

Proposal Guidelines for applicants

# BIENNIAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

2024



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# QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Funding available	Approximately NZ\$1,000,000 (excl. GST) over 2 years.
Project value	Projects are expected to range from \$50,000 to a maximum of \$100,000
Project length	Maximum 24 months.
Contract commencement date	On or after 1 January 2024, project must start by 1 April 2024.
Contract completion date	Before 31 December 2025, or 24 months after commencement date.
Eligibility	<p><b>Research must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with <a href="#">new funding criteria</a></li> <li>• Align with the <a href="#">Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023</a>.</li> <li>• Be primarily focused on New Zealand and by researchers based in New Zealand.</li> <li>• Formally supervised student projects can apply</li> <li>• Provide outputs that are available for public use.</li> </ul>
Applicants	Anyone may apply, subject to the eligibility requirements above.
Involvement in more than one proposal	An applicant can be named as Principal Investigator on up to 2 proposals in the same Biennial Grants round. There is no limit to the number of proposals a researcher can participate on.
Submission	<p>All proposals must be submitted via <a href="#">SmartyGrants</a>. Please follow the SmartyGrants guidelines to learn how to login, prepare and submit your application.</p> <p>Refer to the timetable on page 6 for deadlines. Late, incomplete or ineligible applications will not be accepted.</p>
Assessment	<p>Applications follow a 2-stage process, with all applicants required to submit a Stage 1 – Expression of Interest. All Stage 1 applications will undergo an initial eligibility check and internal preselection before progressing to our two assessment panels, a Main Panel and a Māori Assessment Panel. Successful Stage 1 applications are then invited to submit a Stage 2 - Full Proposal, that will also be assess by our two panels. Successful applications will be announced in early November.</p> <p>More details refer to the <a href="#">assessment process</a> section in this guideline.</p>
Confidentiality	All proposals received will be treated as confidential, subject to any legal requirements under the Official Information Act 1982 or any other relevant law.
Contact us	If there are any changes in your application at any stage, please contact <a href="mailto:Research@eqc.govt.nz">Research@eqc.govt.nz</a> as early as possible.

# INTRODUCTION

Every 2 years, Toka Tū Ake EQC's Biennial Grants programme welcomes experienced and emerging researchers to submit research proposals for public good. We encourage research applications that align with [Toka Tū Ake EQC's Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).

Biennial grants focus on individual projects that provide exceptional research quality, targeted to the areas of research interest explained in our [Toka Tū Ake EQC's Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#). Unlike our other contestable grant, the University Research Programme, Biennials do not require the development of extensive research capability. However, where appropriate, we do encourage the involvement of students.

The proposed projects should be feasible within a two-year timeframe, commencing on 1 January 2024 (or no later than 1 April 2024), and concluding by 31 December 2025, or 24 months after the commencement date.

Applying to the Biennial Grants programme is a 2-stage process:

**Stage 1** involves submitting a one-page (500-word) Expression of Interest (EOI) by the deadline of midnight on 17 July, 2023. Stating the objectives of the proposed project, giving an estimate of cost, and setting out the perceived benefits and impact of the research. During Stage 1, the expressions of interest will undergo an initial eligibility check and internal preselection. Selected EOIs will be evaluated and shortlisted by the assessment panels to proceed to the next stage. Applicants will be notified of the outcomes of Stage 1 in mid-August.

**Stage 2** will require shortlisted applicants to submit full proposals by the deadline of midnight on 11 September 2023. The proposals will be assessed by the assessment panels, and successful applicants will be notified of their acceptance in early November 2023. Funding will be made available starting from 1 January 2024.

## What is new?

- Our Research Investment priorities have been updated - [Toka Tū Ake EQC's Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#)
- We have [new benefits-related criteria](#) that must be applied to all applications.
- Research offices and team administrators are encouraged to use SmartyFile to manage their own organisation's SmartyGrant applications.

# SUPPORTING MĀORI AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Toka Tū Ake EQC is dedicated to promoting the participation of Māori and Early Career researchers. To achieve this, 50% of the grants (25% for Māori relevant research and 25% for ECR-led), approximately \$500,000, have been specifically allocated to these groups.

To facilitate a comprehensive evaluation process, the assessment panel for the Māori allocation will be composed of Māori researchers. This panel will assess all the applications under the Māori relevant research allocation. It is important for researchers to state their [eligibility](#) for these allocations.

## [Eligibility criteria for Māori and Early Career allocations](#)

### **Please note:**

Applications under the general allocation will also undergo a review by the Māori Assessment Panel should their proposal reference Māori, have specific benefit for Māori and/or included mātauranga Māori.



