TE TĪTOKI MATAORA
MEDTECH RESEARCH TRANSLATOR

RAP Stage I: Collaboration and Ideation 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 I Collaboration and Ideation Fund supports the formation of new collaborative relationships between researchers, clinicians, companies, and/or new collaborative relationships with Māori and Pacific communities. Interorganisational collaborative behaviour is a strong push in the Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator initiative and this funding recognises that new relationships are difficult to pursue, particularly when potential collaborators are in different centres throughout the nation.

This fund is for researchers from NZ universities, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora, primary healthcare providers, independent research institutes (including CRIs), and/or Whānau Ora / Fonua Ola providers who also have a deep knowledge of the needs of their communities. The researchers may not have formally worked together and want to build relationships, or they are existing collaborating groups wanting to pursue a new concept or build new relationships. There is an expectation that with the funding, the team will progress into a RAP Stage II Concept Seeding Project or other grants including HRC, MBIE, and Royal Society funds.

Projects of **up to $20,000 (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. The requested funding should be allocated as outlined below:

- Up to $10,000 may be used to bring potential collaborators together in focused meetings or curated workshops to explore new opportunities or ideation sessions. The funding covers travel support for researchers from organisations involved in the proposal to meet and visit one another's facilities, workshops, hui, or community consultations. In the case of projects that include or focus on such ideation sessions, the funding will extend only to explore the initial concept, and where no ethics is required; a detailed research plan suitable for applying for RAP Stage II Funding would be an expected outcome.
- An additional $10,000 can be used to fund discrete activities arising from ideation sessions and/or which are required to move the research project forward to a robust RAP Stage II application. For example, funds could be used to develop and pilot a research protocol, to develop initial technology for a research project, to carry out an initial feasibility study, or to contract personnel (i.e. research assistant) for a specific task. These research activities should not require full ethics approval but expedited low-risk studies or studies (extensions) under existing ethics approval to test a new technology could be considered.

The funding does not include FTE time of PIs or AIs.

The funding does not cover student costs (see Section 3).

This is an open call for proposals. Applications may be submitted at any time, but funding is awarded according to the calendar (see Section 5).

Projects on medical and health technologies are welcome (see Section 3). There are some specific challenges that have been identified by the health system, and projects addressing these are also requested:

- **Long-term conditions pathway (Te Whatu Ora Priority):** Innovative solutions that address any stage along the pathway of long-term condition development, from early prevention through to enhanced care – for example, from early prevention of diabetes through to chronic kidney disease and transplant – that improve patients' health or quality of life and/or minimise health system burden.
- **Virtual/Digital Hospital (Te Whatu Ora Priority):** Any technology solutions that will help move and support healthcare into the community.

- **Whānau supporting Whānau (Whānau Ora Priority):** Technology solutions that empower whānau to support each other in the prevention, diagnosis and management of COPD, Cardiovascular disease or Diabetes in their homes and communities.

Projects will be contracted with the Project Team Leader's organisation (see Section 3 for eligible lead organisations). The project start date is flexible but must be within 1 month of contracting.

Funded projects will be tracked and assessed against milestones and outcomes by the Te Tītoki Mataora 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 (see Section 6).

2. Capability Building Modules

Alongside the RAP, Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator also offers modules for capability development through its upskilling programme, which project teams can access for specific support. We strongly suggest applicants take a look at the opportunities offered through this upskilling programme by clicking on this link. These are:

- **Mātauranga Māori:** supports relationship building with Māori communities and organisations, and capability building for Māori researchers and students.
- **Pacific Engagement:** 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:** connections to early- and mid-career researchers' networks and activities.
- **Clinical Translation:** connections to clinicians interested in translational research and innovation, workshops on clinical trial design, and clinical validation of technology.
- **Commercial Translation:** 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 must meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- Projects must be a collaboration between at least two organisations. One of the organisations involved must be from the CMDT partnership comprising:
    - Auckland University of Technology ○ Massey University ○ University of Auckland ○ University of Canterbury ○ University of Otago ○ Victoria University of Wellington ○ Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora
- The other organisation(s) may be any NZ university, primary healthcare provider, independent research organisation or institute, public research organisation / crown research institute, and/or Whānau Ora / Fonua Ola providers. While collaborators can be located within the same city, we strongly encourage forming networks across New Zealand.
- The leading organisation must be a NZ university, research organisation / institute, or Whānau Ora / Fonua Ola provider.

