

# Marsden Fund

## Terms of Reference (2024)

### Nature of the Marsden Fund

1. The Marsden Fund encourages New Zealand's leading researchers to explore new ideas that may not be funded through other funding streams and fosters creativity and innovation within the science innovation and technology system. Exploring new ideas results in greater potential to develop of new technologies, products, boost economic growth, and enhance New Zealand's quality of life.
2. The Marsden Fund invests in excellent, investigator-led research aimed at generating new knowledge, with the potential for long-term economic, environmental or health benefit to New Zealand.
3. It supports excellent research projects that advance and expand the knowledge base and contributes to the development of people with advanced skills in New Zealand.

### Objectives of the Fund

4. The objectives of the Marsden Fund are to:
  - a) enhance the quality of research in New Zealand by creating increased opportunity to undertake excellent investigator-led research.
  - b) contribute in the long-term to economic, environmental or health impacts for New Zealand.
  - c) support the advancement of knowledge and technology in New Zealand and contribute to the global knowledge base.
  - d) contribute to the development of advanced skills in New Zealand, including support for continuing training of post-doctoral level researchers and support for the establishment of early careers of new and emerging researchers.
  - e) support research where there is a clear rationale for the research to be undertaken in New Zealand.

### Funding for research excellence

The Marsden Fund is administered by The Royal Society of New Zealand, PO Box 598, Wellington 6140  
Tel: +64 4 470 5799, Email: [marsden@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:marsden@royalsociety.org.nz), <http://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden>

## Access to the Fund

5. The Marsden Fund is to be operated as a fully contestable fund. Proposals for research will be sought, selected and funded on the basis of an open and contestable process.
6. The Marsden Fund is open to applicants who meet the Marsden Fund's eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria are determined by the Marsden Fund Council. The eligibility criteria must ensure successful proposals are consistent with the nature and objectives of the Marsden Fund stated above.
7. Applicants must be New Zealand-based researchers undertaking research to be carried out in New Zealand or overseas if its nature demands that it be carried out elsewhere. Collaborating researchers from outside New Zealand can be included in proposals but are not able to receive direct funding support for their time or institutional costs.
8. The Council may, from time to time, adjust the eligibility criteria of the Marsden Fund to increase its effectiveness in achieving the Marsden Fund's objectives.

## Types of Proposals Supported

9. Funds will be allocated for the support of research projects, or for the support of individual researchers, including post-doctoral researchers. Funds may also be used to provide scholarships to support work by post-graduate scholars, but such work should be designed as part of a larger project that conforms to the criteria for the scheme.
10. All proposals funded must be consistent with the nature and objectives of the Marsden Fund and the selection criteria developed and published by the Marsden Fund Council.
11. All proposals must demonstrate why their research could be of economic, environmental or health benefit to New Zealand.
12. Approximately 50% of funds will go towards supporting proposals which have the potential to result in economic benefits to New Zealand.

## Costing and Funding of Proposals

13. Full-cost funding of proposals:
  - a) All Marsden Fund research shall conform to the principles of full-cost funding. Full costing shall include direct costs, associated personnel costs, and an appropriate share of overhead costs such as institutional administration and depreciation of research assets, including a share of equipment and buildings.
  - b) The Marsden Fund Council is responsible for assuring that the methodology by which institutions cost their proposals results in the appropriate share of overhead costs apportioned to the Marsden Fund.
14. Relationship of Marsden Fund proposals to complementary or related funding from other sources:
  - a) The Marsden Fund Council shall have the discretion to offer to fund, at full cost, a smaller project than the one proposed.
  - b) The Marsden Fund Council may require applicants to identify complementary and collaborative projects related to their proposal to the Marsden Fund, including the full cost and sources of funding for such projects.

## Investment Plan

15. The Marsden Fund Council will develop and publish an Investment Plan to be agreed by the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology. The Investment Plan will be renewed periodically, and subject to minor annual adjustments to keep it up to date.
16. The Investment Plan will set out the strategic direction of the Fund, including how the Council will manage the Fund to achieve the objectives in these terms of reference and to give effect to other direction provided by the Minister in relation to managing the fund, but specifically excluding any direction from the Minister as to the funding or not of individual proposals.
17. The Marsden Fund Council will develop and publish selection criteria in the Investment Plan which are consistent with the nature and objectives of the Marsden Fund.

## Performance Framework

18. The Marsden Fund Council will develop and publish a Performance Framework for the Fund to be agreed by the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology. The Performance Framework should describe a coherent plan to monitor the performance of the Fund and funded research against the strategy set out in the Investment Plan.
19. The Performance Framework should also consider the short, medium and long-term impact of the Fund.

## Disbursement of the Marsden Fund

20. The Marsden Fund shall be held in trust by the Royal Society of New Zealand (the Royal Society) and shall be disbursed according to these terms of reference. In disbursing the Marsden Fund, the Royal Society is acting as an agent of the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology.
21. Any interest earned on Marsden Fund monies shall be accrued to the Marsden Fund and not used for any other purpose.
22. Advice as to how the funding shall be allocated will be sought from the Marsden Fund Council. The advice of the Marsden Fund Council on funding allocations shall normally be accepted by the Royal Society. The Marsden Fund Council must ensure its recommendations appropriately take into account, and do not exceed, the funding the Royal Society has received for the Marsden Fund from the Minister plus any interest on that funding.
23. In the event that advice on any funding allocation is not accepted by the Royal Society, the Royal Society shall immediately notify the Minister, in writing, that a disagreement has occurred and the reasons for non-acceptance of the advice. The Royal Society on behalf of the Minister shall then commission a review panel to review the Council's advice. Panel representatives shall include Ministerial, Royal Society and Marsden Fund Council nominee(s).
24. The Royal Society shall seek the Minister's approval of the final review panel and its terms of reference. The Minister shall have the final decision as to its acceptance or not of the review panel's decision to accept or reject the recommendation of the Marsden Fund Council. The results of the review shall be made known to all parties.