

Royal Society Te Apārangi

2020 Catalyst: Seeding Review Guidelines

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Version History

History of Document Changes			
Version	Date	Change	Page
1.5	January 2020	Incorporating previous changes to 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 versions	

Background

The Catalyst Fund supports activities that initiate, develop and foster collaborations leveraging international science and innovation for New Zealand's benefit. It targets investment in leadership, influence, seeding and strategic cooperation through four funding streams.

Royal Society Te Apārangī (the Society), on behalf of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), administers a number of opportunities in the funding streams Catalyst: Leaders, Catalyst: Seeding, and Catalyst: Influence.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate the smooth operation of the Catalyst Fund Assessment process for the appointed review panels to Catalyst: Seeding.

About Catalyst: Seeding

Catalyst: Seeding seeds new small and medium pre-research strategic partnerships that cannot be supported through other means, and with a view to developing full collaborations than could be supported through Catalyst: Strategic.

The Objectives of Catalyst: Seeding are:

- To enhance knowledge creation in New Zealand by linking with world-class international research groups, infrastructure and initiatives; and,
- To create enduring international science partnerships for New Zealand by providing multiple scale pre-research collaboration and a line of sight through to Catalyst: Strategic

For more information on the specific Programmes included in the respective January, April and July calls for Catalyst: Seeding, please refer to *Appendix 1: Annual Call times and programme information for Catalyst: Seeding*. The published guidelines are also available to reference on the Society's [Catalyst: Seeding website](#).

Key Definitions

The assessment criteria below should be read in conjunction with the following key definitions:

Applicant means the New Zealand research organisation submitting the Catalyst Proposal.

Call means request for proposals towards specific Programmes or Sub-Programmes, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this document, *Table 1: Annual call timeline for Catalyst: Seeding*.

New Zealand Principal Investigator (PI) means the New Zealand individual nominated by the Applicant, who is responsible for the proposed activity if awarded funding.

Collaboration Partner means the international researcher (and New Zealand researcher(s) from organisations other than the Applicant organisation if applicable) collaborating with the NZ PI.

Partner Institution means the international research organisation (and New Zealand organisation other than the Applicant organisation if applicable) of the Collaboration Partner.

Programme (or Sub-Programme) means the individual funding opportunity within Catalyst: Seeding as outlined in Appendix 1 of this document, *Table 2: Catalyst: Seeding programmes*.

Project means the unique research collaboration proposed by the Proposal.

Project Team means the Principal Investigator, Collaboration Partner and supporting individuals collectively identified in the Proposal as critical to the success of the Project.

New Zealand Project Team means the New Zealand based individuals, including the New Zealand Principal Investigator, identified in the proposal as critical to the success of the Project.

Proposal (or Application) means the application submitted by the Applicant to Catalyst: Seeding.

Research Organisation means an organisation that has internal capability to carry out substantive research, science, technology or related activities. Public service departments as listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988 are not eligible to apply under the Catalyst Fund.

Role of Reviewers

Reviewers are essential to the Catalyst Fund assessment process. Significant funding decisions will be made on the basis of your assessment. As an independent expert, you are asked to grade and comment on the proposals assigned to you in a given call. All proposals will be reviewed remotely and there is no requirement to attend a meeting in person.

- The Society endeavours to ensure that each reviewer will review a **maximum of 25 proposals**, and that the review activities will not take more than one day to complete.
- Each proposal is between 15-20 pages long with the principal content contained within 3-5 pages depending on the programme applied for (excluding CVs, letters of support, etc.). Consequently, we expect few applications will take longer than 30 minutes to assess.
- Reviewers are responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the proposals. Delegating the work to another person is not permitted.
- Reviewers may be asked to review applications that are outside their specific field of research.

Appointment

The review panels for assessing applications submitted to the Catalyst: Seeding programmes are appointed by the Society. For more information on the appointment process, please refer to the Catalyst Reviewer Expression of Interest document:

<http://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/catalyst-fund/reviewing-proposals/expression-of-interest/>

All Catalyst Fund Reviewers used by the Society will be listed on our website, but are not expected to give feedback to applicants.

Note, that when you agree to the terms and conditions set out in these guidelines, you additionally agree to being named as a reviewer on the website.