- Clear reasons must be given as to why this collaboration is important to the medtech translational network, its goals, what it will achieve from this project, and next steps. In the case of existing collaborating groups, applicants must explain the new "stretch" to this collaboration. For example, explain if this involves the inclusion of a new group or collaborator; development of a new concept; or extension of the relationship to Māori and Pacific collaborators.
- A project plan to progress the collaboration or new idea is expected alongside a budget.
- Industry collaborators can be included in the project, but funding **may not** cover the costs of their participation (e.g. salary, travel or accommodation costs).
- Early- and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) and clinicians are encouraged to apply. The Te Tītoki Mataora Executive Team will prioritise applications from EMCRs that are PIs or co-PIs. Doctoral and Master's students are ineligible for this funding as it is focused on developing longer term goals and relationships to grow the translational research community. However, students can be included as investigators under special circumstances (see below), and involved in the meetings, workshops, and activities that the project will support.
- RAP generally does not fund PhD or Master's student thesis work because these types of projects are too long for a RAP project. However, exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:
    - RAP may fund Masters/PhD project work if the student has identified a translation opportunity partway through their thesis, or has finished their thesis and identified a translation opportunity as part of their work. In this case, the student should be co-PI with their supervisor.
    - RAP may fund Masters/PhD project work that is part of a broader project, as long as translation is the focus of the RAP project and that the project fits within RAP timeframes.
    - RAP does not fund student stipends. RAP may fund a research assistant with expertise in the subject matter to work on the project, who may be a student.
    - Proposals that include a PhD student/candidate should be clear and transparent about their involvement.
- RAP funding may **NOT** be used for purchases of research equipment >$5000.
    - Funds may be used for purchases of minor research equipment under $5000.
    - NOTE: This does not mean that major research equipment can be divided into separate components all less than $5000 each.
    - Funds may be used for equipment depreciation or rental cost covering project-specific usage of research facilities and equipment not covered under overheads.

4. Evaluation and Funding

Applicants must complete the Proposal and Budget templates provided – these should outline the team applying and address the eligibility criteria in Section 2.

The Te Tītoki Mataora Executive Team will assess the proposals and decide on awards.

5. Funding Cycle

This is an open call for proposals and submissions can be made at any time. However, proposals are reviewed for funding by the Te Tītoki Mataora Executive Team following the deadlines. Awards will be made by the end of these same months. All proposals should be submitted to medtechresearchnetwork@auckland.ac.nz by the deadlines in the table below via the appropriate channels as required by the Project Leader's organisation. Teams should ensure they

adhere to their organisation's funding application processes to avoid any delays. Proposals received after the deadline will be considered in the next round of reviews.

2026 Deadlines

Proposals must be submitted by:	To be considered in:
12pm Monday 2nd March 2026	March 2026
12pm Monday 4th May 2026	May 2026
12pm Monday 31st August 2026	September 2026
12pm Monday 2nd November 2026	November 2026

6. Project Completion

Projects are expected to be completed by the contracted end date, typically with a maximum duration of 12 months.

Upon completion, project teams must provide:

1. A one-page report outlining the status of the relationship or ideation outcome, highlights on what has been achieved, and next steps for the newly formed relationship or concept; and
2. A short summary (up to 300 words) with photos/images of workshops 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.

The funding source (Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator) should be acknowledged in presentations and any media or formal communications. Information will be provided to projects that are awarded funding.

7. Contact Information

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