

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. Inter-organisational 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, 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 have not 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. Funding for more than \$10,000 can be requested if there is a clear rationale. The funding covers travel support for researchers from different organisations 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 cover student costs and does not include FTE time of PIs or AIs.

Projects on medical and health technologies are welcome (see Section 3). There will be three calls for proposals (RfPs) in 2025.

Projects will be contracted with the Project Team Leader's organisation. The project start date is flexible but must be within 3 months of contracting.

Funded projects will be tracked and assessed against milestones and outcomes by the RAP 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.

2. Capability Building Modules

Alongside the RAP, Te Tītoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator also offers modules for capability development through its Healthtech Capability Programme, which projects can access for specific support. 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:
 - AUT
 - Massey University
 - University of Auckland
 - University of Canterbury
 - University of Otago
 - Victoria University of Wellington
 - Te Whatu Ora
- The other organisation(s) may be any NZ university, Te Whatu Ora, primary healthcare provider, independent research institute (including CRIs), and/or Whānau Ora / Fonua Ola providers. While collaborators can be located within the same city, we strongly encourage forming networks across New Zealand as well.
- The project must be led by researchers at any of the organisations listed above.
- 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.
- Early/Mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) and clinicians are encouraged to apply. The RAP Executive Team will prioritise applications from EMCRs that are PIs or co-PIs. Doctoral and Masters' students are not eligible 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 in the meetings, workshops, and activities that the project will support.
- Industry collaborators can be a collaborator in the project, but funding may not cover the costs of their participation (e.g. travel or accommodation costs).
- RAP generally does not fund PhD or Masters 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 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.
- RAP may fund Masters/PhD project work if the student has identified a translation opportunity part-way 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.
- Proposals that include a PhD student/candidate should be clear and transparent about their involvement.
- RAP funding may NOT be used for purchases of major 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 RAP Executive Team will assess the proposals and decide on awards.

5. Funding Cycle

There will be three calls for proposals (RfPs) in 2025. All proposals should be submitted to medtechresearchnetwork@auckland.ac.nz by the due dates 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 due date will be considered in the next round of reviews.

2025 Deadlines

Proposals must be submitted by:	To be considered in:
12pm Monday 3rd March 2025	March 2025
12pm Friday 29th August 2025	September 2025
12pm Monday 3rd November 2025	November 2025

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 Titoki 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 Titoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator. The progress of the collaboration will be tracked over the life of the initiative.

The funding source (Te Titoki Mataora MedTech Research Translator) should be acknowledged in presentations and any media or formal communications.

7. Contact Information

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