



Ako Aotearoa Funding Policy

POL020	Policy for selection and management of funded projects		
Responsibility: Project Funds Manager Ako Aotearoa		Effective: August 2015 Review date: June 2018	
Related documents	AAF-1	Ako Aotearoa Project Funding Procedures and Guidelines 2018	
	NPF-2	Full Proposal form for NPF 2018	
	RHPF-1	Full Proposal form for RHPF projects 2017	
	NPF-3	NPF Funding Agreement	
	RHPF-2	RHPF Funding Agreement	
Policy initially approved by the Board: April 2008		Updated:	April 2009 May 2013 April 2010 May 2014 July 2012 August 2015 June 2018

A. Policy

- 020.1** Ako Aotearoa project funds are change funds *i.e.*, funding that supports evidence-based change in tertiary teaching and learning for the benefit of learners. Ako Aotearoa has two funding streams: the Regional Hub Project Funding Scheme (RHPF) and the National Project Fund (NPF). Unless otherwise stated, this policy applies to both funding streams.
- 020.2** The objectives of Ako Aotearoa funding are to enhance educational outcomes for learners, promote collaboration across and within different parts of the tertiary education sector, contribute to the development of a more coherent knowledge base of effective tertiary teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, and build research capability and capacity.
- 020.3** Ako Aotearoa seeks to fund projects that are consistent with Ako Aotearoa's strategic themes.
- 020.4** Ako Aotearoa will not fund projects that support business-as-usual activities or do not involve clear organisational involvement and contribution.
- 020.5** In keeping with Ako Aotearoa's principles and values, a partnership with successful applicants will be sought. This partnership will seek to support the progress of each project as much as possible.

- 020.6** Ako Aotearoa project funding operates on a co-funding basis. Organisations must contribute financially to each project (either in dollars or in kind) at a minimum dollar-to-dollar match to our funding, and not normally exceeding twice Ako Aotearoa's contribution.
- 020.7** Each funded project team will be expected to consider the extent to which their project has achieved its proposed benefits to learners through the Ako Aotearoa Impact Evaluation Framework.
- 020.8** The level of funding for each project will vary depending on the funding stream. Information on the funding level for each stream will be available on the Ako Aotearoa website, and detailed in Ako Aotearoa Project Funding Procedures and Guidelines (AAF-1).
- 020.9** Project proposals will be considered for selection based on the following criteria:
- The project has potential to stimulate sustainable change in practice for enhanced learner benefit.
 - There is a clear evidence-based need for the project.
 - The project proposal demonstrates how the planned work either fills a gap in the existing knowledge or builds on other existing work, especially in a New Zealand context.
 - The project design, including the measurement of learner benefit, is appropriate and robust.
 - The project represents good value for money.
 - The project team exhibits the capability to complete the project.
 - The project displays the characteristics of a high impact project, as detailed in AAF-1.
- 020.10** Applications must be endorsed by each organisation's participating Chief Executive Officer/Tumuaki, or delegated manager.
- 020.11** Any project team led by a New Zealand-based legal entity is eligible to apply for funding.
- 020.12** Ako Aotearoa does not undertake to fund any or all projects submitted.
- 020.13** To enhance inclusivity, individuals can submit one application per funding round as Project Leader to the NPF. At any given time, an individual can be a Project Leader on a maximum of one NPF and one RHPF Project.
- 020.14** The Board may, from time to time, as advised by the National Office, set priorities for funding commission or establish requests for proposals for specific pieces of work and/or increase the amount or duration of funding available.
- 020.15** The National Project Fund (NPF) has two streams: Partnership and Contestable. The Board will agree how much funding is available in each stream as part of its annual budgeting process.
- 020.16** Through the Partnership stream of the NPF fund Ako Aotearoa will support projects in partnership with other funders or tertiary education organisations as opportunities arise. The Director Ako Aotearoa will approve partnership projects up to \$50,000 (Ako Aotearoa contribution).

The Ako Aotearoa Board will approve partnership projects where Ako Aotearoa contributes more than \$50,000.

