirements:

1. Research must be focused on health and improving health outcomes and/or the health system, where health outcomes are defined as:
   a. absence or reduction of disease, symptoms or morbidity, and/or
   b. timely access to quality healthcare, for all New Zealanders, including strengthening prevention of disease and injury, earlier diagnosis, earlier patient-specific (precision) intervention, and new and improved models of care, or medicines, treatments and cures, and/or

[1] Letters of expectations for health statutory entities | Ministry of Health NZ
[2] The Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027) outlines five priority areas; five non-communicable diseases; five modifiable behaviours; five health targets; and five mental health targets.
[3] Going For Growth | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

c. longer life expectancy, and/or
d. improved quality of life.

2. Research into the causes of ill health, or the determinants of health (e.g., environmental, socio-economic, cultural, and behavioural factors) must demonstrate a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (as defined above).
3. The research proposal provides an evidence base when describing areas of high health need and population groups with high health need.[4]

Council makes final decisions on funding, informed by the assessing committee recommendations and taking into consideration Government priorities and the balance of investments across our portfolio.

Please carefully read the 'in scope' and 'out of scope' guidance below before preparing your application.

In scope for the 2026 Project Grants

Council will **prioritise opportunities to invest** in research that:

- maximises benefit for healthcare delivery, such as
  - new models of care and treatments
  - improved effectiveness and efficiency
  - innovation and technology in healthcare, and/or
- demonstrates a pathway to commercialisation, and/or
- enhances the development of clinician-researchers,[5] and/or
- contributes to achievement of the health and/or mental health and addiction targets.[6]

Council funding decisions will align with current priorities to the greatest extent possible, subject to the proposals submitted in a particular funding round.

Out of scope for the 2026 Project Grants

This round, the HRC is **NOT** intending to invest in:

- evaluations with a sole focus on audits, surveys, and needs assessments undertaken as part of routine operational practice or as part of a government organisation's performance, accountability, or monitoring activities
- research that describes a health need or community with high health need without providing a clear evidence-base for that need[7]
- research that duplicates research already undertaken overseas (without articulating the additional value of undertaking it in New Zealand)
- social science research that focuses exclusively on determinants of health (e.g. environmental, socio-economic, cultural or behavioural factors) except where it demonstrates a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (see HRC requirements)
- basic research that focuses exclusively on mechanistic pathways except where it demonstrates a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (see HRC requirements).

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[4] CO (24) 5: Needs-based Service Provision | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)

[5] A clinician-researcher conducts research and provides clinical services in any setting, under formal work arrangement and is eligible to undertake clinical practice in New Zealand either under the Health Practitioners Competence Act 2003, through registration with the relevant responsible authority, or as a member of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand.

[6] The five health targets are: faster cancer treatment; improved immunisation for children; shorter stays in emergency departments; shorter wait times for first specialist assessment; and shorter wait times for elective treatment.
The five mental health and addiction targets are: faster access to specialist mental health and addiction services; faster access to primary mental health and addiction services; shorter mental health and addiction-related stays in emergency departments; increased mental health and addiction workforce development; and strengthened focus on prevention and early intervention.

[7] CO (24) 5: Needs-based Service Provision | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)

1.4 Changes this year (NEW)

The HRC has made changes to the application and assessment processes for the Project Grants. Please carefully read these guidelines to ensure your application aligns with the requirements for this round.

The changes include:

- You must begin your Expression of Interest (EOI) application on HRC Gateway by the 'Application creation deadline' (1 pm on 10 September 2025). A list of named investigators and the application lay summary must be also provided by the creation deadline.
- You may only submit one application as the first named investigator or co-first named investigator.
- EOI applications will be assessed in October 2025, and the outcomes will be released in November 2025. Assessment of EOI applications will be completed using assessing committee independent scoring only. Assessing committees will not meet to discuss applications. The top ranked list of applications following independent scoring will be used to determine the applications that will proceed to the full stage. You will not receive committee feedback about your application at the EOI stage.
- Applications will be assessed on the full range of standard HRC score criteria. Refer to Appendix 3 for further information.
- If you are invited to submit a Full application, you will be asked to indicate how your application aligns with HRC's requirements outlined in Section 1.3.
- Full applications close in December 2025. HRC staff aim to complete internal compliance checking by 9 January 2026. The HRC will notify your organisation's research office (or you directly if you do not have one) of any issues with your application between 9-13 January 2026.
- There will be no external peer review or applicant rebuttal for Full applications. Applications will continue to undergo peer review by full stage Assessing Committees, who will meet to discuss, score, rank and make funding recommendations based on the quality of the applications. You will only receive feedback about your application if it was assessed at the Full stage assessing committee meeting.
- The NZ Standard CV template has been updated. Please ensure the latest version of the CV template is used for submission. The new version is available to download on HRC Gateway.

1.5 Project value

- The HRC expects to fund and encourages a range of grant values and durations.
- The HRC offers contracts worth $400,000 per year up to a total maximum of $1,200,000.
- Most projects have a term of 3 years with a budget of $1,200,000, but shorter contracts are offered pro rata (e.g. a 2-year project may have a budget of up to $800,000).
- You can negotiate terms of up to 5 years within the budget cap of $1,200,000.

- The budget cap for randomised controlled trial project applications is $1,440,000 if required and justified in the application (see requirement details in Appendix 1).
- The requested budget needs to be justified and reflect the activities being proposed.

1.6 Project categories

When applying for a Project Grant, you need to select one of the following Project categories:

Rangahau Hauora Māori: Supporting Māori health research that contributes to Māori health gains, upholds rangatiratanga and utilises and advances Māori knowledge, resources, and people.

General: Supporting excellent ideas and innovations designed to improve health outcomes for New Zealanders.

Pacific: Making significant improvements in, or developing knowledge contributing to, Pacific health outcomes.

