

# Ako Aotearoa Project Funding

Procedures and Guidelines 2019  
(Revised)



Nā āheitanga ā-mātauranga,  
ko angitū ā-ākonga  
Building educational capability  
for learner success

Ako  
AOTEAROA

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More information on Co-funding and download guidelines at: [www.ako.ac.nz/co-funding/](http://www.ako.ac.nz/co-funding/)



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# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Vision for our funding	2
<b>2. Project funding</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 What we fund	3
2.2 Co-funded projects	3
2.3 Funding Amounts	4
2.4 How funds can be used	5
2.5 Application process	5
2.6 Selection panel	6
2.7 Multiple submissions	6
2.8 Feedback to applicants	6
2.9 Appeal process	7
<b>3. Project Design</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Selection criteria	7
3.2 Project Impact Indicators	8
3.3 Ethical Issues	9
<b>4. Funding Agreements</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Roles within project teams	9
4.2 Reporting project progress	10
<b>5. Promotion and dissemination</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Creative Commons	11
5.2 Ownership	11
5.3 Acknowledging Ako Aotearoa	11
5.4 Project colloquia	13
5.5 Project outputs	13
5.6 Style of writing reports	14
<b>6. Reviewing project outputs</b>	<b>16</b>
6.1 Review process	16
6.2 Content of reviews	16
<b>7. Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF)</b>	<b>17</b>
7.1 Impact Evaluation	17
7.2 Self-Assessment Process	18
<b>Appendix 1: Co-Produced Pathway to Impact</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Characteristics of projects</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 3: List of relevant documents and info</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Project outputs</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Publications</b>	<b>24</b>

# 1. Introduction

Applicants for Ako Aotearoa's project funding and funded project teams should use this document. It sets out the procedures and guidelines for our project funding. All documents are available on the Ako Aotearoa website at: <https://ako.ac.nz/about-us/our-work/project-funding/>

## 1.1 Vision for our funding

Ako Aotearoa will support projects that, through a focus on impact, carry out translational<sup>1</sup> research and innovation<sup>2</sup> that aim to change factors<sup>3</sup> that influence teaching practice, and enhance teaching and learning for the benefit of tertiary learners.

The objectives of Ako Aotearoa funding are in line with Ako Aotearoa's Shared Strategic Agenda (SSA) as follows:

- Lifelong learning journeys to achieve the best possible outcomes
- Influence factors that enhance education for improving economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes for learners
- A range of valuable tertiary education options that are customised, personalised, accessible and that provide holistic skill sets and innovative thinking. Cultural centeredness is fundamental to these options
- Long-term and sustainable benefits that contribute to the wider community through enhanced tertiary teaching, positive learner experiences and equitable learner outcomes

The tertiary education sector is an agent for change that enhances learner success through collaboration

- The tertiary education sector builds its capabilities through professional standards, to enable educators to self-assess and direct their professional learning
- The tertiary education system values learner experiences and voices, and establishes learners as partners
- A New Zealand is created where Māori, Pākehā, Pacific Peoples and migrant and refugee groups are equal citizens with equal rights and have the opportunity and ability to participate and contribute to New Zealand society.

Ako Aotearoa's Project Funding focuses on its priority sectors and themes such as:

- Adult and Community Education (ACE)
- Wānanga
- Priority groups such as Māori and Pacific Peoples

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<sup>1</sup> Translational research is a type of work that attempts to bridge the gap between basic research and the world of practice. Australian Council for Educational Research 2016. From Concept to Classroom: What is translational research? [https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1009&context=professional\\_dev](https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1009&context=professional_dev)

<sup>2</sup> The process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that people value. New Zealand Productivity Commission 2017. New models of tertiary education. (New Zealand Productivity Commission, Wellington, March 2017) <https://www.productivity.govt.nz/sites/default/files/New%20models%20of%20tertiary%20education%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Includes, but not limited to, governance, management, supporting resources and systems that influence learning and teaching

- Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN)
- Lifelong learning
- Potential for system-wide impact
- Value for the regions
- Future proofing education through innovation.

Ako Aotearoa will work across the regions to ensure that our funding will support the development of learner outcomes in regions where specific needs are identified by industry, Iwi, community and other groups.

Other themes and sectors that align with the Shared Strategic Agenda may also be considered.

## 2. Project funding

### 2.1 What we fund

Ako Aotearoa funds projects that are user-inspired and have the potential to create change for impact, consistent with Ako Aotearoa's Shared Strategic Agenda. That is, we will only fund translational projects that have the potential to improve practice or positively influence how teaching is delivered. See Appendix 1 for a description of how knowledge is transferred along the pathway for impact.

Ako Aotearoa also supports work that is innovative in approach and can demonstrate a step change at organisational level and beyond to influence learner outcomes.

Our expectation is that each project will accomplish a change leading towards beneficial impacts for learners and that this change towards impact can be identified and measured in some way.