- 020.17** ***Selection processes for the contestable NPF stream:*** An independent selection panel will be established for both the expressions of interest and full proposal stages for projects in the competitive NPF stream. The selection panel will consist of eight voting members. The Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus will endorse two members and the Ako Aotearoa Pacific Caucus will endorse two members. The Ako Aotearoa Board will endorse the voting members. The Director Ako Aotearoa will act as the panel's non-voting Chair. The selection panel's membership will reflect a fair balance of gender and tertiary education sub-sector representation.
- 020.18** ***Selection processes for the Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF):*** With three regionally located schemes, the appropriate independent Regional Hub Projects Selection Panel will select RHPF applications. The panel will be comprised of two or more members of the respective Hub Advisory Groups. From time to time, the Hub Advisory Groups may invite individuals to participate on the selection panel where particular expertise is required.
- 020.19** Ako Aotearoa will set in place processes to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest in the allocation of funds. In particular, a selection panel member who declares a conflict of interest with regards to a project proposal will not participate in the decision making process for that application. In addition, NPF selectors will not be able to submit an application to the funding round on which they participate.
- 020.20** Ako Aotearoa will undertake a preliminary evaluation of all applications based on the selection criteria and share their commentary with the respective selection panel. Ako Aotearoa will not, however, have a voting role on the selection panels.
- 020.21** Selection panels and Ako Aotearoa will seek portfolio balance across disciplines and priority areas when selecting projects for funding. This balance will also be in light of funded projects.
- 020.22** Ako Aotearoa will administer the funding through the Project Leader's host organisation, with delegated authorities as appropriate. Where there is joint leadership of a project, one project leader must be identified as the contact and Ako Aotearoa will deal with that person's host organisation.
- 020.23** All potential ethical issues arising from projects must be identified and addressed by applicants in discussion with Ako Aotearoa before final project approval.
- 020.24** In the event of a project application being declined, specific feedback may be provided to unsuccessful applicants with a view to assist them in making future applications. In the case of the RHPF, applicants may be invited to respond to panel feedback and resubmit their application (once only).
- 020.25** Funding decisions can be appealed on the grounds of process only as detailed in AAF-1.

- 020.26** Ako Aotearoa funding can be used for all costs associated with a project (that are actual and reasonable). For all NPF projects, a minimum of 5% of the total budget (inclusive of organisational contribution) must be ring-fenced for targeted dissemination activities. All costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 020.27** RHPF projects will normally be funded for 8-14 months. NPF projects will normally be funded for 2-3 years. An extension of funding may be available on a case-by-case basis depending upon the quality of the project outputs and their potential to enhance educational outcomes for learners.
- 020.28** Ako Aotearoa accepts applications for projects that are currently, or may in the future receive partial funding from other sources to Ako Aotearoa and the organisation contribution. In all cases, Ako Aotearoa will only fund new or unfunded elements of a project.
- 020.29** Funds will only be released after the host organisation and Ako Aotearoa have signed a formal funding agreement. The agreement includes a schedule of payment, milestone reporting requirements, and expected outputs from the project.
- 020.30** Agreed milestones will typically align with key achievements within a project. Periodic (e.g., quarterly) milestone reporting may also be considered on a case-by-case basis. Apart from any necessary start-up funds, payment of funds will be dependent upon meeting the agreed milestones.
- 020.31** In order to meet TEC's requirements for funding transparency, Ako Aotearoa will, at the completion of the project, require copies of auditable accounts of total project expenditure (i.e., against funds committed by both the organisation and Ako Aotearoa to the project). Interim reports on expenditure against the budget will be provided as agreed as part of milestone reporting and as specified in the funding schedule. In addition, Ako Aotearoa reserves the right to independently audit, at our own cost, funded projects if required. In the case of an audit, Ako Aotearoa will provide a reasonable notice period to the project team.
- 020.32** The nature of the final project reports will be agreed on a case-by-case basis with project teams, with a view to ensure the work has maximum impact on the sector as a whole.
- 020.33** Ako Aotearoa intends for all agreed project outputs to be widely available in the public domain. To achieve this copyright will be determined using the Creative Commons 4.0 New Zealand Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence.
- 020.34** Ako Aotearoa will take reasonable steps to ensure that the project teams' right to publish in exclusive contexts (e.g., in peer-reviewed journals) will not be prejudiced by our dissemination requirements. However, sharing work with practitioners in the sector has primacy over publication in these contexts.

- 020.35** Ako Aotearoa will manage a review process for all key project outputs. Information on the review processes for the RHPF and NPF is detailed in Ako Aotearoa Project Funding Procedures and Guidelines (AAF-1).
- 020.36** Ako Aotearoa staff will make every effort to ensure consistency of management of its project funding and encourage collaboration across organisations where different proposals might overlap.
- 020.37** An up-to-date register of funded projects will be maintained. Reporting schedules on progress of projects will be agreed with successful applicants and progress against projects will be collated and advised regularly to the Ako Aotearoa Board.
- 020.38** Ako Aotearoa may terminate funding of a project:
- If insufficient progress is being made, or
 - There is a significant and irreversible breach of the funding agreement, or
 - Significant risk to Ako Aotearoa is identified once the project is underway.
- The final decision is to be made by the Board on advice from the Director.