The same application cannot be submitted to different categories (i.e. you cannot submit the same application for both the General category and the Rangahau Hauora Māori category). The HRC does not provide advice on which Project category you should choose. You cannot change the Project category between the Expression of Interest (EOI) and full stage application.

Please note: These specific guidelines apply to the **Rangahau Hauora Māori** Project category.

1.7 Eligibility

Please take note of the following eligibility criteria, which apply to the lead researcher(s) on a Project Grant application, defined as the first named investigator and co-first named investigator.

The first named investigator will be considered the first point of contact during the application and assessment process and will be understood to be acting for, and in concurrence with, the other named investigators. All correspondence for the application will be addressed to this person and the host.

The co-first named investigator (or co-lead researcher) is an individual with joint overall responsibility for the project.

The HRC welcomes proposals for 'co-first named investigators' to create a research team of exceptional strength, e.g. for interdisciplinary work. In addition, early and mid-career researchers who have not previously held a Project contract are encouraged to apply as co-first named investigator with a mentor/experienced researcher.

To be eligible for a Project Grant, both the first named investigator and co-first named investigator:

1. must have New Zealand as their principal domicile (see definition in the HRC Rules) and their principal place of employment. **Note:** Host organisations are responsible for ensuring that this criterion has been met
2. can only submit **one** application to the Project Grant round as the first-named investigator or co-first named investigator. All additional applications will be withdrawn
3. must complete all progress or end of contract reports that are due from previous contracts in HRC Gateway. (HRC Gateway does not allow a new application to be submitted if the first named investigator or co-first named investigator have any outstanding reports).

1.8 Key Dates

Event	Description	Date (1pm)
Project EOI open	Applicants start Project EOI applications via HRC Gateway	14 August 2025
Deadline for creating an EOI application	You must create your EOI application on HRC Gateway by this date	10 September 2025
Project EOI applications close	You must submit your EOI application on HRC Gateway by this date	17 September 2025
Project EOI applications assessment	Applications reviewed by HRC assessing committees	October 2025
Anticipated EOI outcome date	Anticipated date the EOI results will be sent to applicants	6 November 2025
Anticipated Full stage open date	Anticipated date the Full stage will open to invited applicants	6 November 2025
Project Full applications close	You must submit your Full application on HRC Gateway by this date	11 December 2025
Full assessing committees	Assessment of Full applications	February 2026
Decision	Council decision	April 2026

Creation deadline (NEW)

Please create your EOI application on HRC Gateway by **1pm on 10 September 2025.** You will also need to provide details of your research team and your lay summary by this date. You will not be able to create an EOI application after this deadline has passed.

Submission deadline

Please submit your application to HRC Gateway by **1pm on 17 September 2025.** Your application will not be accepted after 1pm unless you have **written** authorisation from the HRC.

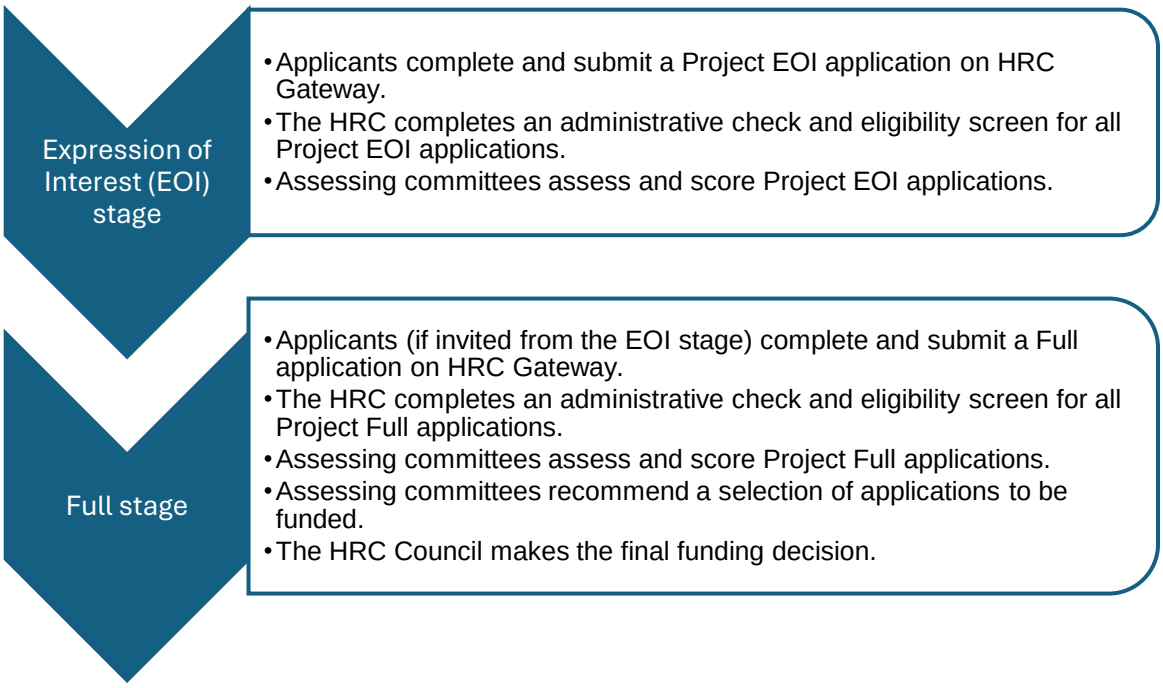
Important note: Your application will be released to the HRC only after it has been approved by your host organisation's research office or equivalent. **You should submit your application before your host organisation's internal submission deadline**, which is usually several working days before the HRC closing date. If your host organisation does not have a research office, your application will be forwarded directly to the HRC.

Commencement date

Your project needs to start by **1 August 2026.**

1.9 Application process overview

Refer to Appendix 2 for further information on the assessment process.



Part 2: General information on how to submit an application to the 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Grant round

This section sets out general information for applicants to the 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Grant.

The information provided in this section includes:

- instructions for using HRC Gateway to submit an application
- formatting requirements for applications
- guidance about the privacy of application content
- contact information if you need assistance with your application.

