Submission by the *Vision Mātauranga Engagement Team, Deep South Challenge: Changing with our Climate* to *Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways green paper* (March 2022)

Tīmatanga kōrero | Introduction

Kōtuia ki te aho rangahau kia mau ai,
whiria te taura mātauranga kia ita

Sew the thread of research to maintain,
plait the rope of ancestral knowledge to bind and sustain. (Composed by Ruia Aperahama)

This whakatauākī speaks to the deep knowledge, skills and experience Māori communities possess and draw on when responding to the changing world. The whakatauākī formed the basis for our most recent Māori research funding round within the Vision Mātauranga programme in Te Kōmata o te Tonga, the Deep South Challenge: Changing with our Climate. It is these recent experiences we draw on in this submission - as a kind of "case study" - to Te Ara Paerangi: Future Pathways Forward Green paper.

We are grateful for the opportunity to feed into much-needed change in the Research, Science, and Innovation System in Aotearoa, and we understand that this will be one of many opportunities to do so. It is our hope that this process will result in transformations that speak to the needs and aspirations of Māori communities and Māori researchers.

This submission sits alongside the broader *The Deep South Challenge: Changing with Our Climate* submission to *Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways Green Paper*

Ko wai mātou? | Who are we?

The Vision Mātauranga programme is advised by a Kāhui Māori with the leadership of a Programme Lead, and staffed by two Kaitakawaenga, with the support of the broader engagement team. We recognise the responsibility and obligations we have to Ahi kā, Ahi tere, Ahi taitai, Ahi tahutahu, Ahi whakaene, Ahi kōmau, Ahi hinu, Ahi Kōpae, Ahi kāroa. We want to support the work Māori are already undertaking not just to survive, but to flourish and thrive against a background of broader environmental, social, and global changes.

Within this programme we seek to support organic, creative, innovative and Māori responses to the impacts of climate change. We recognise the diversity of experience, knowledge, and responses to climate change across and within ngā iwi and hāpori Māori.

We are a member of the Rauika Māngai and note that many aspects of our submission are reflected in theirs. We also note that there may be a requirement for a systems change which is reflected in the communities and echoed in the findings of our own internal evaluation. We realise that this will have implications for the Deep South Challenge, but we are poised to work through whatever those implications might be.

Summary of Key Points

Climate change threatens every thread of the fabric of Māori society, and for this reason we believe consideration of climate adaptation research funding must be a part of the MBIE review. Of import here is a piece of internal research recently carried out by our broader Engagement Team, led by our Climate Change Knowledge Broker. We conducted a "landscape mapping" project to review and understand the broad split of research funding within the climate change research space. While a pilot project only, with data limitations, a key finding was that Māori climate research (defined as "by Māori for Māori") has been and is being underfunded in comparison with other research disciplines.[1]

Any re-design of the science system needs to directly address structural inequity and to empower iwi, hapū and Māori communities to undertake their own research. Mātauranga exists in and of its own right. It is an intellectual tradition, containing robust and innovative research processes and creative solutions to the challenges of the world. The RSI must recognise and provide for this mātauranga, for its own ends and purposes. Furthermore, this space must be protected from the inevitable creep that occurs by researchers seeking to 'claim' this space. Historical experience has proven that upholding mātauranga and tikanga Māori, while embracing the benefits of other knowledge systems, allows us to adapt and strengthen ourselves in a world that is forever in motion.

> "We must consider how to embed Te Tiriti within the fabric of the research system, in decision making, in our processes, in collecting advice and information, in our workforce, and in research outcomes. We need to consider the diverse ways in which Māori organise as iwi, hapū, whānau, businesses, interest groups, subject matter experts, researchers and as individuals. We need to reimagine how to give life to Māori research aspirations, the right ways to enable mātauranga Māori - Māori knowledge - in our research system and the interface between mātauranga Māori and other activities in the system." (Green Paper)

These aspirational statements in the Green Paper suggest that the possibilities for fundamental change are being offered. Expectations are being raised. Everyone working within the science system, and those who are alienated from the science system, must have an equitable opportunity to consider and respond to the Paper.

The RSI system needs to do things differently for Māori. This submission prioritises relationships and engagement with Māori communities, mātauranga Māori being invested in and of its own right, the importance of rethinking common research policy and practice at every level and transforming decision making power over research systems and processes to be more equitable and to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

It is the heart of our submission, based on our experiences and learnings, that power for all decisions about research on Māori must be returned to whānau, hapū and iwi. The structures and processes that are charged with enacting all parts of a reformed science system then must also account for

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[1] The results from the internal research 'Mapping the Climate Change Research Landscape 2021' are being shared widely and we would be happy to have further conversations directly with MBIE regarding this work.

this. Our experience has also told us that research priorities for iwi and hapū are usually on a much longer timescale with deeper and broader reach, in other words are intergenerational and holistic in nature. Defined research priorities or research agendas tend to be responding to a much shorter timeline and assessed against KPIs on an annual or quarterly basis. Impact for Māori research can often be seen over generations and in ways that do not fit the conventional science measures of assessment. Often a research project might 'end' but the kaupapa does not.

Key Messages

- Māori communities are on the frontline, in every way, of climate change. Climate change research must be considered urgently and separately within the process of the reform of the RSI sector. The ways in which Māori consider climate change - including as a continuation of colonisation and of other kinds of environmental degradation must be the starting place when building a research system to enable whānau, hapū and iwi to adapt to the drastic changes ahead of us.

- Current underinvestment must not only be reversed, but it must also be significantly ramped up, to provide Māori with all the tools they need - mātauranga and contemporary science - to have agency over their future.

- Challenging common practices embedded within science funding systems and structures requires a commitment to equity. This commitment must be coupled with serious investment and care (time and resource), at every stage, and at all points of decision making.

- The quality of engagement with hapū-embedded researchers is determined by the quality of relationships. Relationships must be genuine (emphasising common connections and shared goals), rather than transactional. Reforming the science system to prioritise relationships and relationality (rather than dealing in transactions of funds, of knowledge, of people) is key.

- Common research funding practices privilege hierarchical and individual modes of working, rather than collaborative and collective (i.e., whānau and hapū) modes. To achieve different (and better) outcomes for Māori (both researchers and research communities), the recognition of and investment in the expertise that exists within Māori communities and structures must be provided for. Rather than privileging individuals and individual merit (e.g., qualification and publication record), a consideration of the collective production of knowledge and of truly collective research must have a place in our research and science future.

- Written proposals and applications - with little to no face-to-face contact with decision-makers - remain the norm and serve some teams better than others. It is unclear if written proposals ensure that the strongest research is funded, or if successful proposals are those best articulated using the conventions of institutional science.

- Despite how inclusive or flexible the RSI system may intend to be (currently), the balance of power to determine and interpret priorities and scope still ultimately lies with the funder/institution. Most parts of the RSI system do not provide for Māori to determine the scope, priority areas or process and criteria of funding. Interrogating power at all levels of the system is a must. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (a member of our International Science Panel) states: "It [-scientific] research is imbued with an 'attitude' and a 'spirit' which assumes a

certain ownership of the entire world, and which has established systems and forms of governance which embed that attitude in institutional practices. These practices determine what counts as legitimate research and who count as legitimate researchers. Before assuming that such an attitude has long since disappeared, it is often worth reflecting on who would make such a claim, researchers, or indigenous peoples?" (Tuhiwai-Smith 2012, 56).

