

Community grants operations manual DRAFT

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Community grants overview

InternetNZ supports and engages the Internet community with a range of community grants. The objective of the community grants funding is to provide assistance to projects and activities that support InternetNZ's [mission and objects](#) and help maintain or extend the use and accessibility of the Internet in New Zealand.

Every financial year, a portion of the community funding budget is allocated to the community grants and is distributed to the different funding categories including community projects, Internet research, conference attendance, and a small portion for the on-demand grants.

Grants rounds are run according to the principles in our [grants policy framework](#).

Grants governance and staff involvement

Council is the governing and decision-making body for InternetNZ grants. Council members appoint four members amongst themselves to make up the Grants Committee. This committee is reviewed after each AGM (Annual General Meeting).

Grants Committee is a committee of the Council with the specific delegated powers as set out in the [terms of reference](#). The Committee is the decision-making body for on-demand grants under \$5,000, and the recommendation-making body for the rest of our grant rounds. Overall, they provide Council with ongoing oversight of the community funding programme.

Staff assessors include senior staff members and are the recommendation-making body for community projects and Internet research stage one applications. The Grants Committee makes the final decision on who will proceed to stage two, based on those recommendations.

In order to make sure the Grants Committee makes well informed decisions they can choose to include **external assessor/s** in their assessment. External assessors are appointed by the Grants Committee and are experts in relevant work areas depending on the funding round category. In stage one, they support the staff assessors with specific applications, in stage two they are part of the Assessment Committee assessing all stage two applications together with the Grants Committee.

Staff who are involved:

- **Community Funding Coordinator** - is the first point of contact for any queries and support regarding the community funding grants. The Community Funding Coordinator provides administrative support to the Grants Committee and acts as the Committee Secretary.
- **Community Programme Director** - leads the community funding portfolio. The Community Programme Director is the key contact for the Grants Committee on each funding round and advises the Committee where appropriate.
- **Communications Team** - looks after the media coverage.

- *Finance Manager* - monitors the budget and manages the processing of the invoices and payments.
- *Chief Executive* - is subscribed to the Grants Committee mailing list to keep an overview of the community funding process.
- *Staff Assessors* - may include selected senior staff from InternetNZ, DNCL and NZRS.

Conflict of interest guidelines

Transparency of decision making and the declaration and management of any conflicts of interest, real or potentially perceived, is critical for the reputation and credibility of InternetNZ.

The degree of conflict matters:

- At the highest level, there is direct financial benefit to be gained by either the individual decision maker or a close friend or family member e.g. part of the team delivering a proposal.
- At the next level, there can be indirect benefit – financial or otherwise – to be gained by the decision maker e.g. an organisation, or acquaintances/co-workers can benefit. The role the individual plays in the organisation can matter e.g. a director whose livelihood is not dependent on their role is conflicted to a lesser extent than an employee whose livelihood is deeply affected.
- At the next level, a decision maker may be an investor in a company that benefits. Here the extent of the conflict depends on the materiality – if the investment is small and the individual has little ability to influence what happens in the company or to obtain a significant increase in their financial return from it as a result of the decision then the conflict is relatively small - if they are a major shareholder and decision maker then it's different.
- At the lowest level, a committee member may know someone who is part of the application process but who is not related or in any way likely to benefit financially but where there is a perception risk.

Any other relationships not covered above must be declared and discussed (but not normally excluded) including:

- An assessor has represented the applicant in a professional capacity.
- The applicant is a partner in a professional practice with staff or Council/board members.
- The applicant has a personal or family relationship with staff or Council/board members.

Dealing with a conflict of interest:

The challenge is often to ensure that the knowledge the Committee member has about the applicant can be made available to the Committee but without breaching conflict rules. The role the conflicted decision maker can play in the process varies in line with extent and impact of the conflict.

At the highest level, the conflicted person should not receive papers or be involved in the decision making in any way. They should be out of the room while the application is discussed and scored. Indeed, where the process involves a contest and therefore scoring some applications low could be seen to assist in the success of the conflicted application, it may be sensible to substitute that Committee member by another for the whole process.

At lower levels of conflict, a member can provide input, be involved in the process but not score or provide input on the proposal first and then leave the room for the substantive discussion and consensus scoring.

Committee members have the obligation to declare any conflicts from the outset. The Committee Chair should decide each case on its merits using the above principles and ensuring there is careful recording of the exact actions taken including when people have left and entered the room.

Types of grants

Community projects grant

The purpose of community project grants is to provide financial support for community-led projects which will extend the availability, use and benefit of the Internet and its associated technologies and applications in New Zealand including:

- Projects which support more widely available access to the Internet.
- Projects which deliver greater and/or better use of the Internet.

