



New Zealand National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific, and  
Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

*Te Kōmihana Matua o Aotearoa mō UNESCO*

## ACTIVITY GRANTS 2025/2026

# APPLICANT INFORMATION PACK

July 2025

**Supporting a sustainable, healthy and more peaceful future  
by sharing ideas and deepening connections between the  
people of Aotearoa New Zealand and with UNESCO globally.**

We will be accepting applications throughout the year; however, you must leave at least 6 weeks between your application and your activity.

# New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO ACTIVITY GRANTS 2025/2026

**Tēnā koutou and thank you for your interest in our Activity Grants.**

The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO (National Commission) has allocated a limited amount of funds, distributed through activity grants, to support initiatives that align with our mission and key themes.

This information pack explains the purpose of the Activity Grants, outlines the National Commission's key themes, and describes the application criteria and application process.

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## HOW TO CONTACT US

If after reading this, you still have questions, please feel free to get in touch.

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## PART ONE: OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Activity Grant programme is to identify projects and initiatives (which may include travel) that advance the mission of the New Zealand National Commission to:

*Support a sustainable, peaceful and more healthy future by sharing ideas and deepening connections between the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and with UNESCO globally”.*

Applications are sought for projects that will contribute in a lasting way to the mission and key themes of the New Zealand National Commission at a national or regional level.

Applications are being invited for grants of up to \$5,000 (NZD). Applications are accepted throughout the year, but applicants should leave at least six weeks between their submission and the start of the activity or travel.

### THE NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The National Commission was established by the New Zealand government as part of its responsibilities as a UNESCO Member State. National Commissions ensure the permanent presence of UNESCO in Member States and contribute to UNESCO’s efforts to promote international co-operation in the fields of Education, Natural Sciences, Culture, Social and Human Sciences and Communication and Information.

### Key themes

The work of the National Commission is guided by our Strategic Plan for 2026-2029 which includes the following five key themes:

1. Climate action
2. Safe digital environments
3. Indigenous knowledge / Mātauranga Māori
4. Strong social fabrics and cohesion
5. Literacy and lifelong learning

The National Commission also supports and oversees a range of UNESCO programmes in New Zealand, including UNESCO Creative Cities, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Memory of the World, and UNESCO Global Geoparks. It also prioritises activities under the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the International Decade for Indigenous Languages.

## WHAT THE NATIONAL COMMISSION IS SEEKING TO FUND

Applicants may apply for Activity Grant funding of up to \$5,000 (NZD). As UNESCO is an organisation of ideas, it encourages innovation and new ways of working.

The National Commission will also consider funding travel for individuals and groups to participate in international events related to these areas. Where an application is submitted for travel, priority will be given to UNESCO organised events.

The activity must:

- have an impact beyond the project itself
- be replicable or have potential to be shared
- align with one or more of the New Zealand National Commission's key themes or UNESCO programmes.

Examples might include, but are not limited to, the following types of activities:

- fora, conferences, competitions, hui
- initiatives, programmes, innovative research
- collaboration, dialogue, peace-building, expert knowledge-building
- community, regional or national capability building.

Please note: the New Zealand National Commission is not a funding organisation and may choose not to award any funding.

*Please see our website ([www.unesco.org.nz](http://www.unesco.org.nz)) for examples of projects awarded Activity Grants in the 2024/2025 financial year.*

## **PART TWO: APPLICATION CRITERIA**

**Applicants and applications must fulfil all the following criteria:**

### **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To be eligible to apply for an Activity Grant from the New Zealand National Commission, you must be an individual, a group or an organisation (including NGO's, charities, iwi, businesses, social enterprises, trusts etc.) that has legal status and is based in New Zealand.

Please note: the applicant must be the individual or legal entity with whom the National Commission contracts for the Activity Grant and to whom the Activity Grant will be paid.

#### **The proposed activity MUST:**

- be a new initiative or an existing initiative that would be further enhanced by funding from the New Zealand National Commission
- take place within New Zealand or the Pacific (with the exception of travel funding)
- be undertaken by an applicant who has a record of experience and success in the subject area of the project
- be supported by other funding; either from the applicant themselves and/or by having secured funding from other sources in addition to the Activity Grant applied for.

