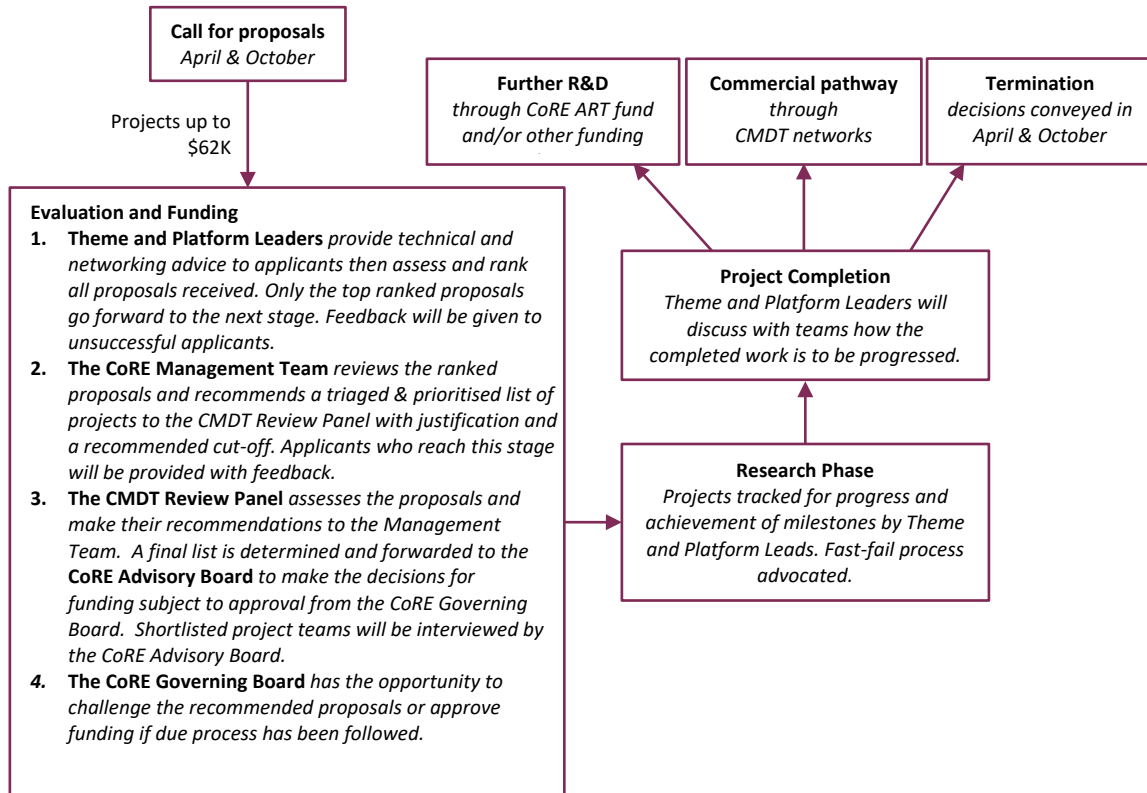


# MedTech CoRE Seed Fund 2019



## Seed Funding Pipeline

### 1. Overview of Seed Project Funding

The MedTech CoRE seed funding is a mechanism to identify concepts that have the potential to become larger collaborative R&D or commercial projects between the partners of the CoRE /CMDT. The CoRE emphasises translational research and seed projects are expected to build on previously funded basic research to take it to the next stage of clinical validation and commercial translation. Inter-institutional collaborative behaviour is a strong push in the CoRE; all seed projects are expected to involve at least two partners from the CoRE/CMDT to contribute to this vision.

The MedTech CoRE Seed process is as outlined above. Two calls for proposals (RfP) in April and October occur annually. The CoRE is seeking submissions for **up to \$62,000 per project (without GST)** typically for a 12-month period. An exceptional case will be required for multi-year funding requests (up to 2 years). All funding must be used within New Zealand.

Projects will be contracted with the host organisation of the Seed Project Team Leader. The start date of projects is flexible but must be within 3 months of contracting.

Funded projects will be tracked and assessed against milestones and outcomes by the Theme and Platform leads over its duration. The second year of funding in a multi-year project will depend on the team meeting milestones and outcomes. The CoRE advocates a fast-fail philosophy to ensure that we have a continuing pipeline of fresh ideas.

