

24 July 2020

Ref: DOIA 2021-0068

Dear Mr Luke,

Thank you for your requests under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on 6 July 2020 for the following information:

I note on your website, <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/funding-information-and-opportunities/investment-funds/covid-19-innovation-acceleration-fund/> MBIE may obtain expert assessment of any proposal at its discretion, from staff of relevant government agencies or external reviewers who have signed a confidentiality agreement. Decisions will be made by the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation. MBIE will provide the Minister with recommendations regarding proposals received, which may include due diligence such as consideration of cost effectiveness. Special conditions may be attached to funding approval. May I ask who are your external reviewers and how are they appointed. What is their pay rate per assessment. Also, I noted on your other funds, like Catalyst Fund and Endeavour Fund, you also mentioned you use expert panel or external reviewer to help with your selection, may I also request the list of people been used, how you select them and how can public submit their expression of interest and what is their pay rate.

Please find the following information in response to your request:

1. *May I ask who are your external reviewers and how are they appointed.*

COVID-19 Innovation Acceleration Fund (CIAF) assessors were appointed from MBIE's College of Assessors, Callaghan Innovation's assessor pool, and on demand by the CIAF Triage Team based on the specific expertise required to assess a proposal. This included seeking comment from other government agencies as required.

MBIE does not provide the identity of specific assessors for individual proposals in order for them to provide free and frank advice to MBIE. Thus we are withholding their identity under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, to "maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty".

2. *What is their pay rate per assessment.*

Payment per assessment of COVID-19 Innovation Acceleration Fund proposals was NZ\$85.

3. *Also, I noted on your other funds, like Catalyst Fund and Endeavour Fund, you also mentioned you use expert panel or external reviewer to help with your selection, may I also request the list of people been used, how you select them and how can public submit their expression of interest and what is their pay rate.*

Information about external reviewers (assessors) has been provided in question 1 and 2.

The CIAF processes utilised two expert panels; a Triage Panel to confirm the eligibility of proposals and a Recommendation Panel to provide recommendations to the Minister based on expert advice.

a. the list of people that have been used

The Triage Panel comprises:

- Gary Evans (Chair) - Chief Science Advisor, MBIE
- Max Kennedy - Manager, Contestable Investments, MBIE
- Richard Walley - Policy Director, Science, Innovation & International, MBIE
- George Slim - Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
- Andrew Clews - Head of Health Technology, Callaghan Innovation
- Vernon Choy, Director Research Investments & Contracts, Health Research Council of New Zealand

The Recommendation Panel comprises:

- Prue Williams (Chair), General Manager, Science System Investment and Performance, MBIE
- Danette Olsen, Manager, Strategic Investments, MBIE
- Gary Evans - Chief Science Advisor, MBIE
- Max Kennedy - Manager, Contestable Investments, MBIE
- Richard Walley - Policy Director, Science, Innovation & International, MBIE
- George Slim - Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
- Daniel Xu, Chair of the Physical Sciences Investment Committee, Return on Science & Co-Founder, Spark 64 Ltd
- Professor Sunny Collings, CEO, Health Research Council of New Zealand

b. how you select them and how can public submit their expression of interest

The rapid and dynamic set up of the fund meant members were selected by MBIE based on their expertise and ensuring our panels had balance and breadth across appropriate disciplines.

The public were not invited to submit their expression of interest to be a member on our expert panels.

c. what is their pay rate

Triage Team and Recommendation Panel members from government agencies were not paid for their roles in these expert groups. External members were paid NZ\$125 an hour.

I trust you find the information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Max Kennedy', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Max Kennedy

Manager Contestable Investments

Science System Investment and Performance