Please follow the instructions set out in this section.

2.1 Preparation

HRC Gateway account

You will need an HRC Gateway account to apply for a Project Grant. Use your existing account or create a new one if you do not have one, via the following URL: https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz. If you have issues logging into your HRC Gateway account, contact info@hrc.govt.nz.

Note: All members of your research team must have an HRC Gateway user account so that their details can be included in the online form. Individual HRC Gateway accounts should be updated annually.

Before submitting an application

Before submitting an application, please read the following resources:

- 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Guidelines (this document)
- Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream Signal
- Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027)
- New Zealand Health Research Strategy (2017-2027)
- New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework
- HRC Research Ethics Guidelines
- Guidelines for Researchers on Health Research Involving Māori
- HRC Research Impact Assessment Slideshow
- ARRIVE guidelines for animal research (if applicable)
- HRC Peer Review Manual (accessed via the 2026 Projects information page on HRC Gateway)

Click on the document name to access the file. These documents can also be found on HRC Gateway.

All Project applications approved by the HRC must seek an ethics review from an HRC-approved ethics committee. Further information will be provided at the full stage. Please note that if your EOI application is successful, evidence of this review will be required, and completion of the ethics review must be listed as a first-year milestone at the full stage.

Application Forms

You will need to download and complete the **2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Form** (Microsoft Word template).

Note: If you are applying for a General Project or a Pacific Project, please use the specific General or Pacific Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Form and Guidelines, respectively.

You can download the application form from the 2026 Projects information page on HRC Gateway. Do not use any other templates; otherwise, your application will be withdrawn.

The application form should be completed in Microsoft Word. Once completed, upload these documents **as a PDF file** to HRC Gateway.

Host organisations

The host organisation is the organisation, institution or company that will be offered a contract with the HRC to deliver the activities described in your application if it is successful. The host organisation will be responsible for ensuring that the activities are completed according to the contract, the HRC Rules, and the HRC Project Grant requirements.

If your organisation has not been previously funded as the host organisation by the HRC and your application is successful, your organisation will need to provide due diligence information before a contract can be offered. The HRC will provide you with information and the relevant forms for your organisation to complete.

2.2 Writing your application

General formatting

Please write your application in a clear, concise manner with sufficient detail. The assessing committee reviewing your application includes a broad range of expertise. It is important that they can understand the scope and implications of your application.

Applications must be in English or te reo Māori; if in te reo Māori, a translation in English must also be provided (any translation will not be included in the page limit).

Please:

- use Arial 10-point type font or larger
- use default margins
- use single line spacing
- keep to the page limits.

Application formatting compliance

The HRC will not process your application if you do not use the correct HRC application forms or follow the stated page limit and font sizes/styles. Your application will be withdrawn.

Scope compliance

Please review Section 1.3 carefully, as applications involving out-of-scope research types will be withdrawn.

Please avoid these common pitfalls:

1. Only submit your application using HRC Gateway. Do not send applications or supporting documents to the HRC via email or any other means.
2. If your host organisation has a research office (or equivalent), your application must be approved by the research office first. The application will then be released to the HRC. Please allow enough time for this approval process before the HRC's closing deadline. All queries regarding applications should be directed to the host's research office rather than to the HRC directly.

3. Ensure you complete all modules, including Module 1 which must be completed in HRC Gateway. Incomplete applications after the closing date will be considered withdrawn and deleted from HRC Gateway.
4. Do not include any additional material (e.g. slides, protocols, CVs) as 'supporting documents' on HRC Gateway, and avoid using hyperlinks in the application form. All additional material and hyperlinks will be removed from your application.
5. Do not send digital files directly to the HRC.

If you are new to the HRC application process and need assistance with using HRC Gateway, please contact the HRC. There are also helpful user guides available.

2.3 Allowed changes between the Expression of Interest and Full application stage

The Expression of Interest (EOI) provides an overview of the proposed research and is the first stage of a two-stage application process for HRC Projects. The second stage is Full application. The EOI should provide sufficient information for assessing committees to review your application, based on established scoring criteria, and to recommend whether you should proceed to a Full application submission.

Although an EOI application is short in length, you must demonstrate a credible level of critical thinking and research planning across all the score domains. It is recognised that the level of detail that can be provided may be restricted by the page limit, and the assessing committees are encouraged to consider this.

Please carefully consider your research team and research plans/objectives when writing your EOI application. If you are invited to the full stage, you cannot make significant changes to your research team or research plans/objectives, since these are the criteria that qualified your application for this stage.

Generally, you cannot add any named investigators to the team at the full stage, except:

- for statistical expertise in clinical trials
- for applications submitted to the Rangahau Hauora Māori or Pacific project category
- to replace an existing member due to unforeseen circumstances.

2.4 Privacy provisions

Statistical and reporting purposes

The information you provide will be used to assess your application. In a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for HRC's statistical and reporting purposes. The HRC stores all applications in a secure place, which may include the New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS) curated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) with details provided by funders of the science sector.

Personal information

Personal information in your application will be available to members of the HRC assessing committees and to external reviewers reviewing your application.

Public announcements

The HRC publishes details of research contracts including named investigators, the host organisation, research title, lay summaries and funding awarded for public interest purposes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Health Research Council Act 1990. This may include publishing details on research activities you provide to the HRC in media releases, on the HRC website, in newsletters, and in publications and reporting.

Official Information Act

Official Information Act requests for information about an application or research contract, beyond information that has already been publicly disclosed, will be discussed with the host organisation and programme director before responding to the request. Where appropriate, the request may be transferred to the host organisation.

2.5 Enquiries

If you have any questions about HRC applications, please contact your host organisation's research office.

You can contact the HRC at info@hrc.govt.nz if:

- your organisation does not have a research office
- your organisation's research office cannot assist you
- you have any technical difficulties (i.e. with HRC Gateway).