## TIMETABLE

21 June 2023	Applications open
<b>17 July 2023 (by midnight)</b>	<b>Closing - Stage 1 applications due</b>
mid-August 2023	Results stage 1 and stage 2 opens
<b>11 September 2023 (by midnight)</b>	<b>Closing - Stage 2 full proposals due</b>
Early November 2023	Results announced
November– December 2023	Contracts negotiations
1 January 2024	Funding commences

*Please note: We reserve the right to modify the dates and process at any stage during the Biennials 2024 contestable process. Applicants will be notified by email should dates be changed.*

# ELIGIBILITY

## General requirements

EOIs and full proposals must meet the following:

- Comply with [new funding criteria](#).
- Research must align with [Toka Tū Ake EQC's Research Investment Priorities statement 2023](#) and address one or more areas of research interest.
- The majority of research proposed must be undertaken by researchers based in New Zealand.
- Funding that supports a postgraduate-student project must include an academic supervisor who monitors closely the quality of the research. The supervisor should be stated as the Principal Investigator of the proposal.
- Research outputs must be publicly available in some form, and able to be used by other researchers, practitioners or the public (i.e. copyright free). Please include open access fees in the full proposal application, if required.

# MĀORI AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER ALLOCATIONS

## Eligibility for the Māori Allocation

Biennial EOIs and full proposals to be considered for the Māori allocation are required to meet one or more of the following:

- Project is led by a Māori researcher/scientist.
- Project involves Māori community research partners.
- Project is designed in accordance with Māori methodological principles.
- Project needs to meet Māori ethical expectations.
- Project develops Māori research capabilities.
- Project responds to areas of concern identified by Māori.

## Eligibility for the Early Career allocation

Biennial EOIs and full proposals to be considered for the Early Career Researcher (ECR) allocation are required to meet the following:

- Research should be led by a researcher who is within 7 years of finishing their highest qualification at the time of application, or who will finish their highest qualification prior to the commencement of the research project.



# DISQUALIFICATION

The following will not be accepted:

- Research does not comply with [Toka Tū Ake EQC new funding criteria](#).
- Applications for funding to develop or test commercial products.
- Research outputs that cannot be made publicly available (e.g. if there are any commercial sensitivities). The exception is where information should remain private in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.
- Research that does not align with, or integrate, any areas of interest in the [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).
- Proposals exceeding \$100,000 (the maximum amount of the grant) where no co-funding has been secured from other sources, or less than \$50,000 (the minimum amount of the grant).
- The majority of research will be undertaken overseas.
- Research that has no discernible (or a very loose) path to application, uptake or impact.
- Projects that are already primarily funded through other means, where no distinct Toka Tū Ake EQC delivery is demonstrated.

# ABOUT THE FUNDING

The Toka Tū Ake EQC budget for the Biennial Grants programme is approximately NZ\$1,000,000 over 2 years. Proposals can range between \$50,000-\$100,000.

Larger projects may be considered if it is demonstrated that funding is available or can be obtained from other sources to complete the project and a distinct Toka Tū Ake EQC component is delivered through the grant.

## Funding agreement

The terms and conditions of the Biennial Grants 2024 are set out in the Biennial Grant Research Funding Agreement, which will be made available on our website. We encourage all applicants to seek legal advice to ensure agreement with the terms and conditions. If your proposal receives Toka Tū Ake EQC funding, the terms and conditions in the Biennial Grant Research Funding Agreement must be adhered to, or formally negotiated with our Legal Team.

## Deliverables

All Biennial projects are required to submit 6-monthly progress reports. The due date of each progress report is calculated according to the start date of your individual project agreement.

Additionally, biennial projects are required to collaborate with Toka Tū Ake EQC on:

- One communication/stakeholder engagement activity
- Two social media posts

Examples of such activities are: media releases, video stories, presentations to a lay audience, presentations to Toka Tū Ake EQC, visits to research end-users or other agreed activities. Social media posts may be made through any app or channel relevant to the subject matter and from a user account owned by Toka Tū Ake EQC, a Host Institution, or the Researcher themselves (if public).

Invoices relating to the project should be submitted at the same time as reports, unless prior arrangements have been made with Toka Tū Ake EQC to invoice more frequently.

At the completion of a project, the researcher must provide a final report in electronic form and a 'Plain English' abstract following the [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Reporting Guidelines](#).

**For more information about reporting requirements, refer to the [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Reporting Guidelines](#).**

# HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

All applicants are required to submit their Biennial 2024 EOIs and full proposals via the online [SmartyGrants](#) research grants management system. You can use your existing account or create a new one. When round opens on 21 June 2023 the application form will be made available online.

For more information on how to create an account or navigate using SmartyGrants please visit [SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants](#).



[Login to SmartyGrants or create a new account by clicking here](#)

## SmartyFile

University and Crown Research Institute Research Offices, as well as Administrators from other organisations applying for Biennial grants, can now administer, view, manage and submit multiple Biennial applications via SmartyFile. To do so, you must first create an account on [SmartyFile](#).