Ako Aotearoa will not fund projects that:

- Support business-as-usual (BAU) quality enhancement activities within or across tertiary organisations
- Do not involve clear organisational involvement and contribution to the project.
- Applicants should advise Ako Aotearoa if they have also applied for funding from other sources. Ako Aotearoa is happy to partner with other funding bodies if there is clear value added by Ako Aotearoa's funding. It is important, however, that the accountability for outputs Ako Aotearoa funds and intellectual property are clearly identified in the contract agreement

### 2.2 Co-funded projects

The majority of Ako Aotearoa's funded projects are co-funded projects. All co-funded projects must contribute to their project costs, either through internal cost contribution, in-kind and/or in dollars. The co-funding contribution must be at least equal to the funding level provided by Ako Aotearoa. To preserve the principle of partnership, Ako Aotearoa would not normally expect an organisation's contribution to be more than twice Ako Aotearoa's contribution. The co-funding contribution applies to all applications

Ako Aotearoa acknowledges that some organizations (e.g., those with less than 25 FTE enrolments per year) may not have the resources to contribute the required level of co-

funding. Ako Aotearoa is prepared to make exceptions and to negotiate the proportion of co-funding required with such organizations on a case-by-case basis for strong proposals.

## 2.3 Funding Amounts

Ako Aotearoa has three levels of project funds available, as a co-funded contribution, as follows:

- \$15,000 to \$50,000 – to support, with seed funding, new regional industry-based learning projects and other work-based learning, including teaching of technology to learners to aid their work-based learning and other R and D projects\*.
- \$ 51,000 to \$100,000 – to support innovation and research projects that incorporate an element of development and scaling of their findings.
- \$101,000 to \$150,000 – to support large-scale national projects and to address systemic issues in tertiary education. In addition, to support strategic initiatives to improve tertiary teaching and learning across the whole tertiary education sector in New Zealand.

The funds share the same overarching objective: enhanced educational outcomes for tertiary learners.

### 2.3.1 Partnership funding

Through project funding, Ako Aotearoa will support selected projects in partnership with other funders or tertiary education organisations as opportunities arise. These are projects of significant and/or strategic purpose, and Ako Aotearoa will be closely involved in the development of the project design.

Partnering organisations must contribute at least a dollar-to-dollar match (internal cost contribution in-kind and/or in dollars) of Ako Aotearoa's contribution.

Potential partners are encouraged to contact our national office with a project idea as early as possible. From time to time, the national office may approach other funders or organisations to develop strategic partnerships.

### 2.3.2 Commissioned funding

Where Ako Aotearoa considers it important to address specific sectors, and/or priority areas, we will, from time to time, commission project work through the project fund. In all cases, the overarching objective is to fund use-inspired projects that have the potential to drive change in tertiary teaching and learning for the benefit of learners. The co-funding requirement does not apply to commissioned projects.

### 2.3.3 Principle of partnership

Ako Aotearoa is committed to working in partnership with all funded project teams. We want to be more than a funder; from the initial project idea, we work alongside project teams to maximise the impact of the work. Ako Aotearoa sees its project partner role

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\* In R and D projects, the research component may be smaller but there will be more content on researching how a solution works- a) in practice, b) on larger scale, c) across sectors – generally a new iteration will emerge that is closer to the delivery of the output/outcome. In example- an organisation may already have developed a microcredential or an App, putting significant research into it. But they would not know how it works in practice or when it is scaled up, or applied to other sectors, etc. – this is development/refining/modifying new inventions, etc.

as providing support for teams on a case-by-case basis, and actively assisting in the promotion and dissemination of their work.

We consider it important to meet all project teams in person so that they know who they will be working alongside over the course of the project. Ako Aotearoa will contact each newly funded team towards the beginning of their project and hold a video-conference with these teams in the early stages of their work. This meeting provides an avenue to informally discuss how we can best work together.

Where there is revenue generating potential through projects, Ako Aotearoa will seek to partner in sharing that revenue.

### **2.3.4 Organisational commitment to support the project and to act on project findings**

Ako Aotearoa expects that the person who signed the contract (or delegate) – that is the project budget holder – to support the progress of the project. Ako Aotearoa also expects the project budget holder to approve each milestone report, to act on the outcomes of the work, and to proactively support the dissemination of findings.

During the process of conducting the Impact Evaluation, Ako Aotearoa will communicate with the project lead, and the project budget holder about the impact reached by the project.

## **2.4 How funds can be used**

Ako Aotearoa funding can be used for all actual and reasonable costs associated with a project. However, funds are not available to make capital purchases.

Each project budget must detail all financial requirements for the project (Ako Aotearoa's and the organisations). Budgets must be approved by each participating organisation, prior to submitting an application. Costs will be considered and negotiated on a case-by-case basis, but may include:

- Staffing
- Equipment and materials – only costs that directly affect the project and cannot be reasonably obtained from the organisation will be considered. Capital items will not be funded (i.e. buildings, machinery or general software)
- Dissemination activities – at least 5% of the total budget must be allocated for targeted dissemination activities for projects up to \$100,000 Ako Aotearoa contribution. Projects with an Ako Aotearoa contribution of \$101,000 and over should allocate at least 10% of the total project value for targeted dissemination as agreed with Ako Aotearoa
- Operational costs directly related to the project
- Overheads – the organisational overhead may constitute no more than 10-20% of the organisation contribution. Only up to 20% of Ako Aotearoa's contribution could be applied to cover organisational overheads.

## **2.5 Application process**

Ako Aotearoa will call for proposals through either a closed or an open process. Where open, Ako Aotearoa will announce a call for applications. Ako Aotearoa may

also commission projects from time to time, through a closed round, when this is the preferred mechanism.

Staff at our regional offices are available for organisations seeking feedback on their proposals.

Ako Aotearoa's Project Funds Manager or Sector Services Managers can advise on the development of the proposals. The website has contact details.

All applications are submitted to the Project Funds Manager at Ako Aotearoa's National office.