HRC Gateway will show the status of any application. Please do not contact the HRC for an update on your application status.

2.6 Additional eligibility requirements

Eligibility restrictions on publicly funded research

The HRC cannot accept applications made by a public service department, as listed in Schedule 2 of the Public Service Act 2020. Named investigators from these departments may not claim salary support.

As part of the New Zealand Government's broader response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a new eligibility criterion has been implemented for government research funding. For proposals to be eligible, they must not benefit a Russian state institution (including but not limited to support for Russian military or security activity) or an organisation outside the government that may be perceived as contributing to the war effort.

This is not a broad ban on collaborations with individual Russian researchers. The focus is on ensuring that government funding does not support scientific research collaborations that could further Russia's ability to continue its aggression in Ukraine.

As a Crown agent, investing in health research for the public good with taxpayer funding, the HRC reserves the right to make ineligible any funding application that will benefit a state institution or other organisation identified for exclusion by the New Zealand Government.

Trusted Research Guidance

Please familiarise yourself with the Trusted Research Guidance for Institutions and Researchers. New Zealand has an open and collaborative research and innovation system and values academic freedom and research conducted independently by individuals and organisations. As part of preserving trust, the HRC screens proposals for risk related to sensitive technologies and may require funded projects to identify, mitigate, and monitor risks as part of the contractual conditions of the project.[8]

[8] Technologies become sensitive when they: are or could become dual-use i.e. have both a civil and military/security application; or, underpin or have the potential to underpin significant economic value for New Zealand.

Part 3: Instructions on completing and submitting your application to the 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Grant round

This section contains instructions for completing and submitting your application. It includes prompts for providing certain information that will be used to score your application.

A 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project EOI application form consists of four modules.

Module 1 'General information' must be completed on HRC Gateway. You need to click on the 'Create application' button to start your application. Update the required areas as indicated on HRC Gateway.

Complete Module 2 'Proposed research' in the **2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Form** (Microsoft Word template). Refer to **Sections 3.3** for detailed guidance on how to complete each module.

Module 3 is 'New Zealand Standard CV'. You can provide two CVs at the Project EOI stage. Refer to **Sections 3.4** for detailed requirements.

Modules 4 and 5 are not required at the Project EOI stage.

Module 6 'Research classification' must be completed on HRC Gateway.

The completed application form should be uploaded to HRC Gateway as a PDF file. Before submitting your application, refer to the checklist on the application form to ensure all requirements have been met.

3.1 The Project EOI application form

The form is compatible with most Windows PC and MAC computers. The form has default formatting that conforms to HRC requirements. Figures and tables are best pasted in from a draft document instead of created directly in the form.

Please:

- Use the original HRC document templates
- Complete all sections following the instructions on the form and described in these guidelines
- Enter the HRC reference ID# and first named investigator surname on the coversheet (HRC Gateway will remove the coversheet from the final system-generated PDF).
- Enter information only in the indicated form fields.
- Do not reformat Module and Section headings.
- Do not delete spreadsheet columns/shaded rows; you may insert more unshaded rows.

3.2 Module 1: General information

Note: All named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account to be included in your application.

Step 1

Start the application process by clicking the 'Create application' button on the 2026 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Grant information page on HRC Gateway. This button will only appear when the application submission period is open. Clicking the 'Create application' button will open a dialog form where the following information is required.

Research title

The research title should be succinct, written in plain language, and clearly describe the proposed research. The title must not exceed 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation (e.g. 'growth factors' contains 14 characters). Please use sentence case. The HRC reserves the right to amend the title of funded applications.

Host organisation

The host organisation is the institution or organisation that will be responsible for administering any contract awarded.

Select the relevant 'Host organisation' from the drop-down list (this shows host organisations currently recognised by the HRC). If applicable, a specific research office and research office contact will be able to be selected.

Note: If your host organisation does not appear in the drop-down list, please tick the check box 'My host organisation is not in the list'. A field 'Host organisation details' will appear in the next section, and the name of the host organisation should be entered here.

If the host organisation has a research office with more than one staff member, please select the contact in the research office who will most likely be handling the application, or who will be the principal contact.

If the host organisation has more than one research office, please select which research office will be handling the application.

Step 2

Click the 'Update' button to enter application details for the following fields.

Lay summary

The lay summary must be 150 words or fewer and clearly state: 1) the purpose of the research and why it is needed; 2) how the research will be completed including the research activities; and 3) anticipated contribution to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system and value for money (being specific about the anticipated outcomes where possible).

If your proposal receives funding, your lay summary will be published on the HRC website to communicate to the public the aims, activities, impact and value of your research.

Please use plain language that can be easily understood by members of the public and avoid using technical terms, with any acronyms fully written out in the first instance. The HRC reserves the right to amend the lay summary of any HRC-funded research in terms of its readability for a lay audience.

Research location(s)

This is the specific department(s) and organisation where most research or data analysis will be completed.

Discipline

Choose from the drop-down box.

Duration

Enter the proposed term of the research (months).

Type of research

Choose from the drop-down list what you consider the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research application for assessment purposes. The HRC reserves the right to reassign applications to the most appropriate assessing committee.

Commencement date

Enter the proposed commencement date. Please note that the research activity must start by **1 August 2026**.

Support personnel

Examples of support personnel include individuals who will help you with the project application process (i.e. upload your application to HRC Gateway). Do not list named investigators, collaborators or your host organisation's research office staff. All support personnel need to have an HRC Gateway account to view and edit your application.

Step 3

First named investigator

Some of this information will be automatically populated from the first named investigator's profile in HRC Gateway (e.g. organisation and department). If the profile is not current, details must be updated. The details listed on the application will be automatically refreshed after the profile is updated. Click on the 'Update' button to enter and update the information requested.

The first named investigator will be considered the first point of contact during the application and assessment process and will be understood to be acting for, and in concurrence with, the other named investigators. All correspondence for the application will be addressed to this person and the host. Once an application is created, the first named investigator cannot be changed.

