

Call for Expressions of Interest: Research Priority Leads

What these roles offer

- The opportunity to influence nationally coordinated infectious diseases research.
- A leadership role in shaping flagship research programmes and collaborations.
- Meaningful involvement with a national network of researchers, clinicians, policymakers and community partners.
- A significant professional and research leadership development opportunity.

Overview

Infectious Diseases Research Aotearoa is seeking Expressions of Interest for Research Priority Leads to steer coordination and integration across its national research programme.

It is structured around four areas:

- **Priority 1:** Infectious diseases of importance to New Zealand and the region.
- **Priority 2:** Threats at our doorstep (pandemic preparedness and emerging threats).
- **Priority 3:** Ensuring effective interventions (AMR, prevention and therapeutics).
- **Platform Capability:** Crosscutting systems, workforce, and mobilisation capability.

The work of Infectious Diseases Research Aotearoa is guided by Te Kawenata, which provides the foundation for work across disciplines, institutions, sectors, and communities. Te Kawenata reflects the commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, equitable outcomes, meaningful partnership, shared leadership, reciprocity, accountability, and excellence in infectious diseases research. Priority Research Leads will be expected to give practical effect to Te Kawenata in both their leadership approach and programme development.

In its first phase, Infectious Diseases Research Aotearoa will organise activity around a small number of flagship research questions addressing major unresolved issues such as:

- Persistent childhood respiratory infections and acute rheumatic fever.
- Early warning surveillance and climate-driven threats.
- AMR pathways, diagnostics, and use of new and emerging vaccines to maximise population impact and equity.

Research Priority Leads will work both within their designated Priority Area and collectively as a national leadership cohort, ensuring coordination, integration and shared learning.

Appointments

- 0.2 FTE for 2 years.
- Targeted at mid-career researchers, clinicians, public health leaders, and other professionals with demonstrated leadership potential and the ability to convene and influence across the research system, from community groups through to Government.
- Four roles in total: 1 x each Priority Area, including one focused on Platform Capability.

We recognise different candidates may bring different strengths and experiences. Flexible approaches may be considered where these strengthen the contribution to the Platform.

Research Priority Leads: Key responsibilities

Success in this role will be reflected in stronger national coordination, clearer research priorities, collaborative research programmes, and increased translation of research into policy and practice.

Research Leadership and Coordination

- Shape priority research questions and programmes.
- Identify evidence gaps and opportunities.
- Mobilise and connect relevant national capability.
- Build multidisciplinary collaborations across institutions and sectors.
- Maintain oversight of programme coherence and alignment with Platform priorities.
- Work collaboratively with fellow Research Priority Leads to support an integrated national research programme.

Note: Research Priority Leads do not make funding decisions.

Impact and translation

- Contribute to commissioning priorities and project development.
- Strengthen connections between research, policy, public health and practice.
- Support translation of research into policy, operational guidance and practice.

Mātauranga Māori and equity

- Work in genuine partnership with Māori researchers, organisations, communities, and other partners.
- Ensure equity, partnership, and mātauranga Māori considerations are reflected in research leadership and programme development.
- Support research approaches that respect and value multiple knowledge systems and

enable mātauranga Māori to inform research questions, methods, interpretation and impact.

- Promote meaningful Māori participation, leadership and decision making across Platform activities.
- Foster reciprocal relationships that create benefit for communities and support long-term research capability.
- Maintain a focus on reducing infectious disease inequities and improving outcomes for whānau and communities.

Research Priority Leads will work closely with the Programme Science Lead, Pouarataki, Māori researchers, and Platform partners to ensure research programmes reflect the Platform's commitments to equity, partnership, and excellence. They will also work as a cohort to ensure integration and alignment across Priority Areas.

Platform Capability Lead: Key responsibilities

The Platform Capability Lead focuses on the enabling system, including:

- Research mobilisation and commissioning processes.
- Workforce development and leadership pathways.
- Outbreak research readiness and knowledge translation.
- Identifying capability gaps and opportunities across the research system.
- Consistent incorporation of mātauranga Māori, Te Kawenata principles, and equity considerations across Platform activities.

Person specification

We recognise that no one person will bring all the capabilities required. We welcome applications from candidates with complementary strengths and will consider the collective capability of the Research Priority Lead cohort as part of the appointment process.

Experience

- Expertise aligned to a Priority Area or enabling capability.
- Experience contributing to complex, multidisciplinary research programmes or initiatives.
- Understanding of New Zealand's public health, healthcare, research or policy context.
- Experience working collaboratively across organisational or disciplinary boundaries.

Leadership

- Ability to convene researchers, stakeholders and partners.
- Ability to build trusted relationships and foster collaboration.
- Demonstrated leadership potential and systems thinking.

Impact

- Track record or clear capability in linking research to policy or practice.
- Ability to engage with government, iwi, providers, and communities.

Te Tiriti, mātauranga and equity

- Demonstrated commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and improving Māori health and wellbeing.
- Understanding of Te Kawenata and its application to research leadership, partnerships and collaborative practice, or willingness to develop this understanding.
- Understanding that mātauranga Māori is a distinct and valuable knowledge system.
- Ability to work effectively in partnership with Māori researchers, knowledge holders, organisations, hapū, iwi and communities.
- Commitment to supporting Māori aspirations for research and health outcomes.

How we'll support you

Research Priority Leads will be supported by the Infectious Diseases Research Aotearoa Director, Programme Science Lead and Pouarataki. Support includes access to national networks, regular cohort meetings, leadership development opportunities and advice on navigating Platform processes.

Research Priority Leads will engage with Platform governance and advisory groups, including the Research Excellence Advisory Group, to test ideas, strengthen strategic thinking, and support national connectivity across the infectious diseases research ecosystem.

How to apply

We encourage expressions of interest from researchers, clinicians, public health practitioners, Māori and Pacific leaders, and others with relevant expertise who are passionate about advancing infectious diseases research for Aotearoa.

We invite potential Research Priority Leads to submit their CV, outlining their relevant experience for these roles.

We want to hear about you and why you're putting yourself forward for these roles, including:

- Your preferred Research Priority Area (P1, P2, P3, or Platform Capability).
- Your leadership experience, especially examples of relationships that you've built, partnerships that you've been part of, and what you've learned from those experiences.
- Your approach to collaboration and embedding mātauranga Māori and equity in your work.

You can share this with us in a covering letter or a short video, alongside your CV.

Assessment criteria

- Alignment with the Priority Area and flagship questions.
- Leadership capability, systems thinking, and the ability to convene and coordinate national capability.
- Demonstrated ability to uphold equity, reciprocity, and shared leadership in research programmes and partnerships, including working effectively with Māori and applying Te Kawenata, mātauranga Māori, and equity considerations in practice.
- Potential to deliver coherent, high-impact research programmes.

Applications close 5pm, 24 September 2026.

Submit expressions of interest to IDRP@phfscience.nz