Community projects grants takes place once a year, and when possible coincides with NetHui or some other community engagement event.

Internet research grant

The purpose of the Internet research grant is to help fund individuals or organisations conducting research projects focused on Internet topics and issues. The Internet research grant purpose seeks to support community research which:

- Can inform the development of the Internet in New Zealand and/or the availability, use and benefit of the Internet for New Zealanders.
- Can support the development of the Internet research community in New Zealand and researchers working on New Zealand Internet topics and issues.

Internet research grants take place once a year, and when possible coincides with New Zealand Internet Research Forum events or other Internet research related events.

Conference attendance

The purpose of the conference attendance grants is to help the New Zealand Internet community participate in relevant conferences and events related to the development of the Internet. The grants are intended to assist the successful applicants to:

- Engage in shaping the future of the Internet for New Zealand, both domestically and internationally.
- Gain expertise and experience which will benefit the New Zealand Internet community and the development of the Internet in New Zealand.

The conference attendance grants take place twice a year and coincides with the projects and research grant rounds.

Special funding grant

This could be a one-off funding round to fund activities/projects for a special cause e.g. the Canterbury funding grant that was launched in 2011 as part of InternetNZ's contribution to help rebuild the earthquake-ravaged Canterbury region. The funding was for Internet/ICT related projects that contributed to the rebuild.

On-demand grant

On-demand grants are available to any application that does not fit any of the above categories and funding is under \$5,000. These applications can be accepted any time during the year. The applicant needs to contact InternetNZ to discuss why they need to apply for the on-demand grant before they can get access to the application link.

If staff are satisfied that there is a reason outside of the applicant's control which means the application cannot be considered as part of a grants round, then the appropriate application form for the type of grant is given to the applicant to complete.

Criteria for the type of grant sought (project, research or conference attendance) is then used, with applications assessed and then compared to the most recent round of that type of grant as information to support the Grants Committee in a decision.

Criteria for funding

Applications which are complete and align to InternetNZ's objects are then assessed against the following assessment criteria:

Community projects

a. Alignment with purpose (weighted 40%)

This criterion relates to the extent to which the project is aligned with the project round purpose and related community goals and objectives. Applicants are asked to:

- Explain how the project matches the InternetNZ purpose for the community grants round.
- Identify any engagement within the community relevant to this project and explain how this project can help address community goals and objectives.

b. Potential benefit (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the Grants Committee is assessing the outcomes and potential benefit of the projects, including value for money. Applicants are asked to:

- Give an indication of the expected project outcomes and the impact of those outcomes.
- Identify any potential benefits to communities, disadvantaged groups or segments of the population (government, business, users, etc.).
- Identify how and to what extent this is addressing community needs and how those have been clearly identified.
- Identify the project's relationship to any other related projects.
- Describe what makes this project different or innovative.
- Identify the project's ongoing commitment and viability, if any.

c. Likelihood of success (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the Grants Committee is trying to understand the likelihood of the project being successfully completed, towards delivering the outcomes and benefits intended. Applicants are asked to:

- Show clearly how this project will be implemented.
- Outline your approach and management of any ethical considerations.
- Provide evidence of the commitment of others, especially involved or affected groups or communities, including any co-funding or in-kind backing from others and what commitment exists.
- Where possible, describe the experience of the people applying, i.e. a successful track record of implementing projects of this kind.
- State what qualifications the applicants have that are relevant to the requirements of the project.

Internet research

a. Alignment with purpose (weighted 40%)

This criterion relates to the extent to which the research project is aligned with the InternetNZ Internet research community grant purpose and related community goals and objectives. Applicants are asked to:

- Explain how this research project matches the InternetNZ purpose for the community grants round.
- Identify any engagement within the community relevant to this research, including the research community, and where applicable give an indication how this research can help address community goals and objectives.

b. Potential benefit (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the committee is assessing the outcomes and potential benefit of the research projects, including value for money. Applicants are asked to:

- Give an indication of the expected research outcomes and the impact/use of those outcomes.
- Identify any potential benefits to communities, disadvantaged groups or segments of the population, including to the research community and/or broader Internet community (government, business, users, etc.).
- Identify how and to what extent this is addressing research needs that have been clearly identified.
- Identify the research project's relationship to other existing research projects in New Zealand or internationally.
- Describe what makes this research project different or innovative.
- Identify the research project's ongoing commitment and viability, if any.

c. Likelihood of success (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the Grants Committee is trying to understand the likelihood of the research project being successfully completed, towards delivering the outcomes and benefits intended. Applicants are asked to:

- Show clearly how this research will be implemented.
- Outline your approach and management of ethical considerations.
- Provide evidence of the commitment of others, especially involved or affected groups or communities, including any co-funding or in-kind backing from others and what commitment exists.
- Where possible, describe the experience of the people applying, i.e. a successful track record of implementing research projects of this kind.
- State what qualifications the applicants have that is relevant to the requirements of the research project.