- Mātauranga Māori is sometimes misunderstood as being any research carried out by Māori researchers. There is also a tendency to make false equivalences between mātauranga and scientific understandings. Mātauranga Māori and Kaupapa Māori research must be prioritised and invested in, in and of its own right, not just as something to be added-on, 'integrated' (or even worse, validated) by scientific research.

- Genuine engagement with Māori communities is critical, and achievable, but comes with responsibilities, including:
    o   a requirement for sufficient resourcing
    o   transparency, openness, and a willingness to challenge common practices
    o   not raising expectations that cannot be fulfilled
    o   Being responsive, flexible and innovative to find new ways of doing things or to change when needed.
    o   a commitment to reciprocity of some kind

- Without serious structural change, altering processes and making changes at the fringes can set Māori up to take responsibility for system failures.

- Māori communities have proven that they are ready and capable of doing high quality and robust research at this level and there is an urgency to make systemic changes to support this to occur.

Supporting evidence for this submission (see also appendix 1)

In 2021, the Kāhui Māori of the Deep South Challenge embarked on a new funding process for our Vision Mātauranga research programme in order to directly address the inequity identified in the Landscape Mapping project. Apart from an initial large funding push at the launch of the Challenge, subsequent processes had resulted in limited numbers of Māori research projects being funded. As a result, by 2021 there was an identified risk of underinvestment in Māori research over the life of the Challenge. A further subsequent risk of underinvestment identified was that future funding for Māori climate research (beyond the life of the Challenge) would be reduced - or only maintained at current levels.

With the vision of our Programme Leader Sandy Morrison, we realised we needed to create a funding process focussing on understanding and reducing barriers to access, and on recognising and encouraging more diverse research, particularly research embracing mātauranga, tikanga and te reo Māori. We sought to decouple the requirement on research teams that their research projects integrate scientific disciplines, such as climate modelling. We sought to reflect the climate priorities that had already been identified by hapū and iwi. We also took active steps to recognise the capability, expertise, leadership and mātauranga of kairangahau Māori, tohunga, and community kaimahi who work outside of formal institutions, within their own hapū, iwi and communities.

At the conclusion of the funding round, we conducted a short evaluation (attached in full) with applicants and with our Kaitakawaenga and broader engagement team, to assess whether the processes had been effective in achieving these goals. This evaluation signals clearly the challenges and barriers that Māori communities face when trying to access Climate Research Funding, which are applicable to other science funding models.

This is the context that has informed our submission to Te Ara Paerangi. The evaluation and the landscape mapping project,, together with the experience and reflections of our engagement team, has shaped and influenced our recommendations in regards to the structural changes to the science system required to support equitable access to future climate research funding for Māori.

Responding to the Key Questions on Te Tiriti, Mātauranga Māori, and Māori Aspirations

KEY QUESTION 4: How would you like to be engaged?

Learnings we have gained through the case study, attached as a supporting document to this submission, are important for MBIE to consider in its engagement for broader science structure reform. We support the broad submissions, for example, of the Rauika Māngai. We also consider it crucial that "the devil can be in the detail." Understanding the uniquely detailed dynamics and challenges of working as Māori within the science system will be crucial for MBIE and other policy makers - to be able to see the reasoning for large-scale system reform.

In our latest funding round, our process was developed directly in response to feedback from Māori stakeholders who told us that existing science funding processes are onerous (in terms of time,

length, and detail) and favour certain types of researchers and projects (those affiliated to CRIs and academic institutions, and those who have strong academic records but not necessarily community endorsement).

Early in the process, we heard from prospective teams who felt they were up against significant systemic barriers (for example, a lack of organisational capacity among hapū or marae communities to actively compete for funding, as well as the privileging of Pākehā notions of "research excellence" when assessing the capability of Māori teams).

We addressed these systemic inequities in a number of ways, including: changing our assessment criteria to reflect Māori values; ensuring our kaupapa rangahau spoke directly to Māori aspirations; streamlining our processes; writing strong and natural copy that wasn't tokenistic or appropriative of whakaaro Māori, and front-loading our **engagement support** (i.e. working with teams one on one over time to support their proposal development, hosting Q&A webinars, and providing feedback on drafts).

At the conclusion of this process, we asked teams to tell us what they found most useful and valuable in terms of **engagement**. A summary of their feedback (together with our own observations) is that:

- Engagement must be genuine. That means listening reflexively (i.e., adapting processes when required). "People are more important than processes."

- He kānohi kītea. Engagement in a Māori context means establishing hononga, or connections. That necessarily involves "showing one's face." In a practical sense, it means attending (or calling) hui for the purposes of connecting rather than with a predefined agenda.

- Related, when engagement is done poorly (i.e., in haste and with pressure to achieve an outcome) it can undermine relationships rather than build them. Meaningful relationships maintained over the long-term require solid foundations.

- Transparency and clear communication are critical. Māori communities are under enormous pressure and engagement with central government (or related) agencies can be a huge drain on limited resources.

- Engagement needs to recognise the centrality of whānau/hapū. Engagement with one person is often not a Māori way of working. Genuine Māori engagement will often involve multiple people. This awareness needs to be built into processes from the start. Flexibility is key (i.e., a willingness to be available at times that work for whānau), and a commitment to 'go the extra mile' - as most Māori communities do daily.

- There is significant value and potential in recognising and supporting Māori ways of "doing engagement." Though not always visible, Māori networks are powerful, long-established, and constantly working. The challenge for the science system is in ensuring its own fragmentation and tendency to dominate does not actively undermine or place pressure or competition on existing Māori networks.

- Effective communication with Māori communities depends on quality relationships. For engagement to be genuine, connections need to be maintained from before the beginning to after the conclusion of any process.

- Engagement must reach into the places that the science system does not recognise as holding "scientific knowledge or value." It must go beyond those who have managed to achieve recognition in institutional terms, usually at great cost and effort.'

KEY QUESTION 5: What are your thoughts on how to enable and protect mātauranga Māori in the research system?

Enabling and protecting mātauranga Māori is first and foremost the role and responsibility of Māori. Whānau, hapū and iwi have consistently told us that climate change funding needs to actively support communities to design, lead and enact their own research.

Māori tell us they are more than ready (and strong oversubscription of our funding proves this position). Māori are tohunga/experts on their own whenua and want to be properly resourced to carry out research about and within their rohe.

Māori are tired of assuming cultural advisory positions on research projects designed, led, and managed by non-Māori.

Mātauranga Māori is embedded in place. Therefore, providing for the experts who are connected to those places and to its peoples must be a priority.

"Too many times Māori are fodder for researchers. Climate change is real and experienced more and more on the ground and at home. How can researchers siloed in universities really understand what is happening on the marae, on the kāinga, if they are not living there day to day? How can whānau develop their own responses to external threats if some remote group is not only identifying threats/changes/needs but owning the research outcomes/data. How can whānau understand what is happening on a day-to-day basis if they do not have the critical information to seek, observe and record? The world of research is always someone who comes and asks questions and then goes away - never to be heard from again. That is not 'vision mātauranga'." (Quote from evaluation survey - used with permission)

Furthermore, mātauranga is often positioned in relationship to contemporary science – the discussion needs to move away from only 'integration and incorporation of mātauranga into research and science' to a conversation about changing the structures of power and resourcing that see contemporary science set up as the primary knowledge system given validity (and therefore funding and support) within Aotearoa.

