

Frequently asked questions: 2027 Project and Programme Grant funding rounds



2027 Project Grant eligibility criterion changes

An individual researcher cannot apply as first named investigator or co-first named investigator for a 2027 Project Grant, if they were awarded either a Project or a Programme Grant in the following rounds:

- 2024 Health Delivery Projects
- 2025 Health Delivery Projects
- 2025 Project (including General, Rangahau Hauora Māori and Pacific Health Projects)
- 2026 Project (including General, Rangahau Hauora Māori and Pacific Health Projects)
- 2025 Programme (including General and Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes)
- 2026 Programme (including General and Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes)

If you were awarded a contract in a round not mentioned above (i.e. Explorer Grant or AI RFP Grant) this criterion does not apply to you.

1. Can we apply for both a Project Grant and a Programme Grant in the same round? And are there any limits on being first named investigator (FNI) or named investigator (NI) across the two?

Yes, provided you meet all eligibility criteria for a Programme grant, you can submit a Project and a Programme Grant as FNI/co-FNI in the 2027 rounds and your Project application can be a part of your Programme. If a Programme application is successfully funded, Projects that are a part of that Programme will be withdrawn.

There are no limits on how many times an individual can be added as a named investigator.

2. Is there a limit to how many applications (either Programme or Project) one can submit as FNI?

Yes, there is a limit. Only one Project application and one Programme application per FNI.

3. Can you please clarify whether there is a limit to the number of applications as a named investigator?

There are no limits on how many times an individual can be added as a named investigator.

4. Is the eligibility criteria as a FNI in those previous years or any NI role changed?

No, what constitutes an FNI or NI is still the same as in previous years.

5. As a result of the changes to FNI eligibility criteria, is the HRC open to more junior researchers submitting proposals?

For the Project round, early career researchers are welcome to submit and should consider the makeup of their team to deliver the research, including appropriate mentorship. There are no restrictions on adding named investigators on multiple applications.

6. Is the assessing criteria going to change with the eligibility criteria now changed for Projects?

The Project grant EOI score criteria has not changed as a result of the eligibility criteria changes. Applicants can review the score criterion descriptors in the appendices of the 2027 Project Grant Expression of Interest Application Guidelines, available on HRC Gateway.

7. Is the HRC still planning a Health Delivery (HD) Project round in early 2027? If I submit an EOI to this round as an FNI, will I be excluded from applying for a Health Delivery EOI in 2027 as an FNI, with the one FNI or co-First NI eligibility criteria?

Announcements about future HRC funding rounds will be made in due course through our usual communications channels.

Applicants could submit to both General Project and HD Projects if they were two different projects (but cannot submit the same proposal to both rounds). The 2027 General Project will still be under assessment when the 2027 HD Project opens in early 2027.

For the Project round, early career researchers are welcome to submit and should consider the makeup of their team to deliver the research. There are no restrictions on adding named investigators on multiple applications.

8. Do these eligibility changes impact smaller organisations or early career researchers?

No, we have kept the eligibility requirement changes focused on individuals, rather than at an organisation level.

Programme Grant

9. What are the eligibility requirements for Programme applications?

Programme director(s) must meet the eligibility criteria and director requirements outlined in section 1.8 of the Programme Expression of Interest application guidelines. In addition, this section outlines requirements for the programme team. Programme applicants should carefully review and consider their fulfilment of the eligibility and requirements prior to submission.

10. What are the score criteria for the EOI stage Programmes assessment?

These are available in the 2027 Programme Expression of Interest Application Guidelines (available on HRC Gateway).

The key areas are:

- Potential for outcomes: How will your research realise improvements in health outcomes and support uptake of outcomes?
- Vision of programme: How is your research innovative and does it have a clear direction?
- Māori health advancement: How will your research advance Māori health outcomes?
- Research team collaboration and integration: Does your team consist of the appropriate mix of skills to successfully deliver the programme of research?

The Programme EOI application is intended to be short.

HRC research priorities

11. What is the rationale for prioritising cancer/blood cancers for clinical trials?

This focus area is in response to the expectations set by our Ministers in our 2026/2027 Letter of Expectation.

12. Is it worth submitting an application that doesn't clearly align with the new priorities, or is it unlikely to be funded?

To be eligible to apply you do not have to align with any of the priorities, however, council funding decisions will align with HRC research priorities, informed by assessing committee recommendations and balance of investments across our portfolios.

13. For this year's round will there be any requirements for research to align with or speak to the new Healthy People and a Thriving Society Pillar?

The expression of interest stages (EOI) do not have specific requirements for research to align with the Healthy People and a Thriving Society Pillar as the Pillar Investment Plan is not yet available. Please refer to the information on priorities and requirements in the relevant 2027 application guidelines. Further details on the HRC's priorities can be found in our Research Investment Plan, available on the [HRC website](#).