Conference attendance

a. Alignment with purpose (weighted 40%)

This criterion relates to the extent to which the conference attendance is aligned with the community grant purpose and related community goals and objectives. Applicants are asked to:

- Explain how this conference or event and your proposed attendance matches the InternetNZ purpose for the conference attendance round as described above.
- The conference subject matter must be demonstrated to be of relevance to InternetNZ in terms of achieving its Objects noting that InternetNZ will from time to time establish priorities to ensure it maintains an appropriate spread of focus.
- Identify any engagement within the community relevant to this conference attendance, and where applicable give an indication how this research can help address community goals and objectives.

b. Potential benefit (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the Grants Committee is assessing the outcomes and potential benefit of the conference attendance, including value for money. Applicants are asked to:

- Give an indication of the expected outcomes of attendance and the benefits of these outcomes. Specificity as to the proposed outcomes and benefit of your attendance at the conference (for example, being a confirmed speaker at conference, opportunity to enhance research, publication of articles, proposed follow-up engagement in New Zealand etc.) is valued – for example saying your attendance will help develop and maintain relationships internationally may well not score highly relative to others.
- Identify any potential benefits to communities, disadvantaged groups or segments of the population, including to the Internet community or specific sectors (government, business, users, etc.).

c. Likelihood of success (weighted 30%)

With this criterion, the committee is trying to understand the likelihood of the conference attendance successfully delivering the outcomes and benefits intended. Applicants are asked to:

- Provide evidence of the commitment of others, especially involved or affected groups or communities, including any co-funding or in-kind backing from others and what commitment exists.
- Outline the experience of the people applying and how it will contribute to the benefits described from the conference attendance proposed.
- State what qualifications the applicants have relevant to the conference attendance proposed.
- Note: It is preferred that the attendee have appropriate expertise in the area concerned but the opportunity will also be taken to grow and develop both the level of expertise and the number of people with that expertise in NZ.

Timelines and processes

Annual timeline

FUNDING ACTIVITY	MONTH
Approval of community funding budget	April
Community projects round	July/August (or around relevant event like NetHui)
Conference attendance rounds	July/August and Nov/Dec
Internet research round	Nov/Dec (or around relevant event)
Special funding <i>(if any)</i>	TBC
On-Demands	Any time in the year <i>(under \$5000)</i>

Community projects and Internet research round

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Applications open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online using Smarty Grants (SG) ● Applications are open for two months 	Community Funding Coordinator (CFC)	On a set date
Applications close. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Insightly with all applicants' details ● Check applications for missing content 	CFC	1 week after the round closes
Stage one applications assessment in SG 1-7 assessment ranking on three criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alignment with InternetNZ purpose (40%) ● Potential benefit (30%) ● Likelihood of success (30%) 	Staff assessors (SA)	5 working days
IF REQUIRED External assessors (EA) Includes research and technical experts		During the staff assessment
Staff assessors' stage one discussion meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision recommendation on who will proceed to stage two 	Community Programme Director (CPD) +CFC + SA	On agreed date/time
Staff recommendations approved by Grants Committee	CFC	1 week
Contact stage one applicants with results/stage two Applications open for three weeks	CFC	1 week after approval
Stage two application forms close Applications are checked for missing content	CFC	2 days
Grants Committee assesses stage two applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When necessary External Assessors will also fill in GC assessments for all stage two applications (Internet research) ● Same 1-7 scoring as in stage one 	GC + EA	1-2 weeks
Grants Committee stage two decision meeting	CFC + CPD + GC (+ EA)	On agreed date/time
Council approves final funding decision based on GC recommendations	Council + Secretary Council	2-3 weeks
Process agreements, invoicing, etc with successful applicants	CFC + CPD	2-3 weeks after Council decision

Grantee to provide progress report and final reports	CFC	Reminder 1 week before deadline Deadline set in the contract
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Conference attendance round