However, proposals of total value less than \$40,000 can be forwarded to the Sector Services Managers.

## **2.6 Selection panel**

Selection panellists will be from a wide range of relevant professional groups (see Ako Aotearoa's Project Funding Policy).

### **2.6.1 Conflict of interest**

Panellists who declare a direct conflict of interest concerning a project proposal will not participate in the decision-making process for that application.

Panellists cannot submit applications as a Project Leader to the funding round on which they will participate as a panellist.

### **2.6.2 Selection process**

Ako Aotearoa's Project Fund Manager will check the applications to ensure eligibility (see 3.1). A selection panel will consider eligible proposals.

Ako Aotearoa will not have a voting role on the selection panel.

Applications will be considered against the selection criteria (see 3.1 and Funding Policy 2019) and the balance of Ako Aotearoa's portfolio of completed and in-progress projects. Applicants may be contacted and asked to provide additional information, to discuss the proposal, or to resubmit a revised application, based on the comments of Panellists.

The decision panel reserves the right to invite short-listed applicants to submit a revised proposal that responds to their feedback and/or to attend a panel meeting to discuss the proposal in more detail. In this case, Ako Aotearoa will organise and pay for the meeting, as required.

Ako Aotearoa will advise applicants whether their project application has been successful, or not.

## **2.7 Multiple submissions**

Project Leaders can at any given time be a Project Leader on a maximum of one project. A Project Leader may be a team member on one other project at any given time.

## **2.8 Feedback to applicants**

In the event of a project application being declined, Ako Aotearoa will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants with a view to assisting them in making future applications.



## 2.9 Appeal process

Funding decisions can be contested by an appeal only on the grounds of process. To appeal, an individual/group must write to the Director of Ako Aotearoa within two months of a funding decision, stating their appeal and the reason(s) for that appeal. An Ako Aotearoa staff member will correspond with the individual/group regarding their appeal, which will be discussed with Ako Aotearoa's Director. The relevant staff member will contact the applicant about the appeal.

## 3. Project Design

### 3.1 Selection criteria

Projects will be assessed against the selection criteria (see Table 1). These criteria are consistent with Ako Aotearoa's Funding Policy which describes what Ako Aotearoa hopes to achieve through project funding.

For help with designing and planning your project, please see the characteristics of a good project (Appendix 2). You can also contact the Sector Services Manager nearest to you.

Table 1 – Description of Selection Criteria

Criterion: Impact value	Criterion: Change value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– High collaboration</li> <li>– High implementation capability</li> <li>– Ability to attain positive outcomes for learners</li> <li>– Potential to impact on a large number of learners, relative to the funding</li> <li>– Cross-institutional/cross-sector perspectives</li> <li>– Potential for developing international reputation and credibility</li> <li>– Active engagement of practitioners</li> <li>– Ability to develop/establish communities of practice</li> <li>– Ability to influence policy</li> <li>– Evidence of the ability to generate sustained professional development opportunities/support networks of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ability to influence change within the institution and/or across several institutions/sectors</li> <li>– Ability to generate debate</li> <li>– Evidence of potential to demonstrate change for the benefit of learners: e.g., course completion rates, contributing to industry (TEC's education performance indicators)<sup>4,5</sup></li> <li>– Ability to improve teaching quality via change in teaching practice</li> <li>– Wide dissemination possibilities</li> </ul>

4 TEC 2018. A Tertiary Education System That Works for Everyone. TEC, Wellington.

<http://tec.govt.nz/assets/Publications-and-others/Investment-Toolkit-Infosheet-A-tertiary-education-system.pdf>

5 TEC 2018. Educational Performance Indicators for Industry Training Organisations. TEC, Wellington.

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Publications-and-others/a3b01a38b5/Educational-performance-indicators-ITOs.pdf?r=1>

Quality of knowledge developed	Quality of team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Generates new knowledge, insights, concepts, innovation, etc.</li> <li>— Specific gap(s) identified and addressed</li> <li>— Builds on Ako Aotearoa’s previous work and/or other existing research/ knowledge</li> <li>— Evidence of using action research</li> <li>— Evidence of student engagement/ student partnerships</li> <li>— Inter-disciplinary approach in project teams and project design</li> <li>— Quality of project design: outcome focused, sound methodology for collection and analysis of data and information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Collaborative team (cross-institutional or cross-sector or both) with clear roles and expectations being agreed</li> <li>— Diverse perspectives brought by team members</li> <li>— Investigator capability (or sourcing the capability)</li> <li>— Reliability</li> <li>— Previous performance in similar projects or other undertakings, especially external contracts</li> <li>— Capability to deliver quality outcomes</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Project Impact Indicators

From the outset, project teams are expected to think of their impact post-project completion and must include elements of design to steer projects towards that impact. For example, by engaging stakeholders in the team; by testing the change desired at regular intervals using methods used by practitioners; generating valuable insights as the project progresses if possible; gaining information early on gaps of knowledge required to make policy changes and using these in developing proposal and the approach.

Teams are encouraged to develop indicators to meet the criteria that apply to their proposals. This includes identification of change elements as indicators that demonstrate that steps are being taken towards achieving the impact outcomes.

- Four or more indicators are recommended for proposals with an organisation contribution of \$101,000 and above
- Two or three indicators are recommended for proposals an organisation contribution up to \$100,000.

A few examples illustrating impact indicators are provided below. Teams should however tailor their proposals to determine their own indicators, relevant to their proposals.