The Research Investment Plan 2026/27 signals the HRC's investment areas, research priorities and funding opportunities for the year ending 30 June 2027. It is informed by and linked to the annual Letter of Expectations, the objectives of the science system reforms and the New Zealand Health Research Strategy. If there are any changes, these will be communicated to the sector.

14. What timeframe is expected for demonstrating better health outcomes and how should more basic biomedical research with longer development horizons be considered?

The HRC has not set defined timeframes for outcomes to be achieved for the 2027 Projects and Programmes, and we acknowledge that fundamental research may require a longer period of time until it is able to demonstrate impact than clinical research, for example. We advise applicants to demonstrate a clear pathway to impact on health outcomes. Applications will be assessed in a context dependent manner by peers. The impact score criterion remains the same as previous years.

Indicative investment budget

15. What is the total budget available for this round, and the likely split between programmes and projects?

We are unable to provide specifics on the level of investment we intend on investing in this upcoming round, as Council will need to consider the balance of investments across all HRC funding and meeting our expectations for funding.

You can take a look at the [HRC Statement of Performance Expectations 2026/27](#) that provides an indication of what we intend to invest, however we note this is subject to change.

The round is very competitive and as has been the case for many years, it is possible that our investment budget will not be able to fund all fundable applications.

As an indication, we invested in 3 Programme grants and 37 Project grants to a total of just over \$60M for the 2025 Projects and Programmes round.

We invested in 3 programmes and 39 projects to a total of just over \$62M for the 2026 Projects and Programmes round.

16. Do you have any information on the proportion of the funding that will be distributed for Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) and Pacific Projects?

We are unable to provide specifics on the level of investment we intend on investing in the RHM and Pacific Projects as funding decisions will need to be responsive to the considerations outlined above. These considerations also apply to funding decisions for applications in the General investment stream.

Clinical trials

17. Are clinical trials restricted to the general Project investment stream or will the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream accept clinical trial applications?

We accept clinical trial applications in our Rangahau Hauora Māori, General and Pacific investment streams.

18. What is the funding amount for a project that has both animal/bench study and clinical trial?

The maximum value of an HRC Project Grant is \$1.2M. Study's that are 100% Randomised Clinical Controlled Trials are eligible for an extended \$1.44M value, however, this study would not be eligible for this extended value.

Process and application related queries

19. Has the Project EOI form changed?

No, the Project EOI form has not changed.

20. To confirm for the Project Grant creation deadline - will the details requested at this stage be locked and not able to be updated at the EOI submission stage?

While we encourage applicants to be as precise as they can with the information requested by the creation deadline, you will be able to make changes to the information up until EOI application submission.

21. For a successful application, how long until researchers need to start using the grant?

The contract of any successful grant is with the host organisation. Once the offer has been sent to the research office, applicants are required to start the contract within 3 months of the notification date.

22. Can international academics key to the project (e.g. co-inventors on work) be listed as named investigators (or do they need to be listed as collaborators now this category exists). If they can be listed as named investigators, can they receive salaried FTE (i.e. in the 0.03-0.05FTE range) or do they need to be time only? How does this sit alongside signals in the documents for funding to primarily support activities in NZ?

As noted in the HRC rules, in relation to all other Investigators, HRC may, at its discretion, allow an Investigator domiciled overseas to be a named Investigator on a contract. However, the HRC will not contribute to the overhead of the overseas investigator and the total proportion of contract budget allocated to overseas Investigators must not exceed 20% for Projects and 10% for Programmes. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be in place for any collaborations with international organisations or investigators that have funding over \$50k allocated to for salary and research costs. Please refer to the HRC rules for further information: [HRC Rules | Health Research Council of New Zealand](#).

This arrangement provides a focus on New Zealand-based research, impact and capacity building, while balancing the gain of additional expertise/equipment/technology that is unavailable currently in New Zealand.

Please refer to your research office in the first instance as they should be able to provide guidance around this.

23. Will the Rangahau Hauora applications be assessed by a convened panel or the Māori Health Committee.

RHM applications are assessed by a convened expert panel that consists of aligned Māori health research expertise.

Science system reforms

24. What is the impact of the science system reforms on HRC funding?

As you may be aware, the decision has been made to disestablish the HRC with our investment funding transitioning to Research Funding New Zealand. While we do not have confirmed timelines at this point, the transition requires legislative changes and it is expected to be completed by 2028, pending the legislative timeline. The best place to find updated information is on the [Research Funding New Zealand](#) page on

the MBIE website and via MBIE's webinars. We will continue to share HRC specific information via our usual communication channels.

More immediately, as noted in the webinar and previous HRC communications there is less funding and operational budget available for 2026 onwards as this has been reallocated to support the science system reforms.