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Applications open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online using Smarty Grants (SG) ● Applications are open two months 	Community Funding Coordinator (CFC)	On a set date
Applications close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Insightly with all applicants' details ● Check applications for missing content ● Review of applications by Staff Assessors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conflict of interest ○ Previous engagement ○ Any overlaps in work ○ Further contextual comments 	CFC + Staff assessors	1 week after the round closes
Grants Committee assesses applications in SG 1-7 assessment ranking on three criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alignment with InternetNZ purpose (40%) ● Potential benefit (30%) ● Likelihood of success (30%) 	Staff assessors	1 week
Grants Committee conference attendance decision meeting	CFC + CPD + GC	on agreed date/time
Council approves final funding decision based on GC recommendations	Council Secretary + Council	2-3 weeks
Process agreements, invoicing, etc. with successful applicants	CFC + CPD	2-3 weeks after Council decision
Grantee to provide progress report and final reports	CFC	Reminder 1 week before deadline Deadline set in the Contract

On-demand

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Potential applicant to contact InternetNZ to give an overview of the conference/research/project they want the funding for - up to \$5,000 only	Applicant Community Funding Coordinator	Anytime
Decision of whether to ask to apply or not	CFC + CPD + staff	1 week
Applicant is sent private Smarty Grants link.	Applicant	Within 1 week
Check application for any missing content and if the CG might need the help of External Assessors Review of application by Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict of interest ● Previous engagement ● Any overlaps in work ● Further contextual comments 	CFC + Staff	1-2 week
The GC assesses the application in SG against relevant round criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1-7 assessment ranking on three criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment with InternetNZ purpose (40%) ○ Potential benefit (30%) ○ Likelihood of success (30%) 	GC (4 members, minimum 3 per applications)	3 days (ideally a weekend)
GC discusses and votes on a decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff provides a recommendation 	GC + CFC + CDC	1-2 weeks
Process agreements, invoicing, etc. with successful applicants	CFC + CPD	2-3 weeks after Council decision
Grantee to provide progress report and final reports. Deadline is set in the contract.	CFC	Reminder 1 week before deadline

Finance

Budget allocations for community grants funding are included in the financial year budget plan and are approved annually by Council late April.

Invoicing and payments

- Funds awarded to recipients are exclusive of GST.

- Funding recipient will be asked to send invoices to accounts@internetnz.net.nz and quote the reference number provided in the signed funding agreement.
- Invoices will be processed on the 20th of the month following the invoice date (unless different payment terms have been agreed with other party).
- Payment of funds will be sent via bank transfer and the account quoted in the invoice.

Reporting

Grant recipients are asked to produce status reports on their particular project, research or conference attendance. A description of each required report is below.

Community funding / Internet research

Interim/mid-year report

Report detailing the progress on what has been done so far, whether project/research deliverables have been achieved, raise any issues/risk encountered at this point, and progress on the expenses incurred for the project.

Project Completion/final report

A detailed summary of the project/research which includes detailed information on what the project/research has achieved, if the project/research deliverables have been met, and the overall outcomes of the project/research.

Conference attendance

Final report

Summary report on outcomes/activities completed during a conference attendance that has been funded through the community funding.

On-demand grants

Post-activity report

For one-off grant funding, applicants will be asked to complete a post-activity report at the completion of their project/research/conference attendance.

Further reporting and promoting

Based on those reports, InternetNZ may choose some or all grantees to follow up with and share their grant story and the outcomes with the Internet community and wider public in order to inspire other community members.

A quarterly update paper that includes all the recent grantee reports is included in Council papers.

APPENDIX 1 - Grants Committee external input guidelines

External input for community grants assessment may be requested by the Grants Committee. External persons, staff and contractors (of InternetNZ or its subsidiaries) may be approached by InternetNZ, with staff liaising with those invited, at the request of Grants Committee.

External Assessment Committee members are bound by the [community grants policy framework](#), including conflict of interest requirements, and are also required to respect the confidentiality of applicants.

Process for appointing external members to the Assessment Committee:

Members of the Assessment Committee from the community serve at the invitation of InternetNZ and are invited to assist in providing information and to assist in the assessment of applications, where deemed necessary or valuable by the Grants Committee.

1. The Grants Committee discuss in each round whether external members of the Assessment Committee are desired, in either or both stages of grants rounds.
2. If desired, the Grants Committee and staff discuss the nature of the external input needed for that round (ie technical advice, local community knowledge, etc.) and shortlist potential external assessment committee members.
3. Staff approach shortlisted external members to discuss the process:
 - Staff (including subsidiaries) and contractors of InternetNZ who are invited to be part of the Assessment Committee in this process are bound by the conflict of interest register and approach in the policy framework. External people are provided with the grants policy framework and operations manual and InternetNZ staff meet to discuss these with them.
 - If they are interested and able to act as external input, they are then asked to make a declaration of confidentiality of applications and assessment, agree to their involvement as an external assessment committee member being published, as well as declare any conflicts of interest.
 - If substantial conflicts of interest are declared or the person is unable or unwilling to agree to these terms, then staff may decline.

