

Pūtahi Manawa| HHANZ CoRE Funding Panel

Conflicts of interest

A “conflict of interest” described by HRC:

“refers to situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, professional judgement in objectively assessing research proposals. As such, in evaluating a conflict of interest, it is important to consider not only known conflicts but also the appearance of conflict”. (*Peer Review Manual for Research Applications in the Annual Contestable Funding Round, 2017*)

HRC process requires that COI’s be declared if you:

- are an NI on any application in the current funding round,
- are from the same immediate department, institution or company as the applicant(s),
- have direct involvement in the research proposal being discussed,
- have collaborated, published or been a co-applicant with the applicant(s), within the last five years,
- have been involved in any funded studies or associated activities with the applicant(s),
- have been a student or supervisor of the applicant(s) within the last ten years;
- are a close personal friend or relative of the applicant(s),
- have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant(s),
- are in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the application,
- have direct involvement in a competing application in the current funding round, and
- for whatever reason, feel that they cannot provide an objective review of the application.

This also includes financial interests.

“...financial interest is anything of economic value, including relationships with entities outside the research host institution. Examples of financial interests include positions such as consultant, director, officer, partner or manager of an entity (whether paid or unpaid); salaries; consulting income; honoraria; gifts; loans and travel payments.

A financial conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual’s financial relationships may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the individual’s professional judgment in conducting, assessing or reporting research.” (*Peer Review Manual for Research Applications in the Annual Contestable Funding Round, 2017*)

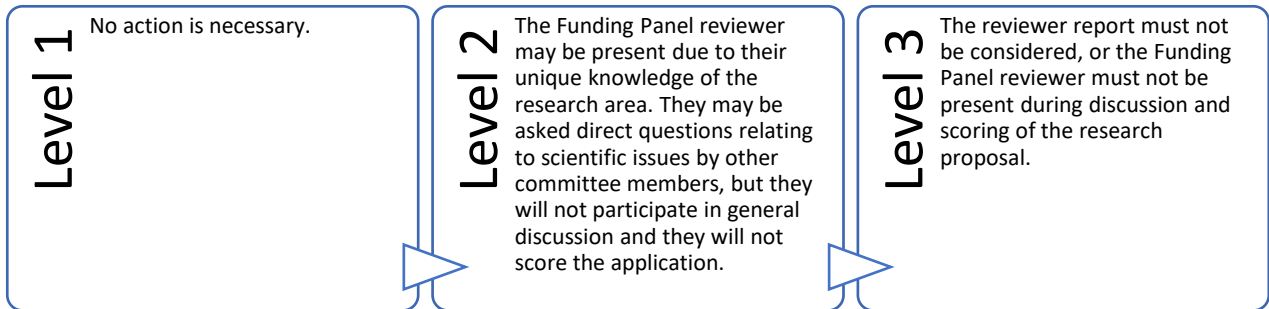
Evaluation of Conflict of Interest

We will adopt the same process for evaluation of conflict of interest as the HRC guidelines (Peer Review Manual for Research Applications in the Annual Contestable Funding Round, 2017, section 2.3)

Reviewers may exclude themselves from the assessment process when they recognize a potential conflict of interest by notifying the co-chairs. Reviewers, in their reports, also have an opportunity to declare potential conflicts. When a reviewer does not recognize or declare a conflict of interest, but the potential conflict is later detected, their report will not be used by funding panel.

Declarations of conflicts of interest should be made as soon as possible to allow evaluation of the conflict and an appropriate outcome or resolution to be achieved. The panel and the co-chairs are responsible for raising any potential conflict of interest issues, resolving any areas of uncertainty, in making final decisions in managing potential conflicts of interest. Potential conflicts of interest are

discussed with the Funding Panel as a whole; the member concerned may be asked to leave the room during this discussion. For example, a reviewer should declare an involvement in any competing application. Following this discussion, one of the following agreed actions is taken:



All declared conflicts should be recorded in the notes or minutes of the relevant meetings including action taken.

Where a perceived conflict e.g. recent publication, arises from a person's technical expertise e.g. biostatistics, this may be considered a minor conflict if the person was/is acting in a capacity similar to that of a consultant. If the association extends to the person being considered an integral member of the research team, then this is likely to be considered a strong conflict.

An individual who is concerned about another member's potential or actual conflict of interest should raise the issue with the co-chairs or the co-directors, and measures to alleviate those concerns will be taken.