#### **The proposed activity must also:**

- align with the New Zealand National Commission's 2026-29 key themes or UNESCO programmes in New Zealand (see page 7)
- be located within the National Commission's areas of responsibility: natural science, social sciences, culture, education, and communication and information.

#### **The National Commission will NOT accept applications:**

- for service provision
- from individuals seeking personal study or research grants
- from start-ups seeking to establish or grow their organisation
- for projects seeking to promote political or religious objectives
- from government departments or government-funded agencies for which the proposed activity is core business (the National Commission acknowledges that many projects can only be funded in partnership with central or local government – in this case, exceptions may be made where the case is sound)
- for the purchase of capital items
- for the purchase or renovation of buildings
- for completed projects or recurrent projects (with some exceptions)

- for or towards an organisation's ongoing operational costs, including salaries and honoraria (these may be funded if they are an essential component of the project).

### **CAN WE APPLY FOR AN ACTIVITY GRANT?**

If you have checked that you are eligible under the general eligibility criteria, please read the specific requirements relating to applying for the Activity Grant.

#### **Activity Grant criteria**

Applications **MUST** meet these criteria:

- the maximum you can apply for is \$5,000 (NZD)
- the project or travel must be completed within the 2025/26 financial year, however in some instances an extension may be granted. Please contact the Secretariat to discuss your situation.

## KEY THEMES 2025-2026:

To be considered for Activity Grant funding, projects must align with the National Commission's key themes, listed on page 3.

Please note: a project may address one or more of these 2025-26 themes.

Key themes	Evaluation Criteria
<b>Climate action</b>	<p>The project provides or demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ways our communities can learn about and utilise sustainable and regenerative practices to better address the impacts of climate-related events.</li> <li>• how we can support protection of our environment, including our oceans, through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and natural heritage.</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous knowledge / Mātauranga Māori</b>	<p>The project provides or demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a strengthening and uplifting of indigenous knowledges and practises such as Mātauranga Māori.</li> <li>• an encompassing of Indigenous perspectives, practices, and values to offer unique insights and solutions for sustainability, resilience, and community wellbeing.</li> <li>• promoting the links between and importance of language, culture (both tangible and intangible), people and place.</li> </ul>
<b>Safe digital environments</b>	<p>The project provides or demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• actions to promote and develop safe digital environments.</li> <li>• the enabling of equitable access to knowledge and supporting community connection.</li> <li>• ways to enhance an appreciation of diversity and social inclusion in Aotearoa New Zealand in our digital ecosystem.</li> </ul>
<b>Strong social fabrics and cohesion</b>	<p>The project provides or demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunities for diverse groups to collaborate effectively to address issues of sustainability.</li> <li>• ways to enable young people to come together and address challenges within their communities.</li> <li>• support for diverse communities to deepen mutual understanding through the active exchange of knowledge, stories and perspectives.</li> </ul>

<b>Literacy and lifelong learning</b>	<p>The project provides or demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support for literacy and lifelong learning (including digital literacy and critical thinking) in ways that help people to access opportunities and contribute positively to their communities.</li> <li>• the significance of literacy and lifelong learning as essential for addressing global challenges, fostering sustainable development and promoting peaceful societies.</li> </ul>
<b>UNESCO Programmes</b>	<p>The project provides an opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthen relationships at a national, regional or international level with UNESCO, including through the International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.</li> <li>• supports or engages with UNESCO programmes in New Zealand such as Global Geoparks, Creative Cities, Memory of the World and UNESCO Chairs.</li> </ul>



**Please take note:**

- applicants are only eligible for an Activity Grant once in a 12-month period
- as a general rule, the National Commission will only fund up to 50% of the total cost
- the applicant will bear all other expenses for carrying out the proposed activity
- projects must be completed by 30 June 2026. Exceptions may be sought where a large project would be constrained by such a deadline. These applicants should make this request as part of their application stating an alternative completion date with appropriate milestones
- Activity Grants can only be used to cover costs identified at the time of application
- if an application is incomplete, illegible, or mandatory documentation has not been included, your application will not be considered
- matching these criteria is no guarantee of receiving an Activity Grant.

## **PART THREE: THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

To apply for an Activity Grant, complete the online application form, including all requested information and submit it to the National Commission online.