Details of external members of the assessment committee are included in recommendations to Council.

APPENDIX 2 - Grants assessment processes

Community projects and Internet research grants

Stage one

- Community Funding Coordinator gathers information on applications and assesses the applications for objectives of the round, completeness of application and fit with InternetNZ Objects by a 'Yes/No' process.
- Applications that meet these criteria are passed on to Staff Assessors, who score each application on their own against the other criteria on a 7-point scale.

- Staff Assessors then meet to discuss each application and a consensus score is reached for each criterion.
- Applications need to have a consensus score of three in *alignment with purpose* criteria and score of two in the other two criteria for the proposal to be considered further. If the application scores less, this means it will definitely not be funded nor discussed further.
- The remaining applications scores are then weighted and summed to determine total scores.
- The applications are then ranked, and staff assessors agree on short-list applications to proceed to stage two, based on a threshold of a percentage of funding available (300% as maximum suggested). Staff assessors make a recommendation to the Grants Committee.
- The Grants Committee approves/declines the recommendations.

Stage two

- The Grants Committee scores the stage two applications against each criterion on a 7-point scale.
- The Grants Committee then come together to discuss each application and a consensus score is reached for each criterion.
- Applications need to have a consensus score of three in *alignment with purpose* criteria and score of two in the other two criteria for the proposal to be considered further. If the application scores less, this means it will definitely not be funded nor discussed further.
- The remaining applications scores are then weighted and summed to determine total scores.
- The Grants Committee carries out a 'sore thumb' exercise by going through the list to ensure the same standards have been applied on each application and rankings are reviewed.
- As part of this exercise, the Grants Committee may take into account a concentration of proposals (geographic, area of focus, etc.). The Committee may decide to adjust the ranking list among comparably scored proposals to achieve balance. A clear decision trail must be visible on any occasion where this proves necessary.
- Applications are then funded in sequence for highest to lowest until available funds are exhausted. The Grants Committee can also decide on partial funding.
- The Grants Committee makes recommendations of funding to Council.
- Council makes the final funding decision based on the Grants Committee recommendations.

Conference attendance grant

- InternetNZ community staff gather information on applications, including from the staff grants assessors, and assess the applications for objectives of the round, completeness of applications and fit with InternetNZ Objects by a 'Yes/No' process.
- Community Funding Coordinator will pass those applications, which meet these criteria together with any supporting information, on to the Grants Committee.
- The Grants Committee scores each application on their own against the other criteria on a 7-point scale.
- The Grants Committee meets to discuss each application and a consensus score is reached for each criterion.

- Applications need to have a consensus score of three in *Alignment with Purpose* criteria and score of two in the other two criteria for the proposal to be considered further. If the application scores less, this means it will definitely not be funded nor discussed further.
- The remaining applications scores are then weighted and summed to determine total scores.
- The Grants Committee carries out a 'sore thumb' exercise by going through the list to ensure the same standards have been applied on each application and rankings are reviewed.
- As part of this exercise, the Grants Committee may take into account a concentration of proposals (geographic, area of focus, etc.). The Committee may decide to adjust the ranking list among comparably scored proposals to achieve balance. A clear decision trail must be visible on any occasion where this proves necessary.
- Applications are then funded in sequence for highest to lowest until available funds are exhausted. The Grants Committee can also decide to on partial funding.
- The Grants Committee make recommendations of funding to Council.
- Council makes the final funding decision based on the Grants Committee recommendations.

On-demand grant

- InternetNZ community staff assess preliminary application for on-demand need, as well as fit with objectives of the grant type and fit with objects. If the applicant meets these criteria, a full application is invited using the stage two application form for the relevant grant type.
- When full applications are received, staff gather information on application, including from the staff assessors, and assess the applications for completeness.
- Staff provide the application and supporting information to the Grants Committee.
- The Committee scores the application against the relevant grant type criteria on a 7-point scale.
- The Grants Committee meets to discuss each application and a consensus score is reached for each criterion.
- Applications need to have a consensus score of three in *Alignment with Purpose* criteria and score of two in the other two criteria for the proposal to be considered further. If the application scores less, this means it will definitely not be funded nor discussed further.
- The total scoring of applications recently funded in the funding rounds and other on demand grants is provided by staff, for the Grants Committee to consider in relation to this application.
- The Grants Committee makes a decision to fund or not, based on this score taking other factors into consideration if necessary.