In the case of co-first named investigators, applicants need to add 'named investigators' and choose the role of 'co-first named investigators' in the dropdown list. The role of the co-first named investigator should be described in the appropriate section of the form.

Information on ethnicity, gender and whether the researcher is a clinician (and is practising) is used for HRC information purposes only. Please note that ethnicity, iwi, clinician, or practising clinician are not required to be entered as these details will automatically populate from the individual's profile.

Named investigators

All named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account before they can be added to the application. **All members named on the research team must be added to this application on HRC Gateway and will be included in Module 1**. Each named investigator will need to sign in to HRC Gateway and check and update their details before EOI applications are submitted. Click the 'Update' button to enter additional information as requested.

Under 'role type', you can assign a role to each individual as follows:

- Co-first named investigator: A co-principal investigator (or co-lead researcher) with joint overall responsibility for the Project.
- Named investigator: A named investigator listed on the application, whose expertise and involvement are critical to the Project's success.
- Student: A master's or PhD student named in the Project application.
- Technician: An individual who will complete specific tasks that require technical knowledge and experience (e.g. those collecting participant data, processing and analysing samples, managing datasets, operating equipment, or providing biostatistical or cultural expertise).

Role in project should include brief information on what the named investigator will undertake in the activation activities (1-2 sentences maximum). It should be clear which individual(s) are contributing in a mentoring capacity.

You will need to select an **FTE** band for each named investigator at the EOI stage.

- 3% - 10% (Low FTE)
- 11% - 40% (Medium FTE)
- 41% - 100% (High FTE)

This is required at EOI stage, as the assessing committee needs to know each team member's level of commitment or responsibility. It is particularly important to identify more junior investigators who may undertake key components of the proposed research.

Information on ethnicity, gender and whether the researcher is a clinician (and is practicing) is used for HRC information purposes only. Please note ethnicity, iwi, clinician, or practising clinician are not required to be entered as these details will automatically populate from the individual's profile. All named investigators on successful applications may be cited by the HRC in its various communication channels.

Collaborators (NEW)

Collaborators are individuals who are not named investigators (i.e. not listed as members of the research team) but who contribute in-kind or paid support to assist in conducting the research. Their involvement may include providing expertise, resources, or services to support research activities.

Collaborators do not need to be registered Gateway users. When adding collaborators, please update the person's title, name, organisation, country and support level. You will also need to provide brief details on the purpose of the collaboration.

Step 4

Click the 'Update' button to enter the classification for your application. This information is for HRC data collection purposes only.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)

Categorise the proposed research using the ANZSRC codes for the Fields of Research (FOR) and Socioeconomic Objective (SEO). Enter the percentage to the nearest 10% for each category to a total of 100%.

Keywords

Enter keywords that categorise the research.

3.3 Module 2: Proposed research

The page limit for this Section is **four and a half pages** (three and a half pages for 'Proposed research' and one page for 'References').

The section headings provided must be used. The assessing committee membership is broadly discipline-based, matched to the range of applications assigned to that committee. Therefore, not all members will have specialist knowledge of every research topic. Try to write the application for members with a general understanding of the research area/field.

Using graphics and tables is an efficient use of space. Ensure that the format of non-text content is compatible with PDF conversion software.

The section headings correspond to the four equally weighted score criteria, which form the basis of assessment (Rationale for research, Research design and methods, Research impact, Expertise and track record of the team).

NOTE: Please review the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment signal before writing your application. You must address all six goals of the Rangahau Hauora Māori Investment Signal in your application.

Rationale for research (NEW)

All HRC-funded research must focus on health and improving health outcomes and be within the scope outlined in Section 1.3. You will need to clearly describe the health and health system issues that your research aims to address.

Demonstrate that you have adequately reviewed what is already known in the area and that there is a clear case for further research. For example, refer to systematic reviews or an otherwise robust demonstration of a research gap. If similar research has already been conducted overseas, clearly explain the additional value of conducting this research in New Zealand.

Include information that is essential for the reader to better appreciate or understand why your proposed research should be supported by government funding.

For example:

- What is the significance of the health issue for New Zealand?
- What is the significance for Māori health gains?
- Does the proposed research provide a clear evidence-base when describing areas of high health need and population groups with high health need?
- What is the significant/important gap in knowledge, policy, practice, or service delivery that your research will address?
- How does your proposed research build on existing Māori health knowledge and evidence, and how will it contribute to, extend, or align with research currently being undertaken either nationally or internationally?

(NEW) NOTE: If you are invited to the full stage, you will be asked to indicate alignment with the HRC priorities in your Full application.

Research design and methods

Provide sufficient details so the assessing committee can review your scientific protocol, feasibility, appropriateness, innovativeness, and validity of data. This can include a description of participant recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender, and ethnicity where relevant), study methods, and proposed methods of data collection and analysis.

Clinical trial applications should include a description of data and safety monitoring arrangements. Where appropriate, provide an estimate of the likely effect size and the sample size required to detect this (power analysis). It is also advisable for randomised controlled trials to refer to the CONSORT statement and checklist. For observational studies, it is advised to refer to the STROBE guidelines. For animal studies, referring to the ARRIVE guidelines is advised.

Include an indication of timelines for your research. Consultation with specialists such as methodologists, statisticians, data scientists, and health economists before finalising your research design is also recommended.

The assessing committees need this information to appropriately score this criterion. Therefore, ensure that the practicalities are clearly stated, i.e. what will be done, how, by whom, where and when; preliminary data can be included.

Research impact (NEW)

Assessment of Impact includes two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for Māori and New Zealand; and 2) the **action plan** to address all **six goals of the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream** to

maximise the use and benefits of the research. See the HRC's Research Impact Assessment slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.[9]

What types of benefits are expected to arise from your research, and **who will benefit?**

This section should provide a realistic description of how research findings could contribute to improving Māori health outcomes and/or the health system over time (a 'line of sight' or 'pathway' to impact). Importantly, it should also identify the more immediate benefits, and users of the research who will form a focal point for your action plan (below). The balance between describing short-term benefits and potential longer-term impact will be dependent on the specific research context, with emphasis on considerations within your sphere of influence throughout the life of the research project.

