

# Guide to Planning Research and Innovation Projects

# March 2025

## Planning Template for Ako Aotearoa Research and Innovation Agenda Projects

Ako Aotearoa is specifically seeking proposals that align with the Ako Aotearoa Research and Innovation Agenda (AARIA) Priorities Guide 2025 (Schedule 1, attached below).

This template contains a series of questions designed to support the development of a comprehensive research proposal, enabling Ako Aotearoa to effectively assess the strength of your research idea.

While there is no strict page limit, applicants are encouraged to submit proposals of no more than 25 pages.

Proposals may be submitted in Te Reo Māori; however, applicants must also provide a translated version in English.

We recommend applicants to use the font Calibri with size of 11 and set the line spacing to 1.15.

You can find out more about the AARIA Fund and the projects it has funded here: <https://ako.ac.nz/programmes-and-services/research-and-innovation>

Submit your application:

1. Prepare and complete the two application documents required (Proposal Form and Lead Researcher’s CV in New Zealand Standard Curriculum Vitae Template as provided)
2. Email these two documents to AARIA Team at research@ako.ac.nz. The email subject line must be: “AARIA Proposal Submission – [Lead Researcher’s Full Name]”
3. Applicants will receive an email acknowledging that their proposal has been received.

If you have not received an email by the deadline, please email marvin.wu@ako.ac.nz or phone +64 9 213 6238 ext. 43238

## Phase One: Getting Started

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Proposed Project Title and Focus Area.**The project title should clearly convey the core focus and objectives, ensuring it accurately reflects the intended research aims and contributions. |  |
| **Clarify the Research Focus.**The research question(s) define the key focus of the study, guiding the investigation. They should be open-ended, specific, and concise, clearly outlining the intended area of inquiry. | Key research questionSub questions |
| **Explain the Rationale for the Research.**For example:* What problem might the research help address?
* What hypothesis is being tested?
* What assumptions or insights are being explored?
 |  |
| **Describe how the research proposal aligns with the four broader priorities outlined in the AARIA Priorities Guide 2025 (Schedule 1, attached below).** | Auaha (Innovation):Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi):Ōritetanga (Equity):Hua Akoranga (Learner Outcomes): |
| **Describe how the research proposal aligns with (at least one of) the targeted priorities specified in the AARIA Priorities Guide 2025.**Note: We encourage combining several targeted priorities into one research project, where possible. |  |
| **Describe the expected outcomes of the projects.** Outcome refers to the measurable changes, results, or achievements that occur as a direct or indirect result of the research activities. |  |
| **Define how success will be measured and how the achievement of the expected outcomes will be determined, specifying the indicators or criteria that will be used to assess progress.** |  |
| **Existing Knowledge on the Topic.**Identify what is already known about the topic, drawing from relevant sources such as literature, observations, organisational data, and the perspectives of ākonga (learners). |  |
| **Describe the nature of the work.**e.g., research, innovation (trying something new - action research), evaluation (how well is something working and for whom), resource development.  |  |
| **Consultation and Team Requirements:**Identify who needs to be consulted and what expertise or roles are necessary for the team. This may include specific individuals, groups, or external experts required to support the research process. |  |
| **Describe the expected output of your research.** e.g., guidelines / good practice guide, video, webinar. |  |
| **Identify potential risks that may arise during the research process and describe the strategies or actions that will be implemented to mitigate or manage these risks effectively.**e.g., time, personnel, organisational buy-in, evidence availability, communicating. |  |
| **Estimate the timeline of the research project.** |  |

## Phase Two: Design and Planning

This phase is the ‘what and how’ of the project. It is worth spending quite a bit of time on design and planning as this sets you up well to conduct the research. But it is also a living document, so if things are not quite working as expected there is scope to shift what you intended to do. Answering these questions will lead you into the full design of your project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Describe the overarching approach.**Quantitative, qualitative, multi-method, mixed method?Descriptive, experimental, etc.If you are using a mixed approach, identify the main one.  |  |
| **Describe the research methodology.**e.g., Kaupapa Māori; Pacific research methodologies; case study; action research.If you are using a mixed methodology, identify the main one.  |  |
| **Describe how data will be gathered and the methods that will be employed.**e.g., literature/evidence review; student data (quant); interviews (narrative, semi-structured, structured); survey; observations; reflectionsSampling approach, e.g., random; systematic; purposive; convenience. |  |
| **Describe how the data will be analysed.**Quantitative – looking for trends / patterns?Qualitative – inductive, deductivePlease provide a detailed overview of your data analysis plan, including the specific data collection and analytical methods you intend to use. |  |
| **Explain how you will ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.** e.g., validity, reliability, generalisability in quant research; credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability in qual research; how to be transparent; triangulation/ crystallization, or peer review.  |  |
| **Identify the ethical considerations relevant to your research and explain how these will be addressed.**e.g., care, respect, inclusion, protection, reciprocity, power dynamics, cultural awareness, information for participants, insider / outsider status, subjectivity / objectivity / health and safety. |  |