For more information on how to create an account or navigate using SmartyFile please visit [SmartyFile Help Guide for Applicants](#).



[Login to SmartyFile or create a new account by clicking here](#)

# ASSESSMENT PROCESS

## Stage 1

In **Stage 1**, researchers must submit a 500-word Expression of Interest (EOI) via [SmartyGrants](#), by midnight 17 July 2023. In brief, the EOI consists of:

- a brief description of the project's objectives
- an estimate of total project cost, and
- the perceived benefits and impact of the project.

Please refer to the [Guidelines for Completing 500-word EOIs](#) for information on what to include.

In the application form you will also be asked about the benefit and impact of your research. To assist you on answering this section please refer to [Toka Tū Ake EQC new funding criteria](#).

### **Please note:**

During Stage 1, the expressions of interest will undergo an initial eligibility check and an internal preselection. Please refer to the [eligibility section](#) in this guidelines.

Additional to the general eligibility, applicants applying for Māori and Early Career allocations must also met the Māori and Early Career allocation eligibility requirements (see [Māori and Early Career allocations](#) on this guidelines).

Selected applications will be sent to the relevant assessment panels for evaluation. EOIs submitted for general allocations will be assessed by the Main Panel. Applications eligible for the Māori allocation will be assessed by the Māori Assessment Panel. Applications eligible for the Early Career allocation will be assessed by the Main Panel unless they are also Māori; in this case they will be assessed by the Māori Assessment Panel.

**All applicants will be notified of the outcomes of Stage 1 mid-August 2023.**

## Stage 2

Successful applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to submit full proposals by midnight on 11 September 2023.

In **Stage 2**, the application will require a more in-depth proposal, a high-level project plan and a budget. [Check Appendix B: Elements of a good proposal](#) to support you with your application.

Templates required for this stage will be made available on our [website](#).

Applications under general allocation will be sent to the Main Panel. Applications eligible for the Māori allocation will be assessed by the Māori Assessment Panel. Applications eligible for the Early Career allocation will be assessed by the Main Panel unless they are also Māori; in this case they will be assessed by the Māori Assessment Panel.

### **Please note**

Applications under the general allocation will also undergo a review by the Māori Assessment Panel should their proposal reference Māori, have specific benefit for Māori and/or included mātauranga Māori.

Where there is not sufficient expertise in the panels in question to assess the proposals, the panels will recommend that the proposals are reviewed by an external expert from the fields/disciplines.

**All applicants will be notified of the outcomes of Stage 2 early November 2023.**

# EVALUATION CRITERIA

## Benefit to New Zealand and Māori (50%):

The research proposal demonstrates:

- Alignment with the [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).
- That the research and its findings will improve Māori and New Zealanders' resilience to natural hazard risks.
- A strong relationship with relevant users and beneficiaries of the research, including Māori.
- Benefit to potential end users including supporting the role of Toka Tū Ake EQC in providing natural hazards cover to insured persons.
- A clear understanding of the path to uptake of the research and how it will be or could be used by research peers, practitioners and other end-users.
- A consideration of methods for dissemination and engagement with stakeholders and end-users.

## Research excellence (50%):

The research proposal demonstrates:

- High quality of proposed research (originality, novelty, insight and rigour).
- A clear research plan with objective(s) and high-level milestones.
- Collaboration across agency and/or disciplinary boundaries.
- Clear connections with any existing initiatives.
- A clear plan to manage any ethical requirements of the research.

## Additional criteria for Māori allocation proposals:

The research proposal:

- Clearly identifies potential benefits for Māori that have been identified by and agreed with Māori research partners.
- Addresses an important issue(s) for Māori that has been identified by Māori.
- Involves Māori community research partners.
- Is designed in accordance with Māori methodological principles.
- Meets Māori ethical expectations.
- Includes activities that further develop Māori research capabilities.

## Additional criteria for Early Career Researcher proposals:

The project:

- Will improve the skills, knowledge and research capabilities of the ECR and their career.

## Research Lenses

During the assessment process, if two or more proposals are deemed equal based on the evaluation criteria, the assessment panels will utilize the incorporation of our Research Lenses (mātauranga Māori, climate change and social science) as balance criteria to make a final recommendation.

You can read more about our research lenses (mātauranga Māori, climate change and social science) on page 7 of the [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).

Research lenses should only be included in a project if appropriate, and not as a means of solely gaining assessment credit.

## Additional considerations

Toka Tū Ake EQC wants to ensure its final research portfolio reflects diversity and inclusion across disciplines, gender, research experience, institutions and all five areas of interest in [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).