Guiding Principles

In evaluating proposals, Reviewers should be cognisant of the following guiding principles:

- **Independence;** Reviewers are evaluating in a personal capacity, you do not represent your employer
- **Impartiality;** Reviewers must treat all proposals equally and evaluate them impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants
- **Objectivity;** Reviewers must evaluate each proposal as submitted; meaning on its own merit, not its potential if certain changes were to be made
- **Accuracy;** Reviewers must make their judgment against the official evaluation criteria and the call or topic the proposal addresses, and nothing else
- **Consistency;** Reviewers must apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals

Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias refers to a bias which we are unaware of and which happens outside of our control. The Society wants to ensure that this bias has minimal influence on funding recommendations being made by Society-appointed reviewers. The literature suggests that awareness of unconscious bias can limit the impact of this bias. We therefore encourage reviewers to watch the short (3 minutes) introduction video below from the Royal Society London to familiarise/reacquaint yourself with the topic.

[Royal Society London – Understanding unconscious bias](#)

Some recommendations to blunt the impact of unconscious bias are to:

- Be prepared to **recognize** the impact of unconscious bias
- Deliberately **slow down** decision making
- **Reconsider** reasons for decisions
- **Question** cultural stereotype

Please also feel free explore some of the additional resources below:

- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
Link to Harvard University implicit association tests (IAT) on unconscious bias in relation to Gender and Science, and Gender and Career:
- <https://www.mslearning.microsoft.com/course/72169/launch>
Short Microsoft eLesson course designed to help participants understand what unconscious bias is, how it works, and strategies to counter it in the workplace.
- <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-SOTS-final-draft-02.pdf>
“*State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review*” from Ohio State University’s Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity – this publication covers a wide range of issues relating to implicit or unconscious bias and general mitigation strategies.
- https://awis.site-ym.com/?Awards_webcasts
Material from Association for Women in Science.

Conflicts of interest

The Society takes the issue of conflicts of interest very seriously. A rigorous position is taken in order to maintain the credibility of the allocation process and to ensure that applications are subjected to fair and reasonable appraisal. During Reviewer selection the Society will try, as far as possible, to minimise the known conflicts of interest in any Reviewer. However, where further conflicts of interest arise for Reviewers the following rules will apply:

- All conflicts of interest must be declared in writing to the Society. Society staff will note all conflicts of interest and actions taken.
- Where a Reviewer is a family member or close friend of any applicant(s), that person will not assess the proposal and take no part in the consideration of that proposal. They will hear about the outcome of that proposal when official letters are sent to all applicants.
- If a Reviewer has an interest in an application, such as collaborating with an applicant or an applicant’s group, then that member shall not assess the proposal.

Reviewer briefing video conference

The reviewer briefing video conference is an opportunity for the Society to introduce the objectives and the assessment process for Catalyst Seeding to the reviewers, as well as an opportunity for the reviewers to ask questions about the process. We therefore strongly encourage reviewers to take part in this meeting if possible, but participation in the meeting is not a pre-requisite for being a reviewer. The meeting will take place via Zoom from 10-11 AM on the dates indicated in the [timeline](#) below. A URL link to access the meeting will be sent out prior to the meeting.

Evaluation Procedure

The Society will forward each member of the Catalyst: Seeding review panel(s) a PDF containing the applications they will be required to assess and a spreadsheet to record their scores. In the instance where Reviewers are not required to evaluate all proposals, all submitted proposals will still be made available to the Reviewers.

The scores are automatically combined in the scoring spreadsheet to produce an overall assessment using the weighting for each of the three scoring criteria below.

In evaluating proposals, reviewers are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Each proposal is graded on three criteria using a scale from 1 (poor) to 10(exceptional). For a list of assessment criteria for Catalyst: Seeding see below.
- The Reviewer must be cognisant of the Guiding Principles for assessing proposals above.
- The grades must be submitted on the spread sheet template supplied by the Society.
- The grades should be returned to the Society by 5pm, on the deadline for reviewer's submission of grades as tabled under Timeline below.
- For Catalyst: Seeding, the assessment panel(s) will score and rank all proposals together, independent on the identified programme or sub-programme.

Reviewers are additionally asked to consider if each reviewed proposal is deemed "worthy of funding" if the amount of funding available was not a limiting factor. Due to funding limitations, it is expected that many excellent proposals cannot be funded. However, by answering No to the above question, the Reviewer indicates that a proposal does not have the quality to be considered for funding.