From research design to the inevitable compromises that are made when funding runs low, specific kinds of methodologies and research outputs are often prioritised over others (e.g., a journal article over a marae resource). The drivers that create this situation must be addressed in structural reform.

Enabling and protecting mātauranga Māori requires the research system to think, see and behave differently, for example:

- Systems and processes must not block or undermine (directly or unconsciously) the creation, activation, and transmission of mātauranga Māori.

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- Research priorities must be led and informed by the immediate needs and work plans of hapū, iwi and/or rōpū - not by central or local government bodies or external parties or funders.

- 'Research for research' sake is not valued by Māori communities. More emphasis is needed on outcomes and impacts that will achieve practical change on the ground rather than journal articles or other disembodied research activities.

- Feedback from communities has told us that scientific research tends to default to a deficit perspective without solutions, whereas Māori research is more typically action-oriented and restorative/hopeful.

- The system must support and facilitate research outputs that meet the needs of Māori communities, as defined by them. A lengthy research report, for example, may be of limited value to a community on the ground.

- Efforts to "protect" mātauranga Māori should not perversely create extra layers of bureaucracy or administration for Māori researchers.

- Narrowly defined research priorities and system fragmentation are constant challenges for Māori who are often asked to shift and realign their own research aspirations to fall within the scope of external funders.

- The system as it currently stands continues to silo specific kaupapa which means that for many mātauranga projects they find themselves not 'fitting in scope' of any. For example, a genuine mātauranga Māori approach does not treat specific kaupapa such as "climate change" (or any other kaupapa) as an isolated issue. Rather, climate change includes kaupapa such as justice, resilience, health and wellbeing, biodiversity, indigenous sovereignty etc.

- The system must value and directly cater for the varying research capabilities, capacities and potential opportunities for collaboration that exist among Māori researchers across the motu. Mātauranga is held by kaumātua and haukāinga, whose knowledge and research experience are embedded in (and springs from) a physical place as opposed to an institution.

- Research excellence has traditionally been defined by indicators and parameters that do not speak to the grounded and intergenerational nature of knowledge creation and transfer within Māori communities. The Indigenous intellectual traditions of 'research' are well established over many generations and 'excellence' in this sense can be understood through indices such as, community transformation, physical restorations of places, intergenerational transmission, and succession planning.

"We take for granted that we have methodologies within our worldview that are just as relevant, just as magnificent, just as robust as every other methodology that we get taught about by the mainstream. But the colonised system has taught us to disregard those things. So, when this process actually asked us to bring our own methodologies it kind of threw us. It's not normal for our methodologies and processes to be valued." (*Quote from evaluation survey - used with permission*)

KEY QUESTION 6: What are your thoughts on regionally based Māori knowledge hubs?
We support this idea as it moves the focus back towards the whenua and the importance of place. It is crucial that research recognises the diversity and varying capacity that exists within regions and between hapū and iwi. Carefully considering the boundaries and makeup of the regional hubs would

be important to account for that diversity. Tribal hubs or hubs based on waka could also prioritise Māori ways of understanding connections that wouldn't have to follow the arbitrary 'regions' that have been applied by the Crown.

Attracting iwi, hapū and Māori communities to research and to opportunities is not a simple case of releasing a call for proposals through a website, newsletter, and social media channels. The same goes for workforce development. We have learnt that a direct approach, building relationships beforehand and spreading information through the kumara vine can be more effective to reach into Māori communities.

- Communities, hapori, iwi, hapū, whānau, lands trust are already doing a lot of this work, with minimal resourcing and little acknowledgement of its contribution to the RSI system.

- Creating opportunities for Māori communities to grow, learn and share with each other will create growth from a place of strength and not always as a comparison against 'common' or 'dominant' practices.

- There is an obsession in the RSI system on national and international relevance, application, or impact. Assessed largely by journal publications and citations. This puts local rangahau that prioritises te reo, tikanga and mātauranga at an immediate disadvantage and diminishes the immense value that local impact and relevance has. Regional hubs could go some way in changing this, whereby regional impact is prioritised. Ensuring there is strong sharing between hubs to support national and international connectivity should also be supported.

- More localised organisation of RSI could support co-governance and co-management opportunities with iwi and hapū and/or could be organised around tribal boundaries or regions.

Ngā Whakaarotau Rangahau Research Priorities

Despite how broad, flexible, or inclusive research priorities may appear to be, the balance of power to determine priorities and scope still largely sits outside of Māori communities. In our most recent funding round, a number of research proposals were not submitted, or were withdrawn at various decision-points, because teams felt their research was being distorted to align their priorities with those of the DSC.

"Often, as a career researcher, what you invest your time and energy into what is dictated by what the priorities are, and they're set by the funders. To get even more granular, even if there is a research opportunity within a particular space, part of the key is writing a fundable grant application is to tell the funders what they want to hear, aligned with their priorities. What we found is that the thing that takes up the most energy is trying to align the aspirations of iwi with what will be funded. We found ourselves saying "that's a great idea matua, pai ou whakaaro, but this is what they'll fund." Those conversations are really common, especially with our people. They know what they need, and they know what they want, but we have to say to them 'that's a great idea but the funders won't fund that.' We find ourselves having to shoehorn the aspirations of iwi into the parameters of the funding." (*Quote from evaluation - used with permission*)

Hapū and iwi aspirations for their whenua and people are not always prioritised in research agendas. This can lead to research opportunities excluding community-led and mātauranga-centric projects being cut out of contention before the race has even begun. Setting research priorities at the local level also means that the RSI system and institutions are answerable at that local level.

It is important to consider National priorities and focus areas that support collective wellbeing whilst having enough flexibility for local aspirations and implementation to be supported. We note that Māori priorities and aspirations are often marginalised to provide for the 'greater good' and thus any high level strategic direction needs to consider the unique needs of Māori as partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Te Tuku Pūtea: Funding

Challenging common practices embedded within science funding systems and structures requires a serious commitment to equity. This must be coupled with a significant amount of investment and care (time and resource), at every stage, and at all points of decision making.

For example, in our VM funding round, despite successfully establishing relationships, "common" requirements worked well for some teams, but not others. A reliance on written EOIs and RFPs favoured those with strong written skills and deep experience in writing applications. It is unclear if this reliance ensures that strongest *research* is funded, or just the most well-articulated:

"There were some teams who could explain their kaupapa really well verbally, but when we received their draft, it wasn't clear. So, we'd go back and have another hui and clarify, and then we'd receive another draft. It wasn't that they didn't know what their research questions were, it's that they were really struggling to explain it within fixed word limits. Some teams thrived with this process, and we saw their proposals improve. Other teams had to work quite hard, and we needed to awhi them to make sure they didn't get despondent. This was especially true for whānau who were new to funding applications. We felt a lot of aroha for those ones because their capability and mātauranga were self-evident, and so was the need for the research. But the application process was not helping. The process was a barrier." (Kaitakawaenga)

Common funding practices privilege hierarchical and individual modes of working, rather than collaborative and collective (i.e., whānau and hapū) modes. Written proposals and applications - with little to no face-to-face contact with decision-makers - remain the norm and serve some teams better than others.