1. If the impact outcome is the improvement of learner success, change elements (indicators) could be the change in: number of pass rates, number of individuals showing positive behaviour, tutor/learner motivation (number of learners actively engaging, number of tutors actively engaging), number of apprentices completing L2, learner engagement in programme design, learning success due to the use of analytics, VR, etc.

2. If the impact outcome is increased cultural awareness, change elements (indicators) could be the change in: positive cultural encounters, the use of a cultural toolkit, the number of Māori and/or Pasifika completions in a particular programme (increased completions), the level of enrolments of diverse students in a particular course (increased enrolments).
3. If the impact outcome is increased sector participation, change elements (indicators) could be: a greater number of sectors engaged in workshops, higher cross-sector engagements (numbers) in policy discussion/decisions, higher participation rate of external stakeholders (from different sectors), adoption of the programme by an increased number of sectors.

The change elements (indicators) should be selected/tailored as suited to the context of the project. The measurement method and frequency should be included.

### **3.3 Ethical Issues**

The Project Leader must ensure that ethical issues relating to the project are identified and addressed, and ensure appropriate ethical approval is obtained as necessary.

## **4. Funding Agreements**

For all approved projects, a Funding Agreement will be negotiated between the Lead<sup>6</sup> Organisation and Ako Aotearoa.

The Funding Agreement's Schedule A will identify:

- The agreed funding contributions (Ako Aotearoa's and the organisation's)
- A schedule of project milestone activities and deliverables typically aligned to an Ako Aotearoa payment
- The expected project outputs
- Details of self-assessment.

Payment of funds will be made on approval of agreed milestone activities and self-assessment. The project budget holder or delegate must approve milestone reports, before being submitted.

Any variation to an agreement must be arranged in accordance with the provisions of the agreement. Variations must be in writing and be signed by each party to the agreement.

### **4.1 Roles within project teams**

Every member of a project team needs to have an identified role and time (hours or Full Time Equivalent- FTE) allocation within the project.

The Project Leader leads the project and is accountable for the project team achieving their aims and objectives and reporting against the agreed project milestones. The Project Leader is required to engage with the person who signed the contract on behalf of their Organisation (or delegate) - the budget holder- throughout the project and to obtain their support for the progress of the project and its expected outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the organization affiliated with the Project Leader, within which the Project Leader is employed

The Project Leader is responsible for:

- Obtaining all the ethical approvals required
- Reporting milestones (also ensuring that milestones are approved by the budget holder or delegate)
- Submission of the final report
- Addressing review feedback and updating the relevant outputs (see 6)
- Filling out and submitting Ako Aotearoa's dissemination template in discussion with Ako Aotearoa
- Working on dissemination and extending reach (see 5)
- Completing the self-assessment process (see 7)
- Working on reaching the desired impact of the project, during and after its completion.

Less experienced project teams are required to nominate a mentor to support them in their work, or, to collaborate with experienced personnel. These individuals must be identified in the research team.

All other people in the project team are defined as project team members. These can include co-researchers, research assistants, mentors, data collectors, analysts, advisors on specific aspects of the project or from partner organisations, and any other person actively engaged in the project.

Project teams may establish a reference group/advisory group to informally oversee the project.

In developing the budget, the appropriate proportion of hours or the proportion of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) time must be allocated for all project team members.

## **4.2 Reporting project progress**

All Project Leaders must report the progress of their project to Ako Aotearoa on time, according to the milestones agreed to in the Funding Agreement.

Each project has a milestone report template that is provided to the Project Leader by the Project Funds Manager. The template requires the Project Leader to report on the:

- activities agreed in Schedule A of the funding agreement
- organisation's contribution (internal cost contribution in-kind and/or dollar cost)
- project expenditure against the agreed budget of the project
- change towards impact achieved related to the dimensions of the Impact Evaluation Process
- project highlights and issues, e.g., connection with another project or group, changes to the team's membership, a conference presentation, etc.

If there are significant issues or highlights that occur in between milestone reports, we encourage you to let us know about these so that we can help either promote achievements or provide additional support.

## 5. Promotion and dissemination

We encourage all project teams to disseminate and promote their work to as wide an audience as possible, throughout the full course of the project lifecycle: at approval, during the project, upon completion, and beyond.

Project teams are advised to reflect on their dissemination goals and to discuss the dissemination plans with Ako Aotearoa during the early stages of the project.

Ako Aotearoa's Communications and Marketing staff will provide a tool kit and support teams to appropriately brand and format their project outputs.

Dissemination and promotion should aim to engage, for example:

- Key stakeholders including educators, iwi, Māori, Pacific Peoples' communities and tertiary education policy/ decision-makers;
- Other sector groups engaging in tertiary education and training such as industry and work places-using industry guidelines, toolkits, workshops, interviews with general media, hui, or presentations and
- Relevant research and innovation communities, where appropriate, through outputs such as journal papers or conference presentations.

Ako Aotearoa will supply a dissemination plan template for this purpose. Please see Appendix 4 for suitable output types.

### 5.1 Creative Commons

Ako Aotearoa intends all project outputs to be widely available. To achieve this, unless otherwise agreed, project outputs will be published under the Creative Commons 4.0 New Zealand Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence (BY-NC-SA). This licence lets others distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon work, even commercially, as long as they credit the author/s.

Ako Aotearoa will take reasonable steps to ensure that the project team's right to publish in exclusive contexts, such as 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.

