



Frequently Asked Questions

(as of 4 March 2021)

What is the purpose of the Thermal Explorer Regional Events Fund?

Our purpose is to create a contestable fund that will be utilised to focus on developing, securing or enhancing new and existing events to become long term sustainable 'iconic' or 'anchor' events for the regions; and to support capability development of the event ecosystem in the regions of the Thermal Explorer area.

How many events are being funded?

As this is a contestable fund, this will depend on the number of EOI applications received and alignment of those applications to the criteria. Our intention is to select and work with a smaller number of events that achieve high impact, relative to the host region. We are intentionally looking for events to support that have potential to become self-sustainable 'anchor' or 'iconic' events for their host region.

Is the EOI application form easy to use?

The online form will not save during the process – we recommend that you utilise the provided [Word document](#) to prepare your answers before moving into the EOI online form. We have provided information about each section on pages 10-13 of the Guidelines. The online form provides tips and explanations along the way. It is an involved form, but we believe (and have been told so far) that it is easy to utilise.

Can I apply for Regional Events Fund if I have already received Domestic Events Fund and/or Major Events Fund?

It is preferable that events that receive funding through an MBIE fund, including the Domestic Events Fund (DEF) or Major Events Fund (MEF), do not also receive funding through the Regional Events Fund until future years outside of the DEF or MEF funding term. This is to minimise duplication with MBIE-funded events, and to ensure that a wide range of events and event subsectors are supported. However, if an event believes that further investment will drive additional domestic tourism, as is the intent of the Regional Events Fund, then this may be permissible. Please email ThermExREF@waikatonz.com to discuss prior to submitting an application.

Can I apply for other regions Regional Events Fund?

Yes, you can, however MBIE require all regions to collaborate and restricts utilising the REF to competitively bid against another region to secure an event.

What does 'out of region visitation' mean?

Inter-regional visitation – from one region to another
Intra-regional visitation – within the same region, 50km from home

What is considered to be significant inter and intra-regional visitation?

This will be relative to the host region: we'll consider length of stay of out-of-town visitor's therefore overall economic benefit. Preference will be events that can show their domestic visitors are more likely/able to stay longer and spend more in our regions.

My event is a community event? Can I apply?

Sorry, no. The purpose of the Regional Events Fund is to attract significant inter and intra-regional visitation to the host region. This fund is not for events that target local community attendees.

What events can be considered for event funding?

A wide range of events will be considered for event funding. Including new, one-off, or existing events and across a broad range of event types such as business events, cultural, sport and arts events. If an event can show that it will attract substantial out-of-region visitation, we want to see your EOI.

How do I showcase domestic visitation?

For a new event, you will need to provide a robust marketing plan that targets visitors from drive and fly markets. For existing events, you will (hopefully) have data of your visitation to previous events. However, this fund is for additional visitation. Therefore, we will be seeking details on how you intend to attract more visitors – additional marketing activity, additional event components or duration.



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I don't have event dates or venues locked in? Can I apply?

Yes, you can express your interest, however you will need your event details to be locked in prior to funding allocation. If you are shortlisted, you will need these details for that part of the process.

Can I apply for funding for my event that has already commenced? Or what event period is applicable?

The 2021 EOI application period closes Friday 12 March 2021. No late applications will be accepted. Your event should not commence prior to 1 July 2021 (unless otherwise confirmed by the Panel).

I need an answer before Expression of Interest closes, can you speed up my application?

Sorry, no; this is a contestable fund, and as such, all EOI's will be assessed and compared following close date of Friday 12 March 2021 and will be shortlisted by end of March 2021. Shortlisted applicants will be required to present to the Panel 12 -14 April 2021 (a time slot will be allocated).

This is a new event; how do I show feasibility?

The panel will be looking for evidence of a well-considered business plan or feasibility study that clearly shows you have considered time, location, competitive events; and that the event is viable. The panel will also be assessing your delivery record of previous events.

My event is on a Statutory Holiday, can I apply?