### 2. Project Evaluation Criteria

Projects need to meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- Fit into one or more of the Research Themes **and/or** Technology Platforms of the CoRE, but **one** Theme OR Platform should be the primary affiliation.
- Must be national collaborations with **at least one** other research partner of the CoRE/CMDT<sup>1</sup>.
  - Examples of acceptable collaborations: AUT+UoA, AUT+UoA + industry &/or DHB &/or non-CoRE university, UoO+UC, CI+VUW
  - Examples of not acceptable collaborations: UoA Engineering + UoA Medical School + UoA Science, UoO (Otago) + UoO (Canterbury), UoA Engineering + UoA Medical School + industry.
- Potential to initiate a collaborative project that can grow into a substantial and more extensively funded project in medical technology including devices, software, diagnostics and tools, informatics, tissue engineering, imaging and medical design.
- Clinical/end-user and/or commercial partnership links are strongly encouraged but not mandatory.
- **The inclusion of a Tech Transfer advisor on the team is desirable.**
- **Total funding of \$62K should cover project implementation (\$50K), development of a Vision Mātauranga plan<sup>2</sup> in consultation with Māori groups (\$10K) and a travel allocation for the team to fulfil project obligations (\$2K).**

### 3. Scoring criteria

Criteria	Score Weighting
1. Fit into Theme or Platform	Pass/fail
2. Multi-party collaboration with CoRE/CMDT partners	Pass/Fail
3. Introduction and science quality	30%
4. Clinical end-user need and engagement (including ethics/consent, if needed)	30%
5. Pathway to market and business engagement	20%
6. Project plan & roles	10%
7. Capability building (student training &/or development of project team expertise)	10%
8. Budget details	Pass/fail

Some further guidelines and rules for the Seed Projects are as follows:

- The investigators leading the project must be associated with the MedTech CoRE partner institutions. Contracting will be between the Host and the lead researcher's institution, with that institution receiving and distributing any awarded funding.
- An investigator may be named Seed Project Team Leader on one proposal only per RfP.
- Flagship PIs who are named on a Seed project should be in a supporting role only. Clear reasons must be given as to why the proposed project is not being pursued via Flagship funding.

<sup>1</sup> The 6 CMDT/CoRE partners are: Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Callaghan Innovation (CI), University of Auckland (UoA), University of Canterbury (UC), University of Otago (UoO) and Victoria University of Wellington (VUW).

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix 1: Vision Mātauranga Supplementary Funding

- Graduate students can neither be AIs nor apply for funding as the MedTech management team feels that this would compromise their PhD project completion. This includes students who already have another degree.
- Clarity is needed on the value of a collaboration and the role of the partner. This is to ensure that the proposed or existing collaboration is real. The CVs of participants from multiple institutions are requested.
- A project aimed at saving healthcare costs is eligible. However, the proposal needs to discuss cost saving arguments, how the team would position the technology for uptake by the healthcare system and/or considerations on commercialisation.
- A distribution of Seed funding across the CoRE network and across Themes & Platforms is desirable. As the number of Seed projects underway increases, this equity argument may be used as a way of differentiating between two equally worthy projects.
- Teams should advise whether alternate funding sources are either secured or available for the proposed project, and also whether the CoRE funding will be used to leverage other funding. This information will not exclude applicants from receiving seed funding; rather it can show reviewers that teams have considered other prospects.
- One of the Outcome Measures of the MedTech CoRE focuses on improved health and economic outcomes for Māori. Teams are invited to indicate whether their proposed project incorporates Māori mātauranga and practices and/or whether the proposed project is of relevance to Māori health or economic outcomes. This information will be used for statistical purposes.
- A structured team and project plan showing which team member is responsible for each task should be included.

#### **4. Call for concepts and expectations from project teams**

The CoRE began operations in January 2015. RfP for seed projects are released twice a year for new concepts in April and October. Interested AIs are encouraged to contact the relevant Theme and Platform leaders to discuss their ideas and, where relevant, obtain help to identify potential collaborators from the CoRE/CMDT partners.

Proposals are at maximum two pages outlining the project, the team, and addressing the evaluation criteria in Section 2. Travel can be included as part of a project if the requirement is clearly explained and justified. This should support project team interaction if they are in different cities, or to investigate prospective commercial or clinical partners.

Seed funding can be used to position researchers into a new Smart Idea application or support proposals that were unsuccessful to strengthen the concept. In this case, the full Smart Idea proposal will be requested as part of the submission documentation.

Theme and Platform Leaders are expected to track funded projects for achievement of milestones and outcomes. Project teams will be invited to discuss their progress with the CoRE Advisory Board during the funding term. Final reporting will require an interview/presentation with the CoRE Advisory Board. A selection of projects from each Theme or Platform may be invited to present at the annual MedTech CoRE Conference to showcase their work to the sector during HealthTech Week.

Teams will be strongly encouraged to include design considerations, company involvement and end-user feedback into their work within the first six months of the project commencing where relevant. The CoRE Management team will also help initiate a market feasibility study to position and validate the opportunity where possible.

#### **5. Evaluation and Funding**

The Theme and Platform leaders will check that the concepts meet the CoRE assessment criteria and rank the proposals received. In some cases, they may propose changes to strengthen a proposal, or that projects are merged if they overlap significantly.

The top proposals from the Theme and Platform leaders group will be forwarded to the CoRE Management Team to compile a ranked list of the proposals and determine the funding threshold (i.e. the number of proposals which can be supported based on the budget). A list of shortlisted proposals will be accompanied by commentary and recommendations to be provided to the CMDT External Review Panel. Feedback will be given to all applicants at this stage.