The HRC's Research Impact Assessment slideshow includes discussion of elements that should be covered in this section.

What specific activities have been, or will be, undertaken, throughout the life of the research project, to **address all six goals of the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream** to maximise the use and benefits of your research?

Note: You must address all six investment signal goals. Please cross-reference sections written under other headings to avoid repetition.

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next users or end users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research.[10]

Provide information on how the proposed research contributes to:

- Māori health knowledge and the translation of knowledge into health gains
- the utilisation of Māori health research and ethics processes
- the contribution to Māori health research workforce development and leadership
- responsiveness to and partnership with Māori stakeholders and communities.

Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how have they been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

What elements of the **team's track record of knowledge transfer** provide confidence in the likelihood of research uptake? For example: existing links, relationships, or networks with relevant research next-users or end-users; demonstrable examples of knowledge mobilisation, or changes in health outcomes or societal impact generated from similar research. This component is considered relative to opportunity.

Expertise and track record of the research team

Provide evidence that your research team has the experience, qualifications, and infrastructure to deliver the research.

Clearly define the role, expertise, and track record of each member of the team giving particular weight to those with high FTE commitments to the project. Team members' unique identifiers on publication databases, such as Scopus or Google Scholar, may be provided.

Provide a justification for each member's role. Please state if you have previously collaborated with the team assembled for this application and consider capacity building. Note that changes in the research team between the EOI and the Full application require HRC's prior approval.

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[9] Consult the HRC's Research Impact Assessment slideshow on the HRC website for further discussion on the types of benefits that can arise from health research, and where these benefits might be expected to occur along a pathway to impact.

[10] Consult HRC Guidelines and funding rules for information on support of knowledge transfer activities and include these activities in objectives/milestones where appropriate. Progress against implementing the action plan will form part of the milestones HRC monitors with respect to contractual compliance and delivery.

Include a brief description of the team's track record, related to the application area, to demonstrate the ability to deliver proposed study outcomes. In addition, state how you have utilised previous funding resources and your productivity.

Describe any career disruptions, and their impact, that may be relevant to your career history. A career disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury, parental leave, and/or carer responsibilities.

The HRC recognises that applicants with experience in sectors other than public sector research may have gained valuable expertise or produced outputs (e.g. patents) relevant to research translation, and this may have limited the applicant's opportunity to produce more traditional research outputs.

References (one page)

This section should start on a new page.

Include a **full list of all author(s)**, title of article, journal, year, volume and page numbers. Place an asterisk beside applicants' publications. If references are multi-authored, you can limit the author list to a more convenient number to fit any space limitations.

A reference to Māori terms in the application with a brief translation can be included in this section but is not included in the page limit.

3.4 Module 3: NZ Standard CV (NEW)

Note: Two CVs can be provided at the Project EOI stage. The NZ Standard CV template has been updated, and the new version is available to download on HRC Gateway.

Upload the CV of the first named investigator and co-first named investigator. In the absence of a co-first named investigator, upload to HRC Gateway the CV of a named investigator who may be most involved in the day-to-day research activity of the Project.

CVs must be completed on the NZ Standard CV template, which you can download from HRC Gateway. Please use the default font and stay within the page limits. The HRC will not accept any other forms of CV.

The information provided in your CV **must match** the information provided elsewhere in the application and in your HRC Gateway profile.

Your CV may indicate when career breaks (including pandemic-related disruptions) have taken place as your track record will be assessed relative to opportunity.

3.5 Module 6: Research classification

Classification of research is for HRC evaluation purposes only. The information is not used in allocating funding. Required details must be entered in HRC Gateway.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)

Categorise the proposed research using the ANZSRC codes for the Fields of Research (FOR) and Socioeconomic Objective (SEO). Enter the percentage to the nearest 10% for each category to a total of 100%.

Keywords

Enter keywords that categorise the research.

Appendix 1: Proposals including randomised controlled trials (RCTs)

The Controlled Trials Assessing Committee (CTAC) is responsible for assessing randomised controlled trials (RCTs) across all disciplines, except for Rangahau Hauora Māori Projects, Pacific Projects and Health Delivery Projects which are assessed by the Rangahau Hauora Assessing Committee, Pacific Projects Assessing Committee and Health Delivery Assessing Committee, respectively. The purpose of establishing this committee was to ensure consistency in assessing RCTs and to improve the quality of HRC-funded RCTs. CTAC members are selected for their knowledge and experience of RCTs and have expertise in disciplines reflecting the nature of applications assigned to the committee. Member(s) of the Data Monitoring Core Committee may also be represented on CTAC.

Generic weaknesses that have been highlighted by CTAC include issues with methodological quality and poor knowledge of clinical trial conduct. To improve the rigor and completeness of clinical trial proposals, please refer to SPIRIT 2013 Statement (Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials) when developing your trial protocols and applications.

In addition, consider all 33 items on the SPIRIT checklist. Pay particular attention to the items listed in the Methods section (items 9–23). Addressing these can improve methodological quality and enhance knowledge of clinical trial conduct. Furthermore, consider designing phase III trials with 90% power to detect well-justified minimum important differences. Exceptions would include research questions of importance to New Zealanders that can only be addressed in New Zealand, and the trial size is limited by the pool of patients and the pressure for a timely answer.

Consider the broad expertise of their audience (CTAC) when describing your trial protocol. For example, when describing sample size (SPIRIT item 14), justify all information in the calculation and clearly describe the minimum important difference and how this translates into meaningful clinical benefit.

