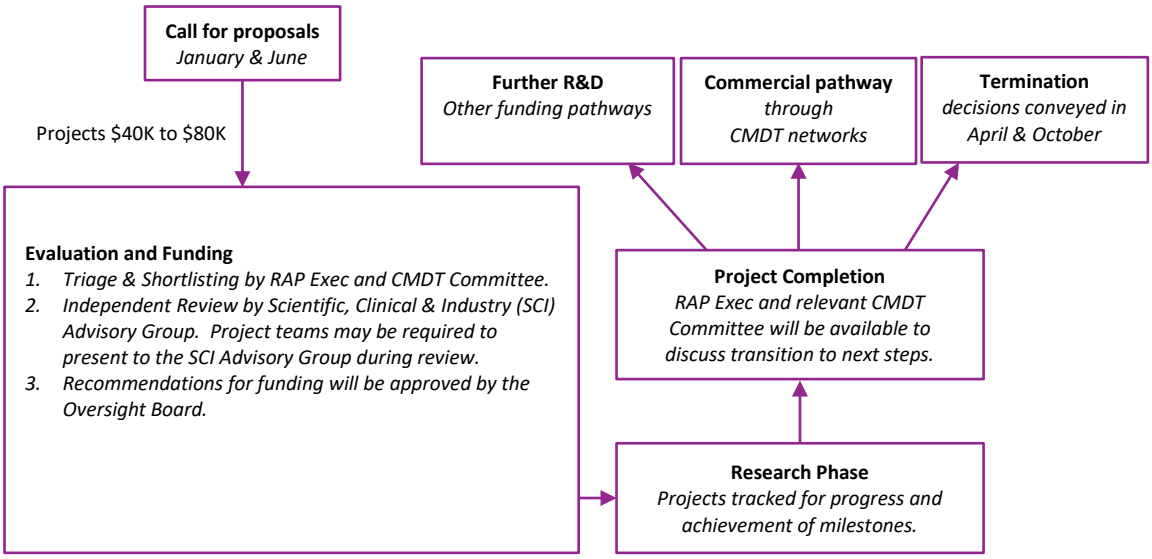
Te Tītoki Mataora
MedTech Research Translator

RAP STAGE II: Concept Seeding Fund Guidelines



1. Overview of Funding

This fund is part of the Research Acceleration Programme (RAP) of the Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator initiative.

The RAP Stage II Concept Seeding Fund is a mechanism to identify concepts with the potential to become viable for clinical application and commercialisation. The RAP emphasises translational research, and Concept Seeding projects are expected to build on proven basic research to take it to the next stage of clinical validation and commercial translation.

Inter-institutional collaborative behaviour is a strong push; all projects are expected to involve researchers from at least two NZ universities, DHBs/healthcare providers, and/or Crown Research Institutes (CRIs). One of these must be from the CMDT partnership (comprising AUT, Universities of Auckland, Canterbury and Otago, Victoria University of Wellington, and Callaghan Innovation).

The funding process is outlined above. There will be two calls for proposals (RfPs) annually, typically in January and June. Projects of **up to $80,000 (excluding GST)** are sought, typically for completion within a 12 month period from project start date. Funding should be used within New Zealand unless in exceptional circumstances.

Projects will be contracted with the Project Team Leader's institution. The project start date is flexible but must be within 3 months of contracting.

Funded projects will be tracked and assessed against milestones and outcomes by the RAP Executive Team over its duration. The RAP advocates a fast-fail philosophy to ensure that we have a continuing pipeline of fresh ideas.

Reporting will be required at the completion of the project.

2. Capability Building Modules

Alongside the RAP, Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator also offers modules for capability development through its HealthTech Capability Programme, which projects can access for specific support. These are:

- **Mātauranga Māori Platform:** supports relationship building with Māori communities and organisations, and capability building for Māori researchers and students.

- **Pacific Engagement Platform:** connections to Pacific organisations and community, capability building of Pacific researchers and students, and workshops and programmes to understand Pacific health and wellbeing requirements.
- **Future Leaders Network:** connections to early- and mid-career researchers' networks and activities.
- **Clinical Research Network:** connections to clinicians interested in translational research and innovation, workshops on clinical trial design, and clinical validation of technology.
- **MedTech Translation Platform:** access to seminars on technology translation and commercialisation, workshops to understand regulatory requirements and market validation, and specialist advice to guide early stage commercialisation strategies.

3. Project Eligibility Criteria

Projects need to meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- The project team must include members from at least two NZ universities, DHBs/healthcare providers and/or CRIs. One of these must be from the CMDT partnership (comprising AUT, Universities of Auckland, Canterbury, and Otago, Victoria University of Wellington, and Callaghan Innovation). While collaborators can be located within the same city, we strongly encourage forming networks across New Zealand as well.
- The project must be led by researchers at NZ universities, DHBs/healthcare providers, and/or CRIs. Projects should bring together research, clinical/end-user, and technology transfer expertise. The inclusion of a Tech Transfer advisor (or equivalent) from one of the collaborating institutions in the project is advisable.
- The concept must have the potential to initiate a collaborative project that can grow into a substantial and more extensively funded project in medical technology including devices, software, diagnostics and tools, informatics, tissue engineering, imaging, and medical design.
- Commercial collaboration links are strongly encouraged but not mandatory. Funding does not cover the cost of company participation unless they are delivering a specific service to the project.
- Total funding of up to $80K should cover project implementation, Te Tiriti Partnership & Māori Capability Outcomes, Pacific Partnership and Capability Outcomes, and any travel needs.