The purpose of the CMDT External Review Panel is to assess the shortlisted proposals and recommend funding options. However, the Management Team will determine the final list for the consideration of the CoRE Advisory Board who will make the final decisions on funding subject to approval by the CoRE Governance Board. It is expected that this approval will be given if the appropriate processes have been followed. Project teams in the final shortlist will be interviewed by the CoRE Advisory Board as part of the evaluation process.

Conflicts of interest arising with the Theme and Platform leaders will be handled appropriately and if required resolved by the Director.

## 6. Project Completion

Projects can be discontinued, become part of an existing Flagship or may catalyse a new Flagship. Alternatively, project leaders can apply for other funding, including MedTech CoRE ART funding, to further the concept development or to take a commercial pathway.

At the end of a project, a recommendation on the research progression will be reached by the CoRE Advisory Board in conjunction with Theme and Platform leaders and relevant experts (e.g. the CMDT External Review Panel, and the CoRE Management Team).

## 7. Translate to CMDT

The CMDT will help by providing industry and clinical networks for projects going through the commercial route. This can include partnerships with the MedTech CoRE partner technology transfer offices and Commercialisation Partners Networks (KiwiNet and Return on Science) as well as investigate other forms of funding through Technology Incubators, and Callaghan Innovation Business Funds. Note that the latter is only available to firms and not researchers.

## 8. April 2019 RfP Round

18 January	RfP published and sent to all PIs and AIs.
<b>28 February</b>	<b>Submissions close at 12 pm.</b> All concepts to be sent to CoRE Admin ( <a href="mailto:medtechcore@auckland.ac.nz">medtechcore@auckland.ac.nz</a> ) and logged. CoRE Admin to forward all proposals to Theme and Platform leaders for scoring and ranking
7 March	Scores and top ranked proposals from Theme and Platform leaders forwarded to Management Team
~14 March	Management Team to meet and recommend a shortlist of the top ranked proposals. Shortlist provided to CMDT External Reviewers for assessment.
1 April	CMDT External Review Panel to agree on a final list of up to 6 top proposals and provide recommendations to Management Team and Advisory Board.
11 April	Advisory Board to meet and make funding recommendations. CoRE Board to meet and asked to approve funding. Final decisions communicated to project teams.

Note: The CMDT External Reviewers will comprise members of the CMDT Steering Committee. (One reviewer per member organisation will be required with Peter Hunter (University of Auckland), Diana Siew and Marcus King (Callaghan Innovation), Simon Fraser (Victoria University of Wellington) and Geoff Chase (University of Canterbury) stood down as they are either members of the CoRE Management Team or PIs that are already involved in seed project ranking.

## Appendix 1: Vision Mātauranga Supplementary Funding

Supplementary funding of up to \$10,000 per seed project is available to help project teams develop a sound plan to achieve the KPIs associated with the CoRE's Vision Mātauranga health and economic outcomes. The related KPIs are:

1. Workshops and hui for information exchange with Māori health delivery groups and Māori consumer groups
2. Māori postgraduate students and postdoctoral research fellows trained by the CoRE
3. Māori health professionals collaborating with the CoRE
4. Seed projects incorporating Māori mātauranga and practices
5. Projects that directly meet Māori health needs
6. Partnerships with iwi and Māori health delivery groups
7. Technologies transferred to existing or new Māori health ventures

Acceptable uses of this funding include supporting the following objectives:

- Supporting consultation with relevant Māori groups (including consumer and/or relevant health professional users) to understand how the new technology will be perceived and develop a plan for any modifications to include Māori mātauranga and practices, support uptake, as well as address implementation and use in Māori health delivery.
- Supporting a Māori collaborator to connect the research team to relevant Māori groups.
- Supporting a Māori health professional in the seed project to achieve outcomes associated with Māori healthcare.
- Training of Māori students within the seed project. In this case, an explanation is required as to why the supplementary funding is needed if the student is not part of the main budget.
- Providing koha for consultation time and/or clinical trial participants.

While the CoRE realises that in many cases the Vision Mātauranga component of the seed project is emerging, an outline plan to achieve the targeted objectives and a realistic budget is required to assess eligibility for funding (not more than 2 page outline plan in the proposal document + specified expense lines in the proposal budget).

The plan should also comment on how this project component meets overall Vision Mātauranga philosophies around the impact on Māori is above and beyond just better health. Consider how the technology or system can reduce inequality and/or inequity for Māori in the health system (i.e. smoking cessation affects all if it is effective, smoking cessation targeted at specific aspects of Māori culture is above and beyond – similar arguments for diabetes). If possible, discuss how the technology will be able to meet Māori preferences in health care (e.g. less invasive). Otherwise, this should be an outcome that will be investigated and reported back to the CoRE through this supplementary funding.