



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

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New Zealand's Association to Horizon Europe: Twelve Months On

MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Summary

- February 2024 marked 12 months since New Zealand researchers gained access to [Horizon Europe](#), the European Union (EU)'s key funding programme for research and innovation, and the world's largest research fund.
- New Zealand is the first non-EU country to formally [associate to](#) Pillar II of Horizon Europe which gives us near-equal access to the scheme in return for a financial contribution.
- New Zealand research and innovation entities apply for funding jointly with counterpart organisations from EU Member States and other Associated Countries.
- Early indications are that New Zealand proposals will be very competitive, and we anticipate considerable success in biomedical and clinical science, environmental science, and the social sciences.
- National Contact Points for Horizon Europe can be found at the end of this report.

Report

New Zealand's Association Agreement with Horizon Europe was formally signed and entered provisional application in July 2023. Via a transitional access scheme, New Zealand researchers have been able to apply for funding since February 2023. The Agreement will enter into force after ratification by the European Parliament, expected in late-2024.

Horizon Europe is the EU's main research and innovation programme, and the world's largest, with a budget of €95.5 billion (NZ\$160 billion) from 2021 to 2027. It consists of three "Pillars": Excellent Science (fundamental research and researcher mobility), Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, and Innovative Europe (innovation and commercialisation).

New Zealand is associated with Pillar II which has a total budget of €53.5 billion (NZ\$95 billion), the largest share of Horizon Europe's funding, and supports research projects carried out mostly by international and inter-disciplinary consortia. The research is organised under six thematic "Clusters":

- Cluster 1: Health (€8.2 billion, NZ\$14.6 billion)
- Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society (€2.3 billion, NZ\$4.1 billion)
- Cluster 3: Civil Security for Society (€1.6 billion, NZ\$2.8 billion)
- Cluster 4: Digital, Industry and Space (€15.3 billion, NZ\$27.2 billion)
- Cluster 5: Climate, Energy and Mobility (€15 billion, NZ\$26.7 billion)
- Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment (€9 billion, NZ\$16 billion)

New Zealand is the first industrialised country outside Europe to associate to Horizon Europe, with Canada recently concluding negotiations, and South Korea commencing negotiations in 2023.

New Zealand research organisations can bid for Horizon Europe funding on the same terms as their European counterparts

Pillar II is the largest collaborative part of the Horizon Europe programme, with research proposals requiring consortia made up of partners from at least three EU Member States or Associated Countries. At least one consortia member must be a full EU Member State. Most bids include significantly more partners, including from industry, making each

project a highly international endeavour. New Zealand participants in successful consortia receive funding directly from the EU.

With Association, New Zealand participants can now join and lead research consortia with some of the world's best research organisations, including large multinational organisations with significant R&D budgets, and access Europe's world-leading research infrastructure that is not available in New Zealand.

From a science perspective, a highly competitive application process means that successful Horizon Europe programmes operate at the frontier of global science and technology. Participation in Horizon Europe will therefore result in more global connections and recognition for New Zealand's research organisations, and provide them and industry partners with the potential for significant connections and opportunities beyond Horizon Europe.

Although Horizon Europe is focused on science collaboration, it is also a useful product development and market access tool for high-tech businesses. Horizon Europe demonstrates credibility to European customers and partners, as well as an effective mechanism for developing in-market networks which can grow from research partnerships to commercial partnerships.

The UK's Association to Horizon Europe, effective 1 January 2024, has added considerably to the opportunities available through Horizon Europe as the UK is one of New Zealand's leading science and innovation partners.

New Zealand will effectively pay into the scheme what we receive in grants

The estimated total direct cost of New Zealand's association to Horizon Europe is \$50.18 million between 2023/24 and 2027/28. This consists of an operational contribution (which covers the cost of research grants awarded to successful New Zealand researchers) and a participation fee paid to the European Commission, in addition to a domestic overheads top-up paid to successful New Zealand research organisations.

Early results indicate NZ researchers will be highly competitive

In the first 12 months of New Zealand's association, 7 out of the 23 applications involving New Zealand researchers were successful – a 30% success rate. A further 30+ projects are in the assessment process.

This early success is a welcome start to our membership, although the Ministry of

Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) expects the success rate will likely trend towards the average of 21% for Pillar II over time.

Applications so far have included more than 650 partners in 55 countries accounting for approximately €320 million (NZ\$529 million) in total funding and €26 million (NZ\$45 million) budgeted for the New Zealand partners. The successful bids include 64 partners in 22 countries, accounting for approximately €36 million (NZ\$65 million) in total funding and €3.3 million (NZ\$5.8 million) budgeted for the New Zealand partners.

The top 10 partner countries across successful application are France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, UK, Greece, Ireland, Germany, Austria, and Portugal.

The successful projects include:

- [VITAL](#): Virtual Twins as tools for personalised clinical care (Cluster 1).
 - NZ partner: University of Auckland.
- [EU-CIEMBL](#): Creating an Inclusive European Citizens' Assembly (Cluster 2).
 - NZ partners: Victoria University of Wellington; University of Waikato.
- [d@rts](#): Advancing Cultural Literacy for Social Inclusion through Dialogical Arts Education (Cluster 2).
 - NZ partner: University of Auckland.
- [STELLA](#) Digital technologies for plant health, early detection, territory surveillance and phytosanitary measures (Cluster 6).
 - NZ partner: Lincoln Agritech Ltd.
- Three additional projects still in grant agreement preparation:
 - One in Cluster 1 on clinical trials for infectious diseases.
 - One in Cluster 4 developing new fabrics from natural materials for e-textiles and sportswear.
 - One in Cluster 5 on digital technologies to improve disaster and climate resilience.

Initiatives established to help New Zealand researchers access opportunities

The challenge for potential New Zealand participants is to overcome the distance between us and Europe and to build relationships with European counterparts in order to be included in high-quality consortia and joint applications. MBIE welcomes the uptick observed in travel to Europe by university and Crown Research Institute staff to further connections.

To help broker opportunities and support New Zealand applications, MBIE has established a network of National Contact Points (NCPs) to provide detailed information to research organisations, businesses and institutions on putting together successful

project bids.

As an Associated Country, New Zealand holds observer status in the Programme Committees which govern Horizon Europe calls (including determining the funding for each) and set programme priorities. New Zealand will be represented on these Committees by a mix of MBIE officials and public sector Chief Science Advisors.

To assist research organisations to develop their European networks, MBIE has substantially increased the funding for the Catalyst: Seeding researcher mobility scheme administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi. The new funding will allow a minimum of 25% of all applications to be funded, and will enhance participation by early career researchers (ECRs). As a consequence, it will be significantly easier for researchers and their organisations to build new collaborations aimed at securing Horizon Europe funding.

For more information

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National Contact Points:

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- Cluster 2 (Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society) – Nancy November. Professor of Musicology – University of Auckland.
 - Email: Cluster2NCP@mbie.govt.nz
- Cluster 3 (Civil Security and Society) – Stephen MacDonell. Professor of Software Engineering – Auckland University of Technology, Professor of Information Science – University of Otago.
 - Email: Cluster3NCP@mbie.govt.nz
- Cluster 4 (Digital, Industry and Space) – John Cater. Professor of Aerospace Engineering and Director of the Aerospace Research Institute – University of Canterbury.
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- Cluster 5 (Climate, Energy and Mobility) – Iain White. Professor of Environmental Planning – University of Waikato.
 - Email: Cluster5NCP@mbie.govt.nz
- Cluster 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment) – Cecile de Klein. Principal Scientist, Environmental Science, Ethical Agriculture Group – AgResearch.
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