### 5.2 Ownership

Unless otherwise agreed, Ako Aotearoa asserts a 50% share of ownership rights to any intellectual property (IP) developed during the course of a project, the other 50% being held by the organisation(s) co-funding the work. Ownership rights to existing IP brought into a project will remain with the existing holders of that IP.

### 5.3 Acknowledging Ako Aotearoa

It is a condition of funding that Ako Aotearoa is acknowledged in all dissemination work, and we ask teams to inform us of any dissemination activities relating to their project ideally before they take place so that our Communications and Marketing team can best support the activities and maximise promotion of a project, where appropriate.

### 5.3.1 Acknowledgement via events

We expect teams to acknowledge Ako Aotearoa in presentations and supporting materials prepared for such events, e.g., symposia, conferences, workshops, media interviews, organisational events. This should include:

- Ako Aotearoa logo on PPT slides, video clips, handouts
- Accompanied by a clear statement to the effect that the work or findings presented were funded by, or based on work funded by, Ako Aotearoa.

### 5.3.2 Acknowledgement in publications/project outputs

We require the placement of the following in all published and/or other project outputs (e.g., reports, summary reports, guides and other resources such as PPT slides, videos, posters and cards):

- Ako Aotearoa logo on the lower edge, front cover or beginning of video clip.
- The words “Supported through Ako Aotearoa’s Project Fund” also included under or alongside the logo
- The project page URL – to link to more information and all project outputs on Ako Aotearoa’s website
- Creative Commons 4.0 licence information.

Figure 2. below offers an example of the Ako Aotearoa funding and licensing acknowledgments appropriate for all project outputs.

This project was funded through Ako Aotearoa’s Project Fund 20XX. More information is available at <insert the URL for the project web space>

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Any queries regarding this will be addressed at a meeting arranged to discuss project dissemination, or can be forwarded to Ako Aotearoa National Communications and Marketing Manager; Jill Tanner-Lloyd at: [jill.tanner-lloyd@ako.ac.nz](mailto:jill.tanner-lloyd@ako.ac.nz)

### 5.3.3 Project output design

Generally, Ako Aotearoa prefers to manage the design and layout of the outputs from a project in the following way:

- Full project report – electronic only, formatted in word, uploaded in PDF with a fully-designed cover.
- Other outputs (e.g., printed flyers/posters/cards/booklets, summary reports, video clips and other multimedia, other promotional collateral) – as part of the

project budget allocation, the most appropriate, fit-for-purpose formats will be agreed in advance: on a case-by-case basis, and in discussion with Ako Aotearoa's Project Funds Manager and Communications and Marketing Manager. (See also 5.6.3 for more information on Projects that create tools and/or other resources.)

### **5.3.4 The Ako Aotearoa brand**

Download our Brand Guidelines for all information regarding correct use of our logo and brand elements from the Ako Aotearoa website.

## **5.4 Project colloquia**

Ako Aotearoa holds projects-in-progress colloquia for some funded projects each year.

Ako Aotearoa's colloquia provide opportunities to:

- Meet people working on other tertiary education projects
- Meet individuals from other sectors and stakeholder groups
- Disseminate preliminary findings and test ideas
- Find early synergies with other teams
- Identify potential collaborators for future projects or sharing practice
- Develop capability.

From time to time, Ako Aotearoa may also request presentations to external groups on the progress of the projects.

## **5.5 Project outputs**

Ako Aotearoa's scope covers the whole range of tertiary learners and educational providers. The audience and users of our outputs are therefore diverse. Ako Aotearoa encourages teams to develop outputs that are academically valuable, useful for implementation and increase reach beyond the organisation.

The development of user guidelines, tools, online resources, and other innovative outputs that are beneficial for teaching and learning, are encouraged. Appendix 4 provides a list of acceptable outputs.

As you frame your outputs' key dissemination messages, consider:

- What are the main, new findings that are beneficial for others, and how will they benefit them?
- How do you ensure that practitioners or identified audiences will want to engage with your output(s)?
- You may create something that has a very specific target audience too, so it may be more about maximising the uptake of the resource/s by your target group (it may not be just practitioners).
- Is the output well-organised and succinct, so users can quickly determine what the issue was, what was learnt, and what the implications are?
- Is the language accessible?



## 5.6 Style of writing reports

We encourage teams to prepare their project outputs with sharing, application and future implementation in mind. A writing style guide is available on request from our Communications and Marketing team.

Here are some points to consider:

- **Be aware of your audience**

Since different outputs will focus on different audiences, it is important that target audiences are kept in mind. Different language, length, presentation, and foci will be given to different audiences, e.g., practitioners, policy makers, researchers.

- **Avoid jargon – use plain language**

Individuals interested in your good practice may be from a different part of the sector or from a different discipline to you. We ask that your publication be in plain English to maximise accessibility, and to avoid acronyms as much as possible.

- **Focus on the implications**

Keep in mind that people may want to incorporate the findings of your work into their own practice, systems, or policies. This might come in the form of a series of recommendations or a section on implications.

- **Focus on the evidence of learner benefit**

Show how your project provides answers to the question: “How do we know this is working for learners?”

In determining the outputs for projects, it may be helpful to think about your project in terms of two broad categories:

- Is your project designed to create change in factors that influence teaching and/or learning practice?
- Does your project create tools and/or resources (e.g., resources for professional learning and development outcomes)?

Of course, projects can be a combination of the above. Most change projects should be producing material, which can be re-used, so you should think about how you will share this.