## Phase Three: Reporting

While milestone reporting happens throughout the project, the project output follows the data collection and analysis.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Describe the type of report that will be produced at the conclusion of the research.**Type of report include written, video clip, PowerPoint, guidelines, etc.  |  |
| **Describe how the research findings will be shared and utilised, and how their reach will be extended to the intended audiences.** |  |
| **Describe the avenues that may be used to contribute to the dissemination of the research findings.** (Both during and after project completion). |  |

## Practical Considerations

Alongside the thinking, design, conducting, and reporting go a range of practical considerations that support the project to work and the relationship with Ako Aotearoa.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The research leader.**(person responsible for the contract and relationship with Ako Aotearoa).**Research leader’s CV in New Zealand Standard Curriculum Vitae Template is required.** |  |
| **The research team and their individual responsibilities and relevant experience.** |  |
| **Project milestones for reporting to Ako Aotearoa.**(timeframe, dates, work completed). |  |
| **Budget and Resource Management.**e.g., staff, equipment, operational costs, travel – see table below. |  |
| **Evaluation Indicators.**How will you know that what you are doing is working? Short term? Medium term? Long term? Please refer to the Workplan. |  |

## Project budget

Please describe the full costs of the project and specify the amount of funding requested from Ako Aotearoa and the contribution of the participating organisation(s) separately. Please expand the table as required e.g., to describe different stages of a project.

It is expected that the Organisation match the funding with in-kind contributions, including but not limited to staffing hours and overheads.

Please see table on next page.

**Table Five**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Description (provide detail *e.g.,* number of staffing hours as FTE proportions, type and purpose of equipment, type and purpose of travel, allocation for dissemination activities)** | **Ako Aotearoa’s contribution** | **Organisation’s contribution** |
| Staffing |   |   |   |
| Equipment |   |   |   |
| Operational Costs |   |   |   |
| Travel |   |   |   |
| Dissemination(10% of total budget from each contributor) |  |   |   |
| Other, please specify |  |   |   |
| Other, please specify |   |   |   |
| Other, please specify |   |   |   |
| Other, please specify |   |   |   |
| Overheads |   |  |   |
| ***Ako Aotearoa’s contribution*** |  | *N/A* |
| ***Organisation’s contribution*** | *N/A* |  |
| **TOTAL BUDGET (GST exclusive)** | **$** |

## Schedule 1: AARIA Priorities Guide 2025

Ako Aotearoa proposed the “broader priorities” and “targeted priorities” as below. “Broader priorities” are high-level funding priorities that bring together the strategic objectives of Ako Aotearoa: Though Leadership, Kāhui Ako/Communities of Practice, and Teaching Excellence. “Targeted priorities” identify specific areas of research, learning, and teaching provision that we want to see growth or change in. These priorities are more specific and focus on what provision we are seeking in the year ahead.

**We expect all applicants to align their research proposals with all of our four broader priorities, and at least with one of our targeted priorities, which are a key factor in our selection criteria. We encourage combining several targeted priorities into one research project.**

We encourage combining several targeted priorities into one research project, where possible.

## Broader Priorities:

## Auaha (Innovation): Driving system-level transformation in tertiary education with a learner-centred approach, addressing the evolving needs of ākonga and the broader education system. This includes the integration of technological developments (e.g., Artificial Intelligence), innovative and flexible programmes, and support for initiatives such as Te Pūkenga, the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE), and work-based learning.

## Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi): Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi through tertiary education, including Te Reo provision, Kaupapa Māori education, Mātauranga Māori provision.

## Ōritetanga (Equity): Achieving system-wide equity for all ākonga, including Māori, Pacific, neurodiverse, disabled, youth, and learners from low-income backgrounds.

## Hua Akoranga (Learner Outcomes): Education and training that delivers for all learners, including supporting work readiness of all learners, online and distance learning options meets the needs of all learners, providing learning opportunities for people who wish to change careers.

## Targeted Priorities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **Targeted Priorities** |
| Education | Neurodiversity |
|  | Leadership and Management Training |
|  | Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) |
|  | Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) |
|  | Pacific Cultures |
|  | Leadership of Teaching |
| Technology | Artificial Intelligence |
|  | Education Technology |