A significant number of clinical trial research proposals request funding for the New Zealand arm of an international study. Clear administrative information relating to funding (SPIRIT item 4) is required, including the status of all sources of funding and whether the proposal is dependent on international funding. Roles and responsibilities (SPIRIT item 5) should be explicitly stated, including the specific role of the New Zealand investigator (e.g. as distinct from the site co-ordinator role) and any New Zealand-led trial components. Additionally, address New Zealand-specific health significance and impact on clinical care in New Zealand, rather than replicating generic information from the international protocol.

Clinical trial registration

As part of our commitment to supporting best practice in clinical trials, the HRC is a signatory to the World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Statement on Public Disclosure of Results from Clinical Trials (the Joint Statement). The Joint Statement sets out policy and monitoring requirements for mandatory timeframes for prospective clinical trial registration and public disclosure of the results of clinical trial research.

The Joint Statement reflects the ethical and quality standards that must be met by HRC-funded clinical trials. This will enhance the evidence base for clinical medicine, both in New Zealand and internationally, while providing easily accessible information to the public, patients and their whānau.

The HRC's full policy statement on clinical trial transparency can be found here.

All RCTs funded by the HRC, either wholly or partly, are required to be registered on an established clinical trials registry (e.g. ANZCTR; Clinicaltrials.gov). Registration should be prospective and should be added to the application as a Year 1 milestone, even if you expect registration to be achieved before starting a resulting contract.

Appendix 2: Rangahau Hauora Māori Project application assessment process

1. Overview (NEW)

Two-stage process

Project applications are processed through a two-stage process that is designed to enable a wide range of applicants to apply in the initial stage and ensure the number of applicants who submit the longer and more detailed application required in the second stage is appropriate given the amount of funding available.

Peer review is provided by assessing committees convened by the HRC to provide expert assessment of the quality and scientific rigour of each application. Assessing committee members are experts in relevant areas of research: some committees are multidisciplinary committees; others focus on a particular research field.

Applications are also screened for alignment with HRC priorities (see section 1.3).

In the final stages of the process, assessing committees provide a list of recommendations for fundable applications to the HRC Council who make the final funding decisions, taking into consideration priorities in relation to health research and balance of HRC investment.

Stage One: EOI application

The purpose of the EOI application stage is to identify which applicants will be invited to submit full applications in the second stage of the process.

Each EOI application is independently scored by the members of the relevant HRC assessing committee, using assessment criteria (see Appendix 3). This scoring generates a ranked list of EOI applications, and the highly ranked applications are invited to submit full applications.

Stage Two: Full application

The purpose of the full application is to demonstrate in greater depth the quality and scientific rigour of the research project, including the research rationale (NEW), design and methods, impact, the expertise and track record of the research team, and how the research aligns with HRC funding priorities for the round.

Full applications are peer reviewed by members of the relevant assessing committee, and each application is discussed at the assessing committee meeting and allocated an overall score and ranking (see Section 3 of this appendix).

Each assessing committee then provides a list of recommendations for funding to the Council, who meet to discuss the recommendations from all committees and make final funding decisions. Their decisions take into account the quality and scientific rigour of the application (the key assessment criteria) as well as the HRC's priorities for health research and the balance of the HRC investment portfolio.

The assessing committee membership required to assess Project Full applications may differ from the EOI stage to ensure experts are matched to the applications. Potential conflicts of interest are managed as outlined in Section 4 of this appendix.

In previous years, applications have been assessed by both assessing committee members and external peer reviewers. **Please note** that the assessment process for the 2026 round does not include external peer review and rebuttal. Peer review will only be provided by assessing committee members at both the EOI stage and Full application stage.

2. Assessment of Rangahau Hauora Māori Project EOI applications

2.1 Assessing committee membership

All Rangahau Hauora Māori Project EOI applications will be assessed by a Māori Health assessing committee. Assessing committee membership depends on the scope of the applications received. The HRC seeks to match an assessing committee's expertise to the research fields of the applications they are considering, taking into account potential conflicts of interest (see Section 4 of this appendix).

2.2 Scoring criteria

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally weighted criteria for the General category. These are listed below with a full description in Appendix 3. Scores must be whole numbers.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

Scoring criteria	Points	%score
Rationale for research	7	25%
Research design and methods	7	25%
Research impact	7	25%
Expertise and track record of the research team	7	25%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Each individual committee member scores the EOI applications assigned to their committee independently and submits their scores confidentially via HRC Gateway. Scores are then collated confidentially by the HRC staff to produce a ranked list of Rangahau Hauora Māori EOI applications.

2.2 EOI application results

The top-ranked applications will be invited to the full stage. Applications invited to the full stage will receive an automatic e-mail from HRC Gateway when the full stage opens.

Applicants will not receive any written feedback at this stage.

3. Assessment of Rangahau Hauora Māori Project Full applications

3.1 Assessing committee membership

The membership of the assessing committee required to assess Project Full applications may differ from the EOI assessing committee. The number of members on an assessing committee and their expertise will depend on the scope of the applications, taking into account conflicts of interest.

3.2 Assessing committee pre-meeting procedure

Full applications are reviewed by members of the relevant assessing committee ahead of discussion of each application at the assessing committee meeting. It is expected that most or all full applications will be discussed at the meeting.

However, if it is necessary to limit the number at this stage to ensure the meeting has sufficient time to discuss the most competitive applications, pre-scoring may be applied to identify the lowest quality applications before the assessing committee.

In this case, the assessing committee members will independently allocate pre-scores on the same 1-7 scale used at the upcoming meeting to all applications assigned to the committee (see Appendix 3). The average pre-scores will be collated to identify a preliminary ranking, and some of the lower-ranked applications may not be discussed at the meeting. Where there is a marked scoring discrepancy for an application, it may also be taken through to the meeting for full discussion.

3.3 Full assessing committee meeting procedure

Each application will have an assigned committee reviewer whose role is to summarise how the application aligns with each score criterion. They will also use the committee's discussion to inform the application's review summary (written feedback to the applicants).