"It's the research ideas that need to be tested, not an individual or group's ability to write a proposal. That works both ways. Some teams can write an excellent proposal in academic language, but when you break it down and interrogate what's underneath those words it's not actually clear what they will do." (Kaitakawaenga)

The current system values written outputs (especially peer-reviewed) because they have been positioned as 'more robust' than other forms of research outputs. What we know, however, is that mātauranga

Māori and kaupapa Māori approaches have equally as robust (and in many ways more robust) ways of measuring impact and sharing knowledge. These kinds of outputs are usually measured by impact on the ground, transformative practice and often occur across generations.

We support the idea of base grants without deadlines, consideration for non-competitive processes, and open/rolling funding rounds. Communities have consistently told us they do not have time for extensive and rigorous funding application processes when outcomes are uncertain and priorities set by outsiders. Climate change is a systemic and interconnected issue, and should therefore be funded that way. Barriers to access need to be actively challenged within funding mechanisms, with criteria based on Māori understandings of excellence.

Ngā Hīnonga: Institutions

Without serious structural change, challenging common practices and tinkering at the edges of policy can inadvertently set Māori up to take responsibility for system failures. The challenges and frustrations in relation to limited and therefore competitive funding highlight the urgent parallel need for government and research funding bodies to increase climate research and implementation funding for whānau, hapū and iwi Māori. These strata of Māori society are all different, with different needs and different priorities. Institutions clearly do not understand this and have in many cases failed Māori communities or been incapable of working with them.

Many institutions do not and cannot work out how to collaborate with Māori in a way that is reflective of true partnership, and not appropriative or exploitative. Many institutions also fail to understand their responsibilities under Te Tiriti. Further, Māori communities are often required to partner with institutions to qualify for research opportunities or to get access to research funding. This often distorts the research collaborations iwi and hapū do want to engage in.

"[This funding] was an opportunity for us to work in collaboration with our iwi… The partnership and collaboration was exciting… There's always a risk for Māori organisations when iwi are brought in as a partner - the resource still sits with the institutions. We saw this fund as offering an opportunity to turn that on its head, so the administration sat with the iwi." (*Quote from evaluation - used with permission*)

Structural change must see a return of power for decision making on Māori research to Māori communities. Accounting for Māori ways of doing things across all structures and processes could avoid the risk that MBIE simply replicate the bureaucracy of existing science structures rather than being a channel to ensure communities are funded to do their own research and to also access the kinds of science expertise they require, as and when they require. Māori institutions, wānanga, Māori departments and faculty and iwi and hapū organisations are undervalued and underserved in the RSI system. These are the institutions that are well connected to Māori communities and to the work that is happening on the ground. These institutions aspire for their communities that could be well served by a transformed RSI system that invested more heavily in institutions that prioritise te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori.

Te Hunga Mahi Rangahau Research Workforce

There has been considerable underinvestment in Māori in the research workforce. What is more, many Māori researchers participate in the RSI system for minimal if any resourcing and hold down many other roles. Many team members who applied to our latest VM round had other competing work and multiple resource-intensive (and voluntary) roles within their iwi and hapū.

"For whānau and hapū groups new to this process - it is tight [timewise] and particularly when they are juggling many commitments. Some well-resourced places may have dedicated proposal writers, but we rely on people doing this outside of their work and whānau commitments. If there was a way to recognise those kinds of communities where there was no deadline but an ongoing opportunity to submit proposals would be good." (*Quote from evaluation - used with permission*)

Through this process our engagement team was highly reflexive, meaning that, whenever possible and required, processes were adaptable.

Until 2021, all VM funding processes were managed by the Kāhui Chair. A Māori engagement team did not exist, and the chair of the Kāhui was tasked with the majority of the operational work. Once the new strategy was defined and the Kaitakawaenga roles established, it became clear the extent of the work that previously had not been properly resourced:

'It wasn't until the engagement team was up and running that we realised how impossible it was for the Kāhui alone to do all of that operational mahi. I think as Māori you get used to carrying these enormous workloads and you don't always stop to question the inequity that you're up against. It's been awesome to see the material evidence of success through this strategy. 14 projects, all Māori leads, the majority wāhine Māori and grassroots. We get used to hearing things like 'Māori lack capability,' or 'We tried to fund Māori communities but they're not ready'… it becomes a self-fulling prophecy. But as this process has shown, Māori do have the capability, it's the system that needs to stop discriminating against us in its manner of operation." (*Kāhui Chair*)

It is not enough to simply add more people to existing institutions and structures that do not work well for Māori and that also can be 'toxic' places to work within. The notions that 'things are better than they have been' or that 'we've made significant gains' create an environment where Māori in the RSI workforce are made to feel like they should feel 'grateful.' The reality remains that there is a disconnect between what is said and the realities for the Māori workforce in the RSI system (see *Ngā Kete Mātauranga: Māori Scholars at the Research Interface*).

Resourcing the RSI system to be inclusive of Māori communities will support the growth of a grounded workforce that is connected and committed to Māori communities. Significant investment is required to transform institutions, access to and through education institutes and access to research opportunities and funding.

Kupu Whakakapi | Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of the learnings and reflections that we as a team have had in our roles working with Māori communities and within the RSI system. We would like to see all science sector institutions engage in courageous conversations about these statements in the Green Paper. We hope that such conversations will be coupled with the commitment, resource and action

required to address the inequities for Māori research and importantly Māori communities and to restore the rightful place of mātauranga Māori as a guiding and principal knowledge system for Aotearoa. We look forward to ongoing conversations with MBIE on this kaupapa.

Appendix 1: Te Taura & Te Aho: Evaluation of new funding process for Vision Mātauranga

In 2021, The Kāhui Māori of the Deep South Challenge embarked on a new funding process for our Vision Mātauranga research programme. Apart from an initial funding push at the launch of the Challenge, subsequent processes had resulted in minimal funding for Māori research. As a result, there was a real and identified risk of under investment in Māori research over the life of the Challenge. A very likely consequence of any underinvestment would be the risk that future funding for Māori research would be reduced.

The Kāhui knew that at least some of this inequity could be addressed by critically examining, and actively altering, some of the existing practices. Feedback from researchers who had been unsuccessful in the past was that the process of applying for funding was onerous, lacking in transparency, and favoured certain types of researchers (i.e. those affiliated to CRIs and academic institutions, and projects that centred non-Māori research methodologies).