**The application MUST include:**

- Names of two referees (specific to the relevant initiative) who are based in New Zealand and have no financial interest in the project. For example, these referees may have provided you or your organisation with funding in the past and can outline the benefits your activity delivered. The National Commission may choose to seek additional testimonials. Include their full name, role, affiliation and full contact details.
- A full detailed project budget.
- A declaration of any potential conflicts of interest.

## PART FOUR: THE FINE PRINT

**The following are general terms and conditions under the National Commission Activity Grant arrangements.**

**A full and detailed contract will be issued to successful applicants.**

1. Applications must be made by completing and submitting the application form for the 2025/2026 Activity Grant and include all the information requested in the form.
2. The person/s signing an application form and funding agreement must be duly authorised to do so.
3. Applications **must** include the names of two referees who are based in New Zealand, with no financial interest in the project who if possible have provided you or your organisation with funding in the past. The National Commission reserves the right to ask for additional referees if required.
4. An Activity Grant will not be provided to projects that have concluded before the applicant is advised of the outcome of their application by the National Commission.
5. Applicants are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest at the time of submitting their application to the National Commission.
6. The applicant must be the legal entity with whom the National Commission contracts for the Activity Grant and to whom the Activity Grant will be paid<sup>1</sup>.
7. The National Commission may undertake the following due diligence in relation to applicants for Activity Grants:
  - reference check the applying organisation and named personnel
  - other checks against the applicant e.g. Companies Office
  - inspect audited accounts for the last three financial years.

The findings will be taken into account in the evaluation process.

### **On approval of an Activity Grant:**

8. Unless otherwise provided for in the letter of approval of the Activity Grant, the applicant shall bear all other expenses for carrying out the proposed activity.
9. An Activity Grant can only be used to cover costs identified at the time of application.
10. Any funding unexpended for the purpose for which it was approved must be returned to the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO via the Ministry of Education.
11. The National Commission reserves the right to withdraw support for any initiative at any time. Prior approval must be sought from the National Commission in the event of a significant change in the activity for which funding was approved.
12. The applicant is not to be considered as an agent or member of the National Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the funding is administered by the Ministry of Education on behalf of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

13. The applicant shall not be entitled to any privileges, immunities, compensation or reimbursement, nor is the applicant authorised to commit the National Commission to any expenditure or other obligations.
14. The applicant undertakes full responsibility for the purchase of any insurance that may be necessary in respect of any loss, injury or damage which might occur during the execution of the activity.

### **Acknowledgement of the National Commission**

15. The applicant is to include the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO logo on any promotional material related to their project and acknowledge the support of the National Commission in any media statements released.
16. The contribution from the National Commission should be acknowledged in any publications, speeches and media releases relating to the project or activity, and identified as an integral component of the National Commission's work programme.
17. The Chair and members of the National Commission and its Secretariat would expect to be invited to any event associated with the project. While it may not always be possible for a representative to attend, they would hope to do so if they can.

### **Payment of the Activity Grant**

18. On advice from the National Commission that the application has been successful, the applicant will receive a letter of offer which will outline the conditions of the Activity Grant and the milestones / deadline for receipt of the final report.
19. The applicant's counter-signing of the letter constitutes a formal agreement between the applicant and the Ministry of Education on behalf of the National Commission.
20. The applicant will be asked to provide bank account details which must be in the name of the recipient organisation, as shown in the application, and provide proof of their bank account details. Please note that the bank account must be a New Zealand bank account. Funding will not be paid to overseas bank accounts.
21. Upon receipt of an invoice, the approved Activity Grant will be paid in advance directly into an approved bank account.

### **Reporting/Communications**

22. Successful applicants must provide a full report on the project within four weeks of completion of the project.
23. In addition, a 300-word summary suitable for publication by the National Commission must be provided. This should include photos, media releases or other relevant publicity.
24. A completed accountability form together with a financial statement detailing all expenditure of Activity Grant funds must be provided with the report within four weeks of completion of the project.
25. It should be noted that the National Commission is liable to inspection by the Office of the Auditor General. Therefore, all successful applicants will be required to account for the spending of funds received. The National Commission will require the funds to be returned if their use cannot be adequately accounted for.