### 5.6.1 Arranging content for reports

We recommend that main reports should be preceded by a summary document containing the executive summary, main findings, a link to the main report and recommendations (ideally about 8 pages in length).

The main report should be concise, and we recommend the following format:

- Introduction (setting the context and describing the background, review of the literature, identification of gaps in knowledge, and the aims and objectives of the study)
- Methods (how the study was approached, planned, designed, analysed)
- Results (main findings)



- Conclusions and recommendations (please include the next steps and aspirational goals for advancing your research, potential partners/ collaborations, and other plans, where applicable)
- Survey results, case studies, data, focus group results, etc, can be included in Appendices, but they should always be referred to, with the number of the appendix, in the main body of the report.

### 5.6.2 Key dissemination messages

- What was the intervention?
- What was the intervention trying to achieve?
- Was the intervention successful? How does the project team know? Was it evaluated?
- What is the evidence of the impact of the project?  
Examples of evidence of impact include:
  - Number of learners affected
  - Feedback
  - Evidence of enhanced learning
  - Evidence of uncovered complications
  - Plans for further work
- How will the project result in sustainable change?
- What other areas of tertiary learning and teaching will be able to adapt or use this work?

#### Key issues/questions:

- How do you ensure that practitioners and users will read the report?
- How do you know the work will result in any impact on teacher or learner practice?
- How do you know that new knowledge has been created?
- How will the project result in sustainable change, and at what level?
- What did the project team learn that could be applied elsewhere –key issues/ questions?
- What are your plans and suggestions to build on this work for continued/ sustained impact?
- Can you identify areas where this work could be extended within your organisation, field/s, community, network, or involving other tertiary institutions?

### 5.6.3 Projects that create tools and/or other resources

Projects that create tools and/or other resources have very concrete, practical outputs that should immediately be of use to a wide variety of people.

**Key message to disseminate:** What the tool/resource is, its benefits, and its use?

**Key issue:** How to get the message out and ensure the tool/resource is used?

**Questions to think about when determining the type of output and its development:**

- Who would be interested in it? Who is it for? How can you get the message to

- them (e.g., associations, staff developers' forums, etc)?
- What types of tools/resources are best suited to helping the intended audience make changes to replicate success?
  - Are the tools/resources well presented? How would they be best presented on the Ako Aotearoa website?
  - How can the tools/resources be further developed? Is there an opportunity to develop stories/case studies about how they are being used?
  - How does the work involved in testing the tools/resources during the project provide insights for other users?
  - Would it be useful to start a conversation/community around the use of the tool/resource?
  - Are there champions or others outside the project team who can champion its cause/endorse it?

## **6. Reviewing project outputs**

Ako Aotearoa will manage the review process for key project outputs. Details of the review process are shown below.

### **6.1 Review process**

#### **6.1.1 Projects of total value up to \$50,000**

Ako Aotearoa staff members (or a nominated reviewer) will review outputs of smaller projects. The Project Fund Manager or nominated staff member will send these reviews to the project teams. The review may include requirements and/or recommendations to improve the output. The Project Leader is responsible for editing the output in response to the reviews and then sending the output to the Project Fund Manager.

Feedback to the Project Leader normally takes four weeks.

#### **6.1.2 Projects of total value over \$50,000**

An Ako Aotearoa staff member will manage an external peer review process. The Project Leader is responsible for editing the output in response to the peer reviews, and then sending the output to the Project Funds Manager for final approval.

Feedback to the Project Leader normally takes two months.

### **6.2 Content of reviews**

External peer reviewers are asked to comment on both substantive aspects of the report or other kinds of output and, where appropriate, minor amendments or points they wish to highlight. Reviewers are asked to consider:

- The potential contribution of the project to existing knowledge on effective teaching and learning

- The robustness and appropriateness of the design and methodology employed
- The possible implications/applications of the results described for practice
- The change that has been measured/demonstrated
- The clarity of writing and data presentation
- How the report might be amended to most comprehensively and clearly communicate what was undertaken in the project
- The strengths of the work, including future implementation, impact and research possibilities.

Ako Aotearoa's staff reviewers are expected to consider and comment on:

- Required changes/inclusions (e.g., executive summary/abstract, references, changes to or acknowledgment of key limitations of the work);
- Recommended changes (i.e., changes that are not required for project approval but would improve the overall presentation of work); and
- Quality and layout of the report and project outputs intended for publication.

## 7. Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF)

Ako Aotearoa has assessed the impact of its project funding since 2012. This year the Impact Evaluation Framework is being expanded to evaluate the social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts on the learner and the impact of the work on the external context (e.g., policy, systems, institutions, communities, internationally, etc).

The illustration in Appendix 1 provides some ideas about the pathway of knowledge towards impact.

Specifically, our IEF explores project impact and outcomes related to five dimensions:

- Reach (generation and dissemination of project outputs)
- Impact on practitioners
- Impact on learners
- Impact on the project teams themselves
- Impact beyond the organisation<sup>7</sup>

### 7.1 Impact Evaluation

There are two stages to the impact evaluation approach.

Stage One occurs during the project and includes self-assessment against the Project Impact Indicators within 6 to 9 months after completion (see 7.2).

Stage Two commences 12 months after project completion. Ako Aotearoa staff will be in contact with the Project Leader after 12 and 24 months to conduct evaluative conversations about the project's ongoing impact. The evaluative conversations explore

<sup>7</sup> External environment – e.g., other Institutions, localities and sectors; agencies, peak bodies and policy development

themes related to each of the IEF's dimensions.