The assessing committee Chairs are responsible for ensuring the committee's discussion is fair and balanced. General discussion by all assessing committee members is essential for a balanced committee opinion, not unduly influenced by one committee member and should not be cut short nor unduly extended.

Applications to be discussed by the assessing committee will be in random order, with 25 minutes of discussion time allocated to each application:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes
- committee reviewer comments - 5 minutes
- general discussion of the application - 15 minutes
- scoring – 1 minute
- committee reviewer notes Review Summary points - 2 minutes.

3.4 Assessing committee meeting scoring criteria: Rangahau Hauora Māori Project category

Rangahau Hauora Māori Project full applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally weighted criteria. These are listed below with a full description in Appendix 3. The 7-point word ladder assists assessing committee members scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of applications. Reviewers may only allocate whole scores.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

Scoring criteria	Points	%score
Rationale for research	7	25%
Research design and methods	7	25%
Research impact	7	25%
Expertise and track record of the research team	7	25%
Total	**28**	**100%**

The Committee also takes into consideration and may make recommendations on:

- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research
- the appropriateness of the milestones and objectives
- the appropriateness of the requested FTE involvement of the researchers and any direct costs requested, and
- the total cost of the research Project with respect to 'value for money'.

The scores are submitted via HRC Gateway and collated confidentially by the HRC staff.

3.6 Recommendation of fundable applications

After scoring, HRC staff generate a ranked list of applications according to the total score.

The committee, noting conflicts of interest, then:

- identifies the applications assessed as not fundable, by starting at the bottom of the ranked list and going up the list based on quality
- identifies the applications assessed as fundable.

The Fundable/Not Fundable line refers to the position in the ranked list of applications below which all applications are of insufficient quality that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

All Rangahau Hauora Māori full project applications deemed as Fundable by the assessing committee are presented to Council to make the final funding decisions. Rangahau Hauora Māori Project application funding is considered separate from the General Project and Pacific Project applications.

Note: Once the applications have been scored following discussion by the assessing committee, scores cannot be further reviewed or adjusted.

3.7 Funding decisions – HRC Council

The assessing committees' recommendations of Fundable applications are presented to the Council who make the final funding decision, taking into consideration available investment budget, and other relevant information, including information relating to HRC's stated requirements for funding, to support their decision making.

3.8 Feedback to applicants

At the conclusion of the funding round, applicants who were invited to submit full applications will receive a review summary and can access their application outcome via HRC Gateway. The assessing committee reviewer writes a brief review summary of the assessing committee discussion for each of their assigned applications (Appendix 4). The intent of the review summary is to provide the applicant with a brief, balanced, objective statement of the committee's response to the research application.

Review summaries should be constructive and may include:

- key strengths of the application
- key areas for improvement and/or further consideration
- other comments (e.g. budgets, FTE, objectives).

Review summaries will not include details of specific scores or the identity of assessing committee members.

Individual outcomes will be available on HRC Gateway and will also be forwarded to the research office/host organisation of the applicant.

Please note: applications not discussed at an assessing committee meeting do not receive written feedback.

4. Conflict of interest

To minimise potential conflicts of interest, the HRC has specific guidance for assessing committee membership.

Anyone who is a **first named investigator** or a **named investigator** on an application should not sit on the assessing committee that is reviewing their application. However, they may sit on or chair a different committee.

All assessing committee members are required to declare all potential conflicts of interest on HRC Gateway before they can access any application-related information. These declarations are then reviewed by HRC staff in accordance with the HRC Conflict of Interest Management Policy.

Appendix 3: Scoring criteria and anchor point descriptors

Criteria for assessing and scoring Project applications in the Rangahau Hauora Māori category by the assessing committee

The 7-point word ladder containing criteria descriptors is considered against each of the following assessment outlines below (listed A-D).

Notes:

- The 'Adequate' anchor point is 3 points.
- Applicants do not necessarily have to address all the points in the outlines below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

Scoring criteria	Points	%score
Rationale for research	7	25%
Research design and methods	7	25%
Research impact	7	25%
Expertise and track record of the research team	7	25%
Total	**28**	**100%**

A. Rationale for research (NEW)

The research is important, worthwhile, and justifiable to New Zealand, with consideration to the international context, because it addresses some or all of the following:

- it addresses a significant health issue that is important for Māori
- it provides a clear evidence-base when describing areas of high health need and population groups with high health need
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a significant/important gap in knowledge, policy, practice, or service delivery need, and contribute to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1)
- the research is original and innovative.

B. Research design and methods

The study has been well designed to answer the research questions because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities
- evidence of availability of materials/samples
- Māori health research processes (Goal 3)
- Māori ethics processes (Goal 4)
- partnership with, and responsiveness to the needs of, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6)
- plan for dissemination of results
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements
- patient safety issues are well managed.

C. Research impact

The proposed research is likely to benefit Māori and New Zealand because:

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
  - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
  - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or economic impacts for Māori.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by:
  - contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1)
  - contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2)
  - incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3)
  - incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4)
  - contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5)
  - responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

D. Expertise and track record of the research team

The team, relative to opportunity, can achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated:

- appropriate qualifications and experience
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs, including consideration of capacity building
- capability to perform research in current research environment
- networks/collaborations
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding.

Appendix 4: Full assessing committee review summary

HRC reference #		**Applicant surname**	
Research title			
Host organisation			

Note to committee reviewers (CR): Carefully consider the information and wording provided below. This will be useful for both successful applicants (in helping to shape their research) and for unsuccessful applicants (in preparing future research applications). Comments should be clear and concise, reflect the committee's discussion, and fit on a single page. Aim for a total of 4-6 bullet points. (Please delete this text before you submit the completed form to the HRC.)

With regard to the criteria for assessing and scoring research applications:

1. The assessing committee noted the following key strengths of the application

2. The assessing committee noted the following aspects that could be improved and/or considered further

3. Other comments/suggestions (e.g. budgets, FTE, objectives)