We wanted to address this feedback directly by creating a funding process that focused on reducing barriers to access and recognising and encouraging more diverse research, including, specifically, research embracing mātauranga, tikanga and te reo Māori. We sought to reflect in a transformed research process the climate priorities that had already been identified by hapū and iwi. We also took active steps to recognise the capability, expertise, leadership and mātauranga of kairangahau Māori, tohunga, and community kaimahi who work outside of formal institutions, within their own hapū, iwi, and communities.
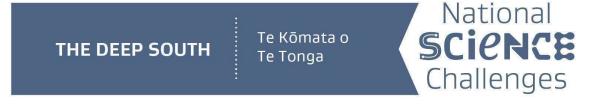
At the conclusion of the funding application round, we conducted a short evaluation to assess whether the new processes had been effective in achieving the goals outlined above. We also sought to gather feedback both from teams and the Kaitakawaenga that would help us to understand and then communicate (including to other funding bodies) what additional changes are required to support equitable access to future climate change funding for Māori. Our methodology consisted of a short survey canvassing researcher feedback, 3 1:1 interviews, and an engagement team-reflection exercise. In addition, the kaupapa Māori nature of the engagement, which was founded in creating strong and meaningful relationships, researchers share unsolicited feedback through hui and email exchanges over the course of the funding process, some of these have also been included here. The key questions guiding this evaluation were:

1. How did the researchers experience the new funding process? What did researchers value, what were the challenges? Were teams disadvantaged in any way (i.e. systemic barriers)?
2. How did we (the engagement team) experience the new funding process? What did we learn - positives and negatives?
3. What are the key lessons we can share with other funders, as well as the research community more generally?

Key Findings

- Challenging common practices embedded within science funding systems and structures requires a serious commitment to equity, this must be coupled with a significant amount of investment and care (time and resource), at every stage, and at all points of decision making.
- The quality of the communications and engagement with Māori communities is determined by the quality of the relationships. Relationships must be genuine (i.e. emphasise common connections or shared goals), rather than transactional in nature.
- Common funding practices privilege hierarchical and individual modes of working, rather than collaborative and collective (ie whānau and hapū) modes.
- Written proposals and applications - with little to no face-to-face contact with decision-makers - remain the norm and serve some teams better than others. It is unclear if written proposals ensure that the strongest *research* is funded, or if successful proposals are those best articulated in scientific conventions.
- Despite how inclusive or flexible funding criteria may intend to be, the balance of power to determine and interpret priorities and scope still ultimately lies with the funder. The funding process did not allow Māori to determine the scope or criteria.
- Mātauranga Māori is sometimes misunderstood as being any research carried out by Māori researchers. Equally, there can be a tendency to make false equivalences between mātauranga and scientific understandings. A lack of expertise in assessing mātauranga on its own terms disadvantages teams whose core research is built within and for the benefit of mātauranga.
- Genuine engagement with Māori communities is critical, and achievable, but comes with responsibilities, including:
    - a requirement for sufficient resourcing
    - transparency, openness and a willingness to challenge common practices
    - not raising expectations that cannot be fulfilled
    - a commitment to reciprocity of some kind
- Without serious structural change at the source, altering processes and making changes at the fringes can set Māori (both researchers and intermediaries, such as Kaitakawawenga or knowledge brokers) up to take responsibility for system failures. Māori communities have proven through this process that they are ready and capable of doing high quality and robust research at this level and there is an urgency to make systemic changes to support this to occur.

Funding process for Te Aho and Te Taura

1. Background

The Kāhui Māori of the Deep South Challenge announced two new funding streams in 2021:

- *Te Taura:* for researcher-led research projects up to $250K for two years.
- *Te Aho:* whānau-, hapū- and rōpū-led research projects up to $150K for 12-18 months.

Te Aho fund was designed to support **action research** (hands-on, on the ground research) and Te Taura research funding is targeted towards larger research collaborations that have a more regional and/or national impact.

In order to encourage broad buy-in, both funding streams utilised a two-stage Expression of Interest (EoI) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process. This enabled both well-established and community-based researchers to put forward their best research ideas, without the effort and risk of a full proposal. If teams were unsuccessful for Te Taura, they were invited to re-scope for Te Aho.

Previous criteria were replaced with new, broadly defined kaupapa rangahau that better reflected Māori perspectives and holistic understandings of climate change. The criteria for assessment were broad and flexible in interpretation and were weighted towards projects that were designed, developed and led by Māori communities. The promotional information directly encouraged research that embodied and expressed mātauranga and tikanga Māori.

The EOI consisted of a simple google form and it was available to complete in both te reo Māori and te reo Pākehā. We received one EOI in te reo Māori, and a number of bilingual EOIs. Conscious effort was made to ensure that both the EOI and RFP were simple and clear in their instructions. The process also recognised and provided for the expertise of mātauranga held by community research and tohunga Māori, with teams able to choose the CV format which best illustrated their capability and skills. The purpose of the CVs was not to identify external demonstrate the

Together, the new process and criteria sought to provide a pathway for projects from non-traditional research providers (i.e. those outside Universities and CRIs) to lead research. In addition, we also committed to providing intensive engagement and support with potential research teams. This included 1:1 hui with teams to discuss their proposals and explain the kaupapa rangahau, providing feedback on drafts, hosting webinars, and offering opportunities to connect with our knowledge broker in relation to existing research.

Broadly, the aims of the engagement team were to:
- Ensure teams felt as though they had a fair opportunity to pitch their idea and for it to be received and understood by the kāhui
- Offer kaupapa Māori ways of engaging (i.e. a-kānohi) not solely relying on written modes

- Provide information about the funding and assessment criteria clearly and with manaakitanga, (including providing feedback on draft proposals in a timely way, when requested).
- Support and encourage teams who wished to submit their proposal in Te Reo Māori
- Avoid processes that overburdened teams with unnecessary labour
- Ensure our communications were clear, transparent and timely
- Anticipate and removed any red-tape or tech-related barriers

The duration of the funding process, from the release of the call for EOIs, to the date teams were officially advised of the outcomes, was around seven months. That process was preceded by 5 months preparation and planning, with contracting adding another 2-3 months. This included formal reviews by the Kāhui Māori, the DSC Governance Group, the Board, and the International Science Panel.

In all, the funding took more than a year from conception to initiation of projects. The total pool of funding allocated wasl $2.5 million. The total number of successful projects was 14 (4 Te Taura, 4 Te Aho). It should also be noted that the initial funding available increased over the course of the funding round from $1.4 million as we were able to advocate for more equitable funding for Māori research and secured additional funding for this round.

2.   Findings

Approach, values & engagement

We knew from past funding rounds that promoting our funds would require us to be much more proactive, not just in terms of extending direct invitations to the fund, but also offering practical support and encouragement throughout the application process. A review of the number of EOIs received for both funds suggests that the efforts to widen access to funding was effective. Overwhelmingly, Te Taura and Te Aho attracted iwi, hapū and independent Māori researchers (either on behalf of or in partnership with Māori communities)[2]. Only a small number (7/68) represented academic institutions or Crown Research Institutes (CRIs).

Feedback[3] suggests that a large proportion of expressions of interest came from groups that had only minimal experience applying for science funding. Communities told us that at least part of the reason for this was due to the strong alignment of the fund with kaupapa Māori. It is rare, teams said, to find science funding that specifically recognises and "allows" Māori methodologies:

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[2] 68 EOIs across both funds, comprised of 27 Independent Māori researchers/communities, 33 iwi authority, marae, hapū or whānau trust, 7 University, CRI or Local/Regional councils, 1 whare Wānanga.