# ASSESSMENT PANELS

The assessment panels are appointed by Toka Tū Ake EQC. We will publish a list of assessment panel members at in our [website](#) once they have been appointed.

While recognised in their respective technical disciplines, not all assessment panel members will have technical backgrounds or knowledge of the disciplines called upon in the proposals, so it is important that proposals are clear, succinct, in plain English and easily understandable.

Panel members will operate under a confidentiality agreement. This includes a declaration and management of any conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest commonly arises when:

- A panel member is a signatory to a proposal or application under consideration.
- A member of a panel member's family or household would benefit from the success of a proposal.
- A panel member has a commercial interest in a proposal.
- A panel member is from the same school or department as an applicant or has close collaborations/ties with the work proposed by the applicant.



# APPLICANT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Applicants should also declare any potential conflicts, including those related to any person involved in the assessment of proposals. This can be done in SmartyGrants or by email to [Research@eqc.govt.nz](mailto:Research@eqc.govt.nz)

## What is considered a conflict of interest?

Conflicts of interest may occur on two levels; direct and indirect.

A direct conflict of interest would be deemed if:

- You have/had a personal or close professional relationship with a panel member or a Toka Tū Ake EQC personnel, e.g. family member or a previous employer/employee; or
- A panel member will be collaborating on your project.

An indirect conflict of interest would be deemed if you:

- are in the same department or organization as a panel member but the panel member is not part of your project or work programme.
- have a personal and/or professional acquaintance relationship with one of the panel members or Toka Tū Ake EQC personnel.

# FEEDBACK

Because of the anticipated large number of Stage 1 EOIs, specific feedback will not be given to applicants except where an application does not meet the eligibility requirements outlined previously.

Stage 2 full proposal applicants can request feedback on their proposals, including any comments from external reviewers. This information will be given in good faith to improve future applications for funding. Applicants should note that the decisions of the panels and Toka Tū Ake are final, and no further action should be taken to engage with panel members regarding these matters.

All Stage 2 applicants will receive a short commentary on the number of EOIs received, the number selected to submit full proposals, and any relevant generic feedback as appropriate.

# Appendix A: Guidelines for completing the 500-word Expression of Interest (EOI)

This guide is for the 500-word EOI. The EOI should include a concise description of the project's objectives, outcomes and benefits, and answer.

The EOI should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the problem?
- How will the proposed research contribute to solving the problem?
- What are the expected outputs? What does uptake of this research look like? What impacts would the research have on New Zealand and Māori if it were implemented successfully?
- Who are the intended end-users of, or interested parties, in this research? How are they involved?
- How does this research fit with activities in the broader New Zealand science community?

## What is not required in the EOI

The following can be included in Stage 2 (full proposal) if the EOI is successful:

- Technical details
- A detailed description of the methodology
- Detailed budget
- Project plans and milestones
- CVs or details of the track record of the research team.

## Appendix B: Elements of a good proposal

- Addresses each of the criteria in the word limit provided.
- Performs a spelling and grammar check and ensures that the information presented is in a logical sequence.
- Considers the diversity of the assessment panel members and experience and avoids the use of domain-specific jargon.
- Aligns with one or more of areas of research identified in [Toka Tū Ake EQC Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#).
- Only if appropriate, identifies and applies one of three research lenses from [Toka Tū Ake EQC's Research Investment Priorities Statement 2023](#): mātauranga Māori, climate change and social science.
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the path to uptake and how the research will/could be used.
- Provides a clear line of sight to how any significant findings would be used to improve New Zealand's resilience to natural hazard risks.
- Aligns with other current or recently completed funding and collaborations.
- Explains links with other projects and initiatives and highlights the components and deliverables that are distinct to Toka Tū Ake EQC and this specific funding request.
- Demonstrates collaboration with other relevant organisations, sectors, research programmes or research community partners.
- Describes the project's key stakeholders and end-users, and the extent to which they have engaged with them.
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of methods for dissemination and engagement with stakeholders and end-users, in particular, appropriate engagement with Māori.

# Appendix C: Toka Tū Ake EQC new funding criteria

Another function of Toka Tū Ake EQC is to administer the Natural Hazard Fund. This is the fund that homeowners with fire insurance contribute to from their premiums through a levy.

**Drawing on the fund for our Research activities requires we meet the following criteria:**

That the Commission believes on reasonable grounds that the activity has the potential to

1. provide a benefit to insured persons (whether or not the activity also has the potential to provide a benefit to persons who are not insured persons); or
2. reduce the future cost of providing natural hazard cover.

Research proposal applications we will be asked more questions regarding who your research will potentially benefit and what the benefit is likely to be, we may also ask if it has an expected impact on The Toka Tū Ake Scheme. These questions are so that we may assess the potential benefit to insured persons or potential to reduce the cost of providing cover and provides the grounds we need to draw from the fund to support the research.