4. Scoring criteria

Criteria	Score Weighting
1. Multi-party collaboration with one being from the CMDT partnership	Pass/Fail
2. Introduction and science quality	25%
3. Clinical end-user need and engagement (including ethics/consent, if needed)	25%
4. Pathway to market and business engagement	20%
5. Project plan & roles	Pass/Fail
6. Team capability building (development of project team expertise and/or student training)	5%
7. Te Tiriti Partnership and Māori Capability Outcomes **and** Pacific Partnership and Capability Outcomes (combined)	25%
8. Budget details	Pass/fail

5. Other Considerations

- Contracting will be with the Project Team Leader's institution, with that institution receiving and distributing any awarded funding.
- An investigator may be named Project Team Leader on one Concept Seeding proposal only per RfP.
- Early Career Researchers and Clinicians are encouraged to apply. Doctoral and Masters' students are not eligible to lead a project and may not be named as AIs; they may however be part of the proposed research. Students may also be included in the meetings, workshops, and activities that the project supports.
- Clarity is needed on the value of a collaboration and the role of collaborators. The CVs of participants from multiple institutions are requested.
- A project aimed at saving healthcare costs is eligible. However, the proposal needs to address cost-saving arguments, how the team would position the technology for uptake by the healthcare system, and/or other relevant considerations on commercialisation.
- Teams should advise whether alternate funding sources are either secured or available for the proposed project, and also whether the Concept Seeding funding will be used to leverage other grants. This information will not exclude applicants from receiving funding; rather it can show reviewers that teams have considered other prospects.
- It is recognised that Māori have a right to equitable health and economic outcomes as Te Tiriti partners. Teams are asked to complete the section on Te Tiriti Partnerships and Māori Capability Outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to seek support from the Mātauranga Māori Platform where needed, to develop their applications in advance of their proposal submissions.
- An outcome measure of the RAP focuses on improved health and economic outcomes for Pacific communities. Teams are required to fill in the Pacific Partnership and Capability Outcomes section.
- A structured team and project plan showing the team member responsible for each task should be included.

6. Call for concepts and expectations from project teams

The funding process is outlined on page 1 of these guidelines. There will be two calls for proposals (RfPs) annually, typically in January and June, except for the 2022 rounds which will be announced in November 2021 and June 2022 (see table below). Successful proposals will be awarded in April and September respectively.

Proposals are at maximum 2 pages outlining the project, the team, and addressing the evaluation criteria in Section 2, with an additional 600 words to address Te Tiriti Partnership & Māori Capability Outcomes, and 200 words to address Pacific Outcomes. Travel can be included if the requirement is explained and justified. Travel should support project team interaction if members are in different cities, or to investigate prospective commercial or clinical collaborators.

Concept Seeding funding can be used to position researchers into a new Smart Idea application or support strengthening the concept of proposals that were unsuccessful. In this case, the full Smart Idea proposal will be requested as part of the submission documentation.

Teams will be strongly encouraged to include design and regulatory considerations, company involvement, and end-user feedback into their work within the first six months of the project commencing, where relevant. The RAP Executive Team can help to initiate a market feasibility study to position and validate the opportunity where possible.

2022 RfPs

There will be two RAP Stage II rounds held in 2022, in April and September respectively. All proposals should be submitted to medtechresearchnetwork@auckland.ac.nz by the following deadlines. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted for consideration in that round.

To be considered in:	Proposals must be submitted by:
Round 1 April 2022	**12pm Monday 7th March 2022**
Round 2 September 2022	**12pm Monday 22nd August 2022**

7. Evaluation and Funding

The RAP Executive Team, together with members of the CMDT Committee, will assess whether proposals meet the assessment criteria, and develop a shortlist of fundable proposals. The Scientific, Clinical & Industry (SCI) Advisory Group will evaluate this shortlist of proposals and recommend a final list of projects for funding. The RAP Executive Team will then present the final list to the Oversight Board for funding approval (see also diagram above).

Conflicts of interest arising will be handled appropriately and, if required, resolved by the RAP Co-Leads.

8. Project Completion

Projects are expected to be completed by the contracted end date. Projects can be discontinued earlier, if they are not meeting milestones. For projects that are progressing well, Project Team Leaders can apply for other funding, including the RAP Stage III Acceleration Fund, to further the concept development or to take a commercial pathway.

Upon completion, project teams must provide:

1. A one-page report outlining the status of the outcomes of the Concept Seeding Project, highlighting achievements and next steps to take the project forward; and
2. A short summary (300-500 words) with photos/images of the team, technology, and/or prototypes for Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator social media posting or a lead for a feature in the MedTech Bites newsletter.

This information will be used for annual reporting and communications to showcase Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator. The progress of the collaboration will be tracked over the life of the initiative.

Research groups should expect to participate in Te Tītoki Mataora showcases and TIKI Tours to promote new developments in the medtech sector.

The funding source (Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator) should be acknowledged in presentations and any media or formal communications.

Should a spinout company result from a funded project, progress of the company will be tracked to show the outcomes of RAP funding.

9. Translate to CMDT

The CMDT will assist by providing industry and clinical networks for projects going through the commercial route as needed. This can include partnerships with the relevant technology transfer offices and Commercialisation Partners Networks (KiwiNet and Return on Science), as well as investigate other forms of support including funding through Angel investment, Technology Incubators, and Callaghan Innovation's HealthTech Activator and Business Funds. Note that Callaghan Innovation's focus is on firms and not researchers.

10. Contact Information

All queries can be directed to medtechresearchnetwork@auckland.ac.nz.