[3] Nearly half of the respondents said they were 'somewhat experienced' applying for science funding (45% or 10/22) prior to submitting an EOI. A similar number said they either had 'no experience', or 'minimal experience' (40% or 9/22). 13% (3/22) considered themselves 'very experienced' with science funding applications. Of 9 who had said they had only minimal experience applying for science funding, 4 were Iwi Authorities, 2 were hapū/whanau organisations, 2 were marae/community trust and one was not defined.

"We take for granted that we have methodologies within our worldview that are just as relevant, just as magnificent, just as robust as every other methodology that we get taught about by the mainstream. But the colonised system has taught us to disregard those things. So when this process actually asked us to bring our own methodologies it kind of threw us. It's not normal for our methodologies and processes to be valued." (Te Aho Researcher)

People also told us that they were excited by the prospect of a fund that would allow iwi to define, develop and lead their own climate research.

"It was an opportunity for us to work in collaboration with our iwi… The partnership and collaboration was exciting… There's always a risk for Māori organisations when iwi are brought in as a partner - the resource still sits with the institutions. We saw this fund as offering an opportunity to turn that on its head, so the administration sat with the iwi." (Te Taura Researcher)

Teams described the scope of the kaupapa rangahau as 'wide-open,' 'flexible' and 'embracing.' This is in contrast to funding criteria that is rigid, and places unequal power in the hands of funders to dictate priorities:

Often, as a career researcher, what you invest your time and energy into is dictated by what the priorities are, and they're set by the funders. To get even more granular, even if there is a research opportunity within a particular space, part of the key is writing a fundable grant application is to tell the funders what they want to hear, aligned with their priorities. What we found is that the thing that takes up the most energy is trying to align the aspirations of iwi with what will be funded. We found ourselves saying "that's a great idea matua, pai ou whakaaro, but this is what they'll fund." Those conversations are really common, especially with our people. They know what they need and they know what they want, but we have to say to them 'that's a great idea but the funders won't fund that.' We find ourselves having to shoehorn the aspirations of iwi into the parameters of the funding". (Te Taura Researcher)

Intensive engagement

Attracting iwi, hapū and Māori communities to the fund wasn't a simple case of releasing a call for proposals through the website, newsletter and social media channels. Most people told us they heard about the fund through word of mouth or via a direct approach from the Deep South Challenge[4] . This consisted primarily of personal emails and phone calls. The engagement team, (two .5 Kaitakawaenga and one .5 Communications kaimahi), maintained a comprehensive database of all the approaches and engagement throughout the duration of the funding process. Over two hundred separate approaches were made just to publicise the funding.

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[4] Most people (81% 18/22) heard about the fund through word of mouth or via a direct approach from The Deep South Challenge. 36% (8/22) learned about the funds through the Deep South newsletter or via the website. Only 3 people heard about the funds through social media.

The Kaitakawaenga then had regular meetings with teams one on one to explain the funding criteria, to answer questions and to encourage interest. Often there were multiple hui with the same teams. Some hui happened in the evenings and weekends in order to offer maximum flexibility to teams. The Kaitakawaenga were available by phone, email, zoom and text message. Webinars were also offered. Teams were encouraged to submit their proposals in advance of the deadline so that feedback could be offered and most teams (about 95%) took up this offer. Some received multiple rounds of feedback.

Anecdotally, teams said that without this direct engagement they would not have applied for the fund. One of the most significant barriers observed was a lack of time to work on proposals amidst enormous competing pressures. As reflected by one of the Kaitakawaenga:

"One team we reached out to right at the start had never heard of the DSC. We had a couple of hui with them and they knew exactly what research they needed, but they just couldn't seem to progress their EOI because they were so slammed fighting on-the-ground climate-change fires. We followed up with phone calls and emails and more hui but it really felt like it was touch and go for them. It was such an awesome moment to see their EOI arrive just before the deadline, and even better when then they went on to get funded. Because we knew that that wouldn't have happened without direct engagement and akiaki." (Kaitakawaenga)

The impact of intensive engagement is evident in the feedback received (gathered from both Te Aho and Te Taura researchers before the results were known):

"I've never known a funding process like this before. It's not normal for a team to go to such lengths. The zooms, the feedback on drafts. It was over and above."

"Whatever the outcome, the awhi and tautoko shown by you all has been phenomenal. We have actually learned a lot about ourselves, but also about how a funding application process can be empowering for our people and community-based researchers."

"We continually felt supported and our pātai was answered well with additional solutions to help circumnavigate the funding application that matches our research vision. This funding application process has been the best process we have experienced so far."

"The efforts of the engagement team to support iwi to prepare proposals was fantastic. I have never seen this amount of care and valuable advice applied to a research funding process. This gave validation to the quality of our proposal."

This feedback highlights the importance of relationship-centred engagement. It suggests that while social media and digital communications may be convenient, it is not a substitute for hononga a-kānohi. The nature of engagement during covid times meant that in person hui were possible only

some of the time, however, the engagement team utilised the same approach using online platforms to centre the relationships with teams, to develop and maintain whanaungatanga, and be accessible and available to teams in a responsive and sustained way.

Process: Time and Resources investment by research teams

In terms of the investment and resources required by research teams, half of all survey respondents told us they spent over 30 hours on the EOIs. Generally, teams that applied for Te Aho spent more time on their RFP than Te Taura (over 50 hours)[5]. This highlights the disproportionate time and labour invested by communities versus universities or CRIs, which, anecdotally, we know tends to be un-salaried work.

The type of engagement that people found most useful were also the most time and labour intensive activities both for teams, and for the Kaitakawaenga (i.e. personal written feedback, personal emails and calls, and feedback on drafts).

Despite the heavy burden of the process, most people who participated in the survey told us that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with it. People said that the two-phase process ring-fenced the amount of work that needed to be committed up front and allowed proposals to be developed and strengthened over time.

Although the length of time for the whole process was acknowledged as long, many felt that it was appropriate for the size of the fund, and that a shorter timeframe would have disadvantaged them. This was especially common for teams whose research was being co-developed (or led by) haukāinga with multiple voices and perspectives shaping the proposal.

"There was adequate time - however, for whānau and hapū groups new to this process - it is tight and particularly when they are juggling many commitments. Some well resourced places may have dedicated proposal writers but we rely on people doing this outside of their work and whānau commitments. If there was a way to recognise those kinds of communities where there was no deadline but an ongoing opportunity to submit proposals would be good." (Te Aho Researcher)

"The timing is any amount in more ordinary times - but marae committees meet monthly - and for many the pandemic and illness of some of the participants (not covid) meant the meetings could not be held. The planning process of research should be incorporated into strategic planning and this is often an annual activity. The opportunity to access funds did not fit with the previous years planning." (Te Taura Researcher)

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[5] For the second stage of RFPs, Te Aho only respondents generally spent more time on their RFPs than Te Taura (or those that applied for both), with half (4/8) the Te Aho only respondents spending over 50 hours on their RFPs, compared to only 20% (2/10) of Te Taura only/both who spent over 50 hours.

A very small number of teams said that the process was too long. However, this feedback tended to come from experienced research teams who were managing multiple kaupapa, applying to different funds simultaneously, or had other contingencies relating to their project. This would suggest careful consideration needs to be given to the size of the funding pool and the duration of the project when deciding what kind of process to adopt. For smaller funds, it might be more suitable to consider grants that will support whānau and communities to mobilise discrete projects quickly. Feedback reiterated to us very clearly was that communities did not want to be wasting their time.