In most cases, our regions enjoy strong visitation during Statutory Holidays; therefore, events may not be suitable for Stat holiday periods in our regions. However, this will depend on the location of the event.

How do I show that logistics are in place for my event?

We need to see evidence that gives assurance your event can be hosted in the region on the dates you have provided. Is your venue available? What other events are being hosted at that time? Is accommodation available in the region at that time? Are logistic suppliers available? A well-considered event plan will showcase this information.

We have lower levels of commercial accommodation available at the moment due to MIQ and MSD contracts. How can we host an event without appropriate levels of accommodation?

This is a challenging time for all in the events sector with accommodation being utilised for MIQ and MSD purposes. All event managers/promoters are encouraged to consider accommodation provision as part of their event plan, regardless of REF fund or not. The REF fund is a 4-year fund, with two application periods (2021 & 2022). We expect that the MIQ/MSD contracts will not be in place for the full duration of the REF period.

The Event Sector Voluntary Code is VOLUNTARY – do I need to comply?

Yes, you do. Please ensure you have read and are fully aware of the [Event Sector Voluntary Code](#).

Do I need to show resource consent and that I meet all regulations/laws?

Yes please. You need to show that the venue you are utilising has appropriate resource consent in place, or if you are using a 'green field' location, that you have obtained (or in the process of obtaining) appropriate resource consent from the local council.

We would like to hear a little about your compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

If my event doesn't fall under the common themes (water related events, cultural/heritage, culinary/food/brews, agriculture/equine, adventure, conservation, music, age-group related sport events, and high-performance sport), can I still apply for funding?

Yes, your event may still be considered for funding as these are priority themes only and all EOI applications will be considered.

How many years of funding can I apply for?

There will be two application periods (2021 and 2022) for events to apply for a maximum of THREE years of funding. If not over-subscribed, or funds remain available into the third/fourth years, additional application period may be required.

Funding can be offered as 1-3 years (one-off grant or diminishing seed funding).



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My event is only feasible with REF funding.

Do not expend REF funds to fully all of your expenses. We will need to see the event will be sustainable after the term of the REF availability. Applications that show ongoing sustainability and varied income/revenue streams are likely to be better received.

The event budget template has an income line for “Government Investment”, what is this?

If you receive funding or a grant from central government (ie: Major Event fund, Domestic Event fund, art and culture grants) please include it in this line. You do not need to include this REF application amount in the budget template as this is, of course, not yet confirmed for your event.

When will I know the result of my Expression of Interest application?

Assessments will be completed by mid-end March and applicants will then be advised if shortlisted or unsuccessful.

My information is confidential, how will you protect my confidentiality and intellectual property?

The Panel have agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with regards to administering this fund. This MOU requires Panel members maintain privacy and confidentiality of the event information shared during the EOI application process:

- EOI applications are not to be discussed externally;
- Information about events is not to be shared (other than as required to be notified to MBIE as per Section 6 Terms and Conditions of Event Funding of the Funding Application Guidelines 2021);
- The event owner’s intellectual property is respected and protected.

Who is on the Event Investment Panel and what is their role?

Our panel representatives assessing Expressions of Interest are (representatives from Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and local council from each of the regions):

Organisation	Name	Position
Hamilton & Waikato Tourism	Nicola Greenwell	Development Manager
Hamilton City Council	Chad Hooker	Director of Operations & Major Events
Destination Rotorua	Graham Brownrigg	Head of Visitor Services
Rotorua District Council	Jason Cameron	Event Attraction & Development Manager
Destination Great Lake Taupo	Amanda West	Industry Liaison & Partnerships Manager
Taupo District Council	Steve Giles	District Events Manager
Visit Ruapehu	Jo Kennedy	General Manager
Ruapehu District Council	Warren Furner	Tourism Development Manager

The panel provide a mix of event and venue management expertise and regional visitor attraction.

What do the Panel do?

The panel’s responsibilities include the planning and delivery of the Regional Investment Plan; and to collaborate and make decisions on funding distribution. Hamilton & Waikato is the Lead Entