

# A NATION OF CURIOUS MINDS HE WHENUA HIHIRI I TE MAHARA

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## **PARTICIPATORY SCIENCE PLATFORM BACKGROUND**

All New Zealanders should feel encouraged and equipped to deal with the challenges and opportunities presented by science and technology, and be capable of participating in the debates involving science. We also need an environment that helps New Zealanders to use our natural curiosity to interrogate, decide on and make the most of new developments and technologies.

Participatory science is a method of undertaking scientific research where volunteers can be meaningfully involved in the development and progression of locally relevant scientific research projects with science professionals. It goes beyond the idea of scientists' crowd-sourcing their data, and builds a true partnership between the scientists and the broader community.

The Participatory Science Platform (PSP) builds on the popularity of citizen science, but re-balances the lay person/scientist relationship through a highly collaborative approach.

Funding proposals will be sought for projects that involve both community groups and scientists in research that is relevant to the local community, harnessing local knowledge and providing learning experiences while producing robust scientific outcomes.

## **WHAT ARE THE SCIENCE IN SOCIETY PARTICIPATORY SCIENCE PLATFORM (PSP) OBJECTIVES?**

The objectives of the Platform are to:

- engage students, kura, schools, businesses, Māori collectives and organisations, and community-based organisations with science professionals to carry out collaborative research projects that have scientific value, pedagogical rigour and resonate with the community;
- offer researchers opportunities to become involved in locally relevant lines of enquiry, where high-quality scientific outputs can be created through harnessing the local knowledge and contribution of citizens.
- offer inspiring and relevant learning and development opportunities for science and technology teachers and students, and
- engage learners and participants beyond the school/kura community to reach parents, whānau and wider communities.

## **HOW DOES THE PSP FIT WITHIN A NATION OF CURIOUS MINDS - HE WHENUA HIHIRI I TE MAHARA – A NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SCIENCE IN SOCIETY?**

*A Nation of Curious Minds - He Whenua Hihiri I Te Mahara*, a national strategic plan for Science in Society was launched in July 2014 to encourage and enable better engagement with science and technology across New Zealand. The PSP is the integrating action identified in the Plan that addresses objectives in all three of its action areas:

1. Enhancing the role of education
2. Public engaging with science and technology
3. Science engaging with the public.

### **WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PSP PILOT?**

During 2015 MBIE will run a pilot of the platform in three areas: South Auckland, Taranaki, and Otago.

The objective of the pilot is to test the platform concept in three different local environments, including the process for seeking and progressing ideas and to provide information about the administrative and operational resource requirements in different environments to inform any post-pilot actions.

### **HOW WILL THE PILOT WORK? (ALSO SEE APPENDIX 1)**

MBIE has appointed a pilot area lead in each area. Their responsibilities include providing support and guidance to research project participants in the pilot areas at all stages of the project, from the identification and matching of project parties to supporting the implementation of projects.

Project funding will be available to part-fund research project participants to plan together and progress the research question, data collection, analysis and knowledge translation strategy for the project (ie travel, meetings and liaison costs).

Pilot area leads are responsible for assessing applications for project funding and allocating funding to projects that best meet the assessment criteria.

The national coordinator (Victoria Metcalf) will establish collaborative working relationships with the PALs and provide:

- a national co-ordination point between the three PALs;
- support and guidance to the PALS in carrying out their responsibilities and oversight of progress in each pilot area;
- quality assurance for proposed research projects in each pilot area;
- support and guidance in the evaluation of the of the pilot in each area

MBIE, the national co-coordinator and the pilot area leads will work together to evaluate the pilot at its completion. Pilot area leads will provide input into the design and implementation of possible future activities by evaluating the local pilot and providing insights into its operation and outcomes.

## **HOW MUCH FUNDING WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS?**

Research project participants will be able to apply to pilot area leads for grants of up to \$20,000 (excl GST), which are intended to partially fund a project.

It is expected that approximately 5-6 projects will be funded in each pilot area.

## **WHO WILL BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?**

Either the community or science sector based partner in research project collaboration may apply for funding. Community based parties include community groups/organisations/schools/businesses and Māori collectives.

Applicants and projects must be based within or have access to one of the three pilot areas.

## **WHAT CAN RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING BE USED FOR?**

Research project funding can be used to part-fund science professionals and community groups/schools/businesses/Māori collectives and organisations to plan together and progress the research project including the research question/s, data collection methods, engagement plan, data analysis plan and knowledge translation strategy for the project (i.e. travel, meetings and liaison costs). In addition, eligible costs could include research tools or consumables related to progressing a project that would not otherwise be accessible to community partners.

Funding may be used to enhance an existing or ongoing research project (which has local relevance and support) with a community collaboration element. In this case community partners must be fully integrated into the research project, including becoming engaged in guiding the research questions, collecting the data and disseminating the results.

## **WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PILOT RESEARCH PROJECTS?**

It is envisioned that research projects initiated as part of the pilot will be the start of ongoing relationships between project parties. Within the pilot timeframe the deliverables that are expected are:

- robust research questions;
- robust data collection that has started and is ongoing;
- evidence of community involvement;
- data analysis plan;
- dissemination plan;
- evidence that functional relationships have been established and the project has begun implementation.

## **WHAT CAN RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING NOT BE USED FOR?**

- an existing research project where the status quo is proposed;
- activities that are part of a project participant's usual programme of outreach and public engagement;

- preparation, publication and distribution of pamphlets, magazines, books, websites, CDs and DVDs, other than those prepared to promote an event or project;
- projects that compete with, or duplicate initiatives already part of the *A Nation of Curious Minds – He Whenua Hihiri I Te Mahara* strategic plan or other existing initiatives (refer Annex 4 in the plan); or
- capital expenditure other than research tools or consumables related to progressing a project that would not otherwise be accessible to community partners.

### **WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS?**

The pilot area leads will establish a process to assess applications that ensures that any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in the assessment of funding applications are avoided.

PALs will allocate funding to projects that best meet the assessment criteria agreed between them, the national coordinator, and MBIE. The National Coordinator will provide quality assurance for proposed research projects in each pilot area.

The final decision on the allocation of funding will be made by the PAL. PALs will be responsible for contracting and distributing funding to projects.

### **HOW CAN INTERESTED PARTIES BECOME INVOLVED?**

Interested parties based in, or with access to, one of the pilot areas should contact their local lead:

- COMET Auckland (South Auckland)
- Venture Taranaki (Taranaki)
- Otago Museum Trust Board (Otago)

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

**Visit:**

[www.curiousminds.nz/discover/article/4/38/participatory-science-platform](http://www.curiousminds.nz/discover/article/4/38/participatory-science-platform)

<http://www.msi.govt.nz/update-me/major-projects/science-and-society-project/funding/>

**Contact:**

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### What is participatory science?

A method of undertaking scientific research where volunteers can be meaningfully involved in the development and progression of locally relevant scientific research projects with science professionals.

## Participatory science platform pilot

### How it will work

**What is the objective of the Platform?**  
To build enduring science engagement relationships and networks between the community and science sector through participatory research projects

### What is the aim of the platform pilot?

To test the platform concept and its outcomes. It will test the process for seeking and progressing ideas, the administrative requirements for the platform and the operational resourcing requirements of the platform in different environments