Process: Time and Resources investment by DSC Kaitakawaenga|Engagement team and the Kāhui

Intensive engagement could not have been achieved without sufficient resourcing of the Kaitakawaenga. Approximately 60-70 relationships were established and maintained through the six-month funding process. This engagement was highly reflexive, meaning that, whenever possible and required, processes were adaptable. The engagement team undertook to ensure that the processes would be fair and transparent for all, but be flexible when required to account for human errors and simple technological or administrative barriers. For example, a small number of teams struggled to utilise the Google Forms EOI and requested to send their proposal by email, which was accepted.

More significantly, the purpose and role of the Kaitakawaenga was to develop a deep understanding of the proposals in order to support their development. The team provided critique, practical suggestions, and facilitated access to relevant research or data when requested and available. Not all teams took up these opportunities, but many of those that did felt that their proposal improved as a result:

"I cannot thank you enough for your manaaki, your depth of unconditional support to our team. The NIWA we encountered in 2001 was sterile a world apart: you bring the reality of iwi our mamae is yours our hopes are yours our journeys are the same. Your response comments, the link attachments, are extremely useful to consolidate-focus our textual approach in practical and clear ways." (Te Aho Researcher)

The significant increase in the number of EOI and full proposals that were submitted across the two funds, also saw a significant increase in workload and requirement for new processes with regards to data management, organisation and filing and management of assessments and feedback.

The time requirements for the Kāhui also increased significantly. The kāhui were required to read 68 EOI applications and provide feedback, and to assess, score and comment on 31 full proposals. This was often done within a very tight timeframe in order to ensure timely assessment of the applications.

One of the Kaitakawaenga was also a member of the Kāhui. This meant that a considerable degree of background knowledge about the projects and teams was available to the Kāhui during

moderation. The visibility of the Kāhui communicated a strong message of commitment to communities, which was highly valued:

Having a member of the Kāhui show up was unique. [Kāhui] wasn't just present, [they were] available all hours. It would have been good if the whole kāhui was more present. It was inspiring to us that [Kāhui] was there, [they were] present and approachable. That kind of leadership is down to earth; you know, showing up and holding a teatowel. That's leadership. Not being some kind of magical kāhui that stands outside, but actually comes inside and picks up a tea towel. (Te Aho Researcher)

Challenging "common practices" - Engagement team reflections & Key Findings
From the outset, the goal of the engagement team was to support the Kāhui to challenge the common practices embedded within funding systems and structures that act as barriers to equity. This demanded a significant amount of work on everyone, at every stage, and at all points of decision making. A number of key reflections are discussed below, including the remaining challenges.

The quality of the communications is determined by the quality of the relationships
Effective communication with Māori communities depends on quality relationships. For engagement to be genuine, connections need to be made from the outset. When reaching out to potential research teams, the Kaitakawaenga were often able to draw on existing professional, personal, or whakapapa connections. In other instances (including when direct emails were received) hui whakawhanaunga a-ipurangi were offered. These hui offered an opportunity to find common alignment, and signalled a commitment to Māori communities that wasn't merely transactional. These hui were often attended by teams of up to 8 people. The nature of this engagement helped extend the reach of the fund and facilitated further promotion by word-of-mouth. At times the demand to meet with teams one on one was so high the engagement team needed to work outside normal hours in order to be flexible in their availability.

"I think some researchers were a bit suspicious of us at first - it's not normal to receive a personalised email or call from a funder. It triggered a natural sense of distrust that a lot of our people have when Pākehā organisations show up promising things. Māori know there's always some kind of catch, some kind of transaction involved, so some of those initial hui were just about showing our face and making connections and establishing trust." (Kaitakawaenga)

Relationships were strengthened when the communication was clear, direct and transparent.

"We appreciated the personal connections and the fact that the process was transparent about the funding, we knew there was limited funding and it was competitive so there was no expectation of funding or support." (Te Taura Researcher)

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Throughout the engagement period, Kaitakawaenga were required to develop and maintain relationships with researchers and tohunga whom they considered their tuakana or kaumātua. This exposed the unequal power dynamic sitting with the Challenge and required sensitivity and respect to navigate.

"We had to walk that line so carefully. It shows how irrelevant and unhelpful academic hierarchies are in te ao Māori. The mana and expertise of the haukāinga is in a league of its own. Yet here we were in the awkward position of having to explain, for example, that hīkoi or hākari are methodologies." (Kaitakawaenga).

Common practices often undermine natural Māori ways of thinking and operating

Despite successfully establishing relationships with a number of teams, certain fixed requirements operated in a way that worked well for some teams, but not others. For example, the reliance on written EOIs and RFPs favoured those with strong written skills. It is unclear if written proposals ensure that the strongest *research* is funded, or if successful proposals are those best articulated in scientific conventions:

"There were some teams who could explain their kaupapa really well verbally, but when we received their draft it wasn't clear. So we'd go back and have another hui and clarify, and then we'd receive another draft. Sometimes that happened two or three times. It wasn't that they didn't know what their research questions were, it's that they were really struggling to explain it within fixed word limits. Some teams thrived with this process and we saw their proposals improve. Other teams had to work quite hard and we needed to awhi them to make sure they didn't get despondent. This was especially true for whānau who were new to funding applications. We felt a lot of aroha for those ones because their capability and mātauranga were self-evident, and so was the need for the research. But the application process was not helping. The process was a barrier." (Kaitakawaenga)

"It's the research ideas that need to be tested, not an individual or group's ability to write a proposal. That works both ways. Some teams can write an excellent proposal in academic language, but when you break it down and interrogate what's underneath those words it's not actually clear what they will do. " (Kaitakawaenga)

Common funding practices privilege hierarchical rather than collaborative modes of working

The process did not always serve those who had multiple people shaping the proposal. In these situations, it is clear that hapū or community voices are those that tend to be relegated, highlighting another system bias towards Pākehā (individual) rather than Māori (collective) ways of working:

"Part of the reason we were successful [for a different grant] was because it was written by one person. It was lucid, clear, methodical, well-structured. The point I'm making is that it was written by someone who knew what was fundable. It may not have matched exactly with what every single person wanted, but if everyone had been involved in drafting it might not have been funded." (Te Taura Researcher)

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Despite how broad or flexible funding criteria may be, the balance of power to determine priorities and scope still ultimately lies with the funder

Although the kaupapa rangahau were broad and inclusive, the scope was still not broad enough for some teams. A number of research proposals were not submitted, or withdrawn after the EOI stage because they felt their research would be distorted by attempting to align their own priorities with those of the DSC.

Similarly, some teams were unsuccessful because their research questions were not confined to the kaupapa rangahau. This was disappointing for some teams and for the Kaitakawaenga, as it demonstrated that even despite conscious effort to shift the determining power back to Māori, ultimately, decision-making power is retained by a state-funded body.