Following the closing of the review round, the Society will use the collated grades from the Reviewers to create a ranked list of applications.

The final decision on what proposals will be funded lies with the Society. In making its decisions, the Society will take into account recommendations made by the assessment panel and the total investment across Catalyst: Seeding to ensure it is a balanced portfolio across both research fields and country relationships supported, while still ensuring quality.

This means, for example, ensuring that:

- the Society is not over-investing in collaborations with one country or topic area to the neglect of others;
- funding is balanced across longer and shorter-term projects; and
- funding is not disproportionately invested in either research with short-term impact horizon versus research with a long-term impact horizon
- joint decision making with bilateral partners is enabled.

Timeline

Tabled below is the calendar of events for the 2020 Catalyst Fund 'Call for Proposals' and associated review activities. Each call includes programme activities in both Catalyst: Leaders and Catalyst: Seeding. For more information on included programmes, please refer the Society's Catalyst Fund [website](#).

2020 Activity	Catalyst Seeding Call For Proposals		
	January Call	April Call	July Call
Call for proposals via Catalyst Portal	30 January	30 April	30 July
Reviewer EOI closing date for current Catalyst Call	2 April	25 June	24 September
Catalyst application closing date	23 April	16 July	15 October
Notification of selected Reviewers	No later than 30 April	No later than 23 July	No later than 22 October
Reviewer briefing video conference (10-11 am)	30 April	23 July	22 October
Collated applications forwarded to Reviewers	30 April	23 July	22 October
Deadline for reviewer's submission of grades	25 May	17 August	16 November
Award announcement	2 June	1 September	1 December

Catalyst: Seeding Selection Criteria

Criterion 1: Enduring collaboration (weight in assessment 30%)

Will the proposed activity establish an enduring collaboration with world class international partners?

Reviewers should base their grading of this criterion measured by:

- Track records of the New Zealand PI and their Collaboration Partner (relative to opportunity);
- Clearly demonstrated excellence of the Partner Institution(s);
- Potential of the collaboration to create an enduring partnership; and,
- Ability of the Project Team to deliver on proposed activities.

In scoring this criterion as 10: the Project Team will have demonstrated a combined record of achievement and/or research translation that is outstanding by the international standards of their research field and for their career stage; there will be evidence of strong commitment to collaboration between these partners. In scoring a 1: the Project Team will have provided no evidence of productivity in a relevant research field; have a team that appears underpowered for the research area; and are without any record of forming stable collaborations.

Criterion 2: Novel knowledge and partnership (weight in assessment 40%)

Will the activity lead to the creation of new knowledge and a novel research partnership?

Reviewers should base their grading of this criterion measured by:

- How the Collaboration Partner will bring world-leading knowledge that complements the New Zealand Project Team members' skills and knowledge; and,
- How the proposed collaboration will support either a new partnership or a new research focus for an established collaboration.

In scoring this criterion as 10: the Collaboration Partner's will possess international standing and skills that complement, and not simply duplicate, those of the New Zealand Project Team; and, the proposed

linkage is either an entirely new collaboration between partners, or a novel and exciting change in research direction building from an existing collaboration.

In scoring a 1: the Collaboration Partner will not appear able to add anything of significance to the New Zealand Project Team, with the proposal being a continuation of business-as-usual.

Criterion 3: Strategic benefits (weight in assessment 30%)

Will the activity lead to a collaboration of strategic benefit to New Zealand?

Reviewers should base their grading of this criterion measured by:

- Ability to leverage international investment, facilities and infrastructure not available in New Zealand;
- Clearly demonstrated pathway to building a substantive collaboration beyond an initial engagement that is in line with New Zealand's science priorities; and,
- Ability of Project Team to use the partnership to initiate links with relevant New Zealand research capabilities beyond the participating institutions.

In scoring 10: the Collaboration partners will provide access to major resources that cannot be found in New Zealand; there will be a clearly defined and practical plan for both partners to extend their networks through this collaboration; and the research programme is clearly aligned with, or complements, an identifiable New Zealand science priority.

In scoring a 1, the Collaboration partners will appear uncommitted or duplicate infrastructure found in New Zealand; there will be no plan for ongoing activity beyond the direct proposal, and the linkage is of marginal relevance to any New Zealand science priority.

New Zealand science priority may refer to any high priority research fields as evidenced by links to a CoRE, NSC, biodiversity documents, central or local government priorities, or any other science priority argued in the proposal.