Ako Aotearoa will seek to include the Manager/Budget holder who signed the original proposal (or delegate) at the impact evaluation conversations.

## 7.2 Self-Assessment Process

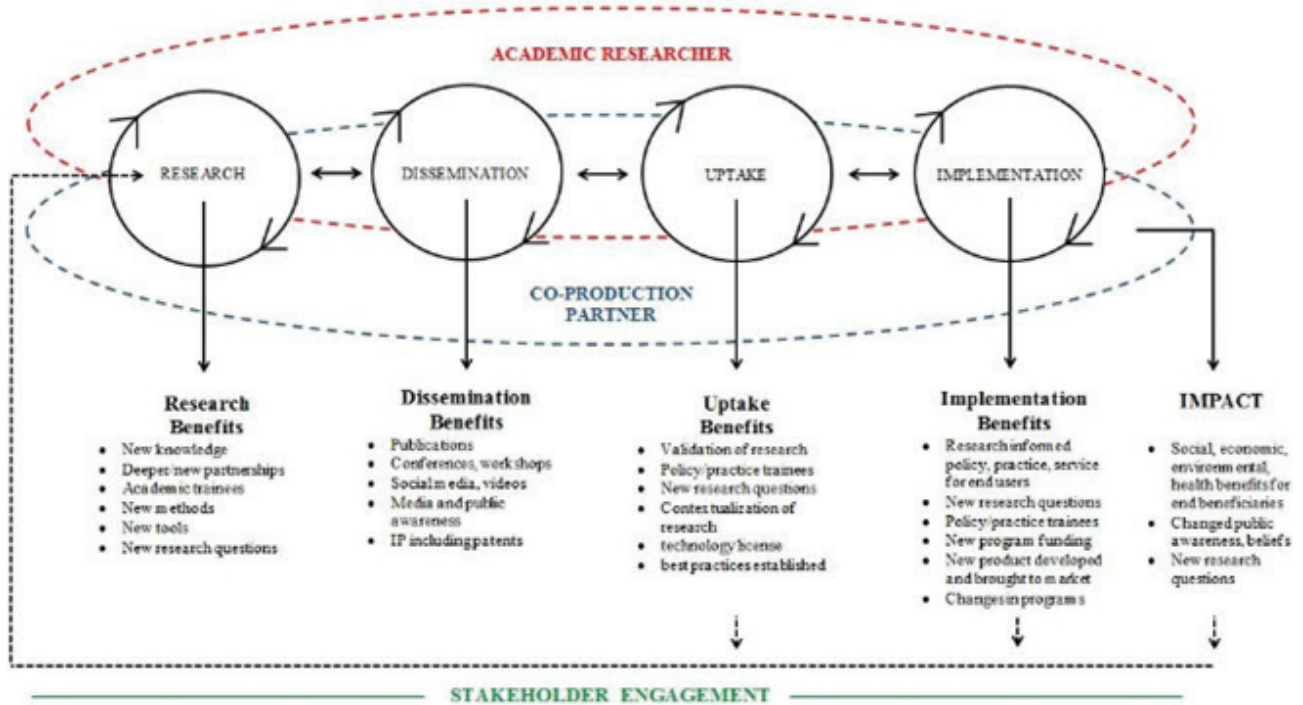
Project teams are required to focus on gathering evidence of change for their chosen Project Impact Indicators from the start of their project/s.

As a part of Ako Aotearoa's impact evaluation, teams are required to undertake ongoing assessment of how the project progresses towards change for impact.

- The Project Lead will need to ensure that team members keep a record of small but significant interactions (e.g., interactions with external stakeholders, peer-groups and professional networks, strategies developed that feed into new initiatives, and changes that have arisen during the lifetime of the project) using a tool provided by Ako Aotearoa.
- Six to nine months after project completion (as agreed to on a case-by-case basis), the Project Leader will provide self-assessment report.
- While teams will have identified Project Impact Indicators and evidence unique to the project, the following information could be included in the self-assessment report:
  - number of learners impacted (potential social, economic, cultural, environmental enhancements observed so far)
  - professional learning development (PLD) resources and opportunities generated
  - professional networks strengthened/built
  - positive feedback received
  - record of change in practice within the team
  - record of change of practice within the institution/external to the institution
  - any potential impact on policy/regulations
  - debates generated due to the work
  - All dissemination events, activities and outcomes.

# Appendix 1: Co-Produced Pathway to Impact

Source: Phillips, DJ., Cummings, J., Pepler, D., Craig, W. & Cardinal, S. (2016). The Co-Produced Pathway to Impact. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 8(2), 31-40.





## Appendix 2: Characteristics of projects

Source: Alkema, A. (2012). *Creating sustainable change to improve outcomes for learners: A framework for thinking about projects in tertiary education* (pp. 22– 24). Ako Aotearoa.