"The Kāhui worked hard on those kaupapa rangahau, but they still weren't perfect or able to fully encompass all the aspirations of our people. We could see some teams writing what they thought we wanted to hear rather than what they really wanted to do. It was clear that what they wanted to do was better, but the scope just wasn't as dynamic as some teams needed it to be. It's hard to watch a project shape up and become really strong, and then to see it dropped because it doesn't fit tidily within a predetermined framework. Unacceptable, really." (Kaitakawaenga)

Mātauranga Māori is sometimes misunderstood as being any research carried out by Māori researchers. Equally, there can be a tendency to make false equivalences between mātauranga and western environmental/cultural understandings.

A lack of expertise in assessing mātauranga on its own terms disadvantages teams whose core research is built within and for the benefit of mātauranga. The process took conscious steps to recognise the expertise and knowledge held within communities by ensuring there was equity between the two types of CVs that could be submitted. Teams were asked to demonstrate their team's capability to undertake the research, which included and recognised, for example, iwi and hapū expertise, haukāinga leadership, and community connectedness. The usual requirements to hold a specific academic qualification, or provide evidence of a 'standard' publication record to demonstrate 'track record' was not part of the assessment criteria.

"Sometimes mātauranga methodologies and outcomes that were proposed by teams were conflated with scientific approaches, but this didn't take into account that Māori methodologies and mātauranga are their own science and don't need to be 'validated' with a western scientific construct. As one of our researchers reiterated when we gave them feedback that their proposal might consider including scientific indicators, they said it felt 'As if we haven't already been experts in our own moana for generations.'" (Kaitakawaenga)

Genuine engagement with Māori communities is critical, but comes with responsibilities, including
A requirement for adequate resourcing

The time involved in this level of engagement was incalculable and required significant resourcing at all levels, and at all points of decision-making. Even 1 FTE (with .5 back-up during heavy periods) was not sufficient to manage all the workstreams. It also created flow-on impacts for the Kāhui, and for the Board, and the ISP, all who were requested to work outside of formal decision-making cycles in order to meet timelines.

Prior to the release of this fund, the Māori engagement team did not exist, and the chair of the Kāhui was tasked with the majority of the operational work. Once the new strategy was defined and the Kaitakawaenga roles established, it became clear the extent of the work that previously had not been properly resourced:

'It wasn't until the engagement team was up and running that we realised how impossible it was for the Kāhui alone to do all of that operational mahi. I think as Māori you get used to carrying these enormous workloads and you don't always stop to question the inequity that you're up against. It's been awesome to see the material evidence of success through this strategy. 14 projects, all Māori leads, the majority wāhine Māori and grassroots. We get used to hearing things like 'Māori lack capability,' or 'We tried to fund Māori communities but they're not ready'. That's then used as a justification for funding Pākehā leads with Māori in token roles, and then it becomes a self-fulling prophecy. But Māori do have the capability to lead their own research. It's the system that needs to stop discriminating against us in its manner of operation." (Kāhui Chair)

Transparency, openness, and a willingness to challenge common practices
Intensive engagement is effective, but it creates expectations, particularly around transparency and openness. For example, Te Aho submissions closed in October 2021 and we were committed to advising teams of the outcome before Christmas because we knew that people were anxious to get on with their planning for 2022. Our strong engagement relationships created a responsibility and expectation that we would share information about each stage of the process as openly as possible.

However, due to a number of pressures and constraints, the Kāhui's recommendations had not been endorsed by the Board by December. Common practice would have been to withhold formal communication until final approval was granted, instead, we sought agreement from the Director of the Challenge to advise outcomes informally with a request that teams not share the news publicly until official notification was received.

Not raising expectations that cannot be fulfilled
Sometimes, however, expectations could not be fulfilled. For example, a number of teams were disappointed to go through such a long process of collaboration and development, and not to receive a personalised communication, either in writing or a-kānohi to explain in detail why their proposal was not successful. This was because the fund was so significantly oversubscribed that final

decisions were determined in relation to factors that were external to individual projects, all of which were of an extremely high calibre.

"We were always very clear that the fund was competitive, but extended engagement by definition requires you to become invested. Most people when they received their outcome letters were understanding and said 'oh thanks anyway.' Some were actually incredibly gracious and said how grateful they were for the opportunity. But of course there were a few that were negative or perplexed. Emotionally in our role, and moving forward, that's quite taxing." (Kaitakawaenga)

"You can understand why Pākehā ways of transacting rather than relating are preferred, because as soon as you step out from behind a structure you show your face. Normal funding systems like to put distance between the decision-makers and the applicants under the guise of "fairness" and the need to treat everyone the same. But a more Māori-centered process alters the values at stake, which is awesome, but it leaves those doing the front-facing engagement exposed. It's a really difficult place to navigate." (Kaitakawaenga)

"The process was exciting, but it was also incredibly revealing. If you're going to challenge common practices in the hopes of getting a different result, then you have to be willing to challenge common practices across all levels. Tātou katoa. Māori should not have to bear responsibility for system failings." (Kāhui Chair)

A commitment to reciprocity of some kind

A kaupapa Māori approach to engagement recognises that there is reciprocity when establishing meaningful relationships. While the Kāhui was successful in securing an increase in funding, it still did not stretch to support all the teams that applied. Regardless, the Kaitakawaenga undertook (and have maintained) a commitment to working with those unsuccessful teams. This is despite having no real resource to do so, and no future funding to offer those teams. There is a responsibility, therefore, to consider how we mobilise other resources, advocate for additional resources and engage creative ways to support teams who are unsuccessful in funding:

"We know that so many of the teams who didn't get through will keep doing the work anyway, ahakoa te aha, because it's important and urgent for their community. We've offered other support, like hosting webinars, accessing data, and facilitating connections with other potential funders, but it's a small consolation. And there's actually so many teams in that boat and we're not even resourced to do it. Heoi, that's reciprocity. We have to find a way. " (Kaitakawaenga)

Insufficient funding and structural inequity

Without serious structural and systemic change, tinkering at the edges of common practice or policy can inadvertently set Māori up to take responsibility for system failures:.

"If the Vision Mātauranga programme had been set up this way right from the beginning, with sufficient management, communications and engagement support, we may have found ourselves in

a different place today. Instead of having to make impossible decisions about our very small portion of the pie, we could have been able to lobby for a larger portion of it. The huge interest in these funds proves that the need and the capacity among our people are there. Instead, in terms of hapū-led research, we're only getting started now, with all this important groundwork done and relationships developed, and with no clear way to maintain the relationships beyond the life of the Challenge. It's not very Māori." (Kāhui Chair)

The challenges and frustrations in relation to competitive funding processes highlight the urgent parallel need for government and research funding bodies to increase climate research and implementation funding for whānau, hapū and iwi Māori. These stratas of Māori society are all different, with different needs and different priorities. Communities have fed back to us that this requires a completely different approach to funding:

"Funds to be considered as grants without deadlines or any competitive process – the people doing the mahi on the ground do not have the time to go through this rigorous application process. Furthermore, if we do well and our neighbouring iwi succeeds, we are all trying to address climate change collectively. Climate Change is a systemic and interconnected issue and should be funded in that way." (Te Aho Researcher)

"Recommend that deadlines are removed and ongoing funding made available for any group to come in and apply – maybe have a set amount available for each year (which is consistent with other community-based funding initiatives) This approach breaks down the barriers of funding deadlines and minimises the reporting requirements of grants focusing on the outcomes achieved as a result of the investment." (Te Aho Researcher)