Vision Mātauranga

Vision Mātauranga is a policy about innovation, opportunity and the creation of knowledge that highlights the potential contribution of Māori knowledge, resources and people.

Where research projects are of particular relevance to Māori or involve Māori, the Society expects that applicants are in consultation with Māori to ensure that the research is well planned, that appropriate etiquette is observed when access to Māori sites, culturally sensitive material and knowledge is sought from their owners, and that Māori intellectual and cultural property rights are respected. Cultural understanding is required to ensure good quality research. As a first step it is expected that researchers will have sought advice from their institution, many of which have established processes for consultation with Māori.

Consultation with Māori is not expected, and may not be appropriate, for proposed projects where no specific interest for Māori can be identified. In this case, the relevant section in the proposal will be left blank.

Vision Mātauranga is not explicitly part of the scoring criteria but, where it is appropriate to a proposal, it can contribute to the overall excellence. Aspects of Vision Mātauranga relating to relevant experience may be included in the "Roles and Resources" section of the proposal application.

Confidentiality

The applications, Reviewers' worksheets and grades are confidential in every respect. An application is submitted on the understanding that: (i) it will only be used in the appraisal process; (ii) it is confidential to the review panels appointed by the Society; and, (iii) that it will not be made available to the public. The Society takes the issue of confidentiality very seriously.

- Reviewers must ensure the safe keeping of all applications and related confidential documents (e.g. application spreadsheets, scoring summaries, letters of recommendation, referee reports).
- At the conclusion of the assessment (concludes with the announcement of successful applicants), Reviewers must destroy/delete any documentation.
- Reviewers should not enter into correspondence or discussion of the contents of the applications with referees, third parties, or the applicants. Any necessary correspondence shall be addressed by the Society upon receipt.
- The intellectual property of the ideas and hypotheses put forward in the applications must be treated by the Reviewer in strict confidence.

Privacy

The Society has obligations under the Privacy Act 1993 to keep confidential certain information provided by individuals. During the course of assessing applications to the selection round, Reviewers may have access to personal information about individuals associated with an application. Where this occurs, the principles of the Privacy Act must also be adhered to.

Role of the Royal Society Te Apārangī Staff

In addition to the above roles, the Society will furthermore:

- record funding decisions;
- record any conflicts of interest and identify problem areas;
- convey funding decisions to applicants and their host organisations - all discussions related to a decision should occur through Royal Society Te Apārangī staff; and,
- negotiate contract details with host institutions.

Thank You to the Reviewers

Royal Society Te Apārangī appreciates the time and effort that reviewers put into the Catalyst Fund assessment process. The time, advice, contribution to the research community and suggestions for improvements from reviewers on the assessment process is highly valued.

More information

For more detailed information on the funding opportunities the review activity supports, refer to the Catalyst Fund webpage: <http://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/catalyst-fund/>

For any queries or further information, please contact the Royal Society Te Apārangī Research Funding (International) team at: International.Applications@royalsociety.org.nz

Appendix 1: Annual Call times and programme information for Catalyst: Seeding

Table 1: Annual call timeline for Catalyst: Seeding

Call	Open Date	Close Date	Programmes
JANUARY	30 January 2020	23 April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General
APRIL	30 April 2020	16 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General New Zealand – Germany Science & Technology Programme
JULY	30 July 2020	15 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General New Zealand – Japan Joint Research Projects (tbc) Dumont d’Urville NZ-France Science & Technology Support Programme (tbc)

Please note: Specific programme information is updated at each call release.

Table 2: Catalyst: Seeding programmes

Programme				
Type	Partner	Application(s) Required	Allowable expenses	NZ\$ Funding (GST exclusive)
General	International	New Zealand	Travel, research expenses, expenses related to hosting workshops	Up to \$80,000 in total for up to two years
Bilateral sub-programme				
New Zealand – Germany Science & Technology Programme	Germany	New Zealand and Germany	Travel, research expenses, expenses related to hosting workshops	Up to \$80,000 in total for up to two years
Dumont d’Urville NZ-France Science & Technology Support Programme	France	New Zealand and France	Travel, research expenses, expenses related to hosting workshops	Up to \$80,000 in total for up to two years
New Zealand – Japan Joint Research Projects	Japan	New Zealand and Japan	Travel, research expenses, expenses related to hosting meetings	Up to \$30,000 per annum for up to two years