### Rubric for the evaluation of Māori focused projects: Tā te Māori Titiro

<i>Te Taumata</i>	<i>Te Kounga o te Rangahau</i>	<i>Te ū Roa ki te Whakapiki Putanga Pai Ake</i>
<p><b>Kua eke panuku</b></p>	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent,' all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project design and method has no significant gaps or areas of weakness</li> <li>• Kaupapa Māori methodology is embedded in the project design</li> <li>• How outcomes for learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities will be achieved is clearly demonstrated</li> <li>• The desired outcomes are determined in collaboration with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities</li> <li>• The project has been initiated by and is led by Māori</li> <li>• The Project team has mana relevant to the proposed work</li> <li>• Capability building is embedded in the project</li> <li>• The focus of the project is highly valued in Māori tertiary education, wider New Zealand and internationally</li> </ul>	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent', all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation demonstrates a clear commitment to act on the outcomes of the work</li> <li>• Relationships are established with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities</li> <li>• The dissemination plan is well developed</li> <li>• The project team is actively engaged in achieving sustained change for learners beyond the scope of the project and participating organisations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kua eke</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any minor gaps or weaknesses in the project design and method can be easily rectified</li> <li>• Kaupapa Māori methodology is part of the project design</li> <li>• How outcomes for learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities will be achieved is well reasoned</li> <li>• The project has a Māori leader and team with the capability to complete the work, and demonstrates expertise in the area of interest</li> <li>• There is evidence of collaboration and partnership with Māori</li> <li>• There is a plan to build capability as part of the project</li> <li>• The project focus is of importance to Māori tertiary education in New Zealand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation is committed to the work and outcomes</li> <li>• Important stakeholder relationships are identified and relationship building is underway with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities</li> <li>• The dissemination plan is in development</li> <li>• There is potential to achieve sustainable change for learners as a result of the work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kāore i te eke</b></p>	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project design and method has significant gaps in scope, logic, or detail</li> <li>• The project lacks Māori leadership and partnerships</li> <li>• The capability of the project team is inconsistent with the proposed work</li> <li>• There is no evidence of capability building as part of the project</li> <li>• The work should already be business as usual</li> </ul>	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisational commitment to act on the outcomes of the work is negligible</li> <li>• There is insufficient evidence of relationship building with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities</li> <li>• There is a low likelihood the project will achieve sustainable change for learners</li> <li>• The benefit of the project is captured by the participating team members or organisation</li> </ul>

## Rubric for the evaluation of open projects

Rating	Project Integrity	Achieving Sustainable Change
<b>Excellent</b>	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent', all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project design and method has no significant gaps or areas of weakness</li> <li>• How learner outcomes will be achieved is well reasoned</li> <li>• The project team has mana relevant to the proposed work</li> <li>• Capability building is embedded in the project</li> <li>• The focus of the project is highly valued in New Zealand and internationally</li> </ul>	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent', all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation demonstrates a clear commitment to act on the outcomes of the work</li> <li>• Relationships are established with key stakeholders</li> <li>• The dissemination plan is well developed</li> <li>• The project team is actively engaged in achieving sustained change for learners beyond the scope of the project and participating organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any minor gaps or weaknesses in the project design and method can be easily rectified</li> <li>• How learner outcomes will be achieved is well reasoned</li> <li>• The project team has the capability to complete the work, and demonstrates expertise in the area of interest</li> <li>• There is a plan to build capability as part of the project</li> <li>• The project focus is of importance to teaching and learning in New Zealand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation is committed to the work and outcomes</li> <li>• Important stakeholder relationships are identified and relationship building is underway</li> <li>• The dissemination plan is in development</li> <li>• There is potential to achieve sustainable change for learners as a result of the work</li> </ul>
<b>Poor</b>	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project design and method has significant gaps in scope, logic, or detail</li> <li>• The capability of the project team is inconsistent with the proposed work</li> <li>• There is no evidence of capability building as part of the project</li> <li>• The work should already be business as usual</li> </ul>	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisational commitment to act on the outcomes of the work is negligible</li> <li>• There is insufficient evidence of relationship building with important stakeholders</li> <li>• There is a low likelihood the project will achieve sustainable change for learners</li> <li>• The benefit of the project is captured by the participating team members or organisation</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3: List of relevant documents and info

Title	Location
Evaluating the impact of projects	<a href="https://ako.ac.nz/about-us/project-evaluation/">https://ako.ac.nz/about-us/project-evaluation/</a>
Project Funding Application Form	Download from <a href="http://www.ako.ac.nz/co-funding">www.ako.ac.nz/co-funding</a>



## Appendix 4: Project outputs<sup>8</sup>

- Artefact/Object/Craftwork
- Authored Book
- Awarded Doctoral Thesis
- Awarded Research Master's Thesis
- Chapter in a Book
- Commissioned Report for External Body
- Composition
- Conference Contribution
  - Abstract
  - Full conference paper
  - Conference paper in published proceedings
  - Poster presentation
  - Oral presentation
  - Other
- Confidential Report for External Body
- Discussion Paper
- Professional Learning and Development
- Design Output
- Edited Book
- Exhibition
- Film/Video
- Intellectual Property (e.g., patent, trademark)
- Journal Article
- Literary translations, where these contain significant editorial work in the nature of exploratory work
- Monograph
- Oral Presentation
- Performance
- Scholarly Edition
- Software
- Technical Report
- Working Paper
- Other form of output (including, but not limited to, book reviews, magazine articles, new materials, structures, devices, images, products, and explanatory texts).

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<sup>8</sup> Modified from Performance-Based Research Fund Sector Reference Group – Consultation Paper #6 Developing Evidence Portfolios – operational guidance for the Research Output component, TEC. 2015.

## **Publications**

Alkema, A. (2012) Creating sustainable change to improve outcomes for learners: A framework for thinking about projects in tertiary education. Wellington: Ako Aotearoa .



Nā āheitanga ā-mātauranga,  
ko angitū ā-ākonga  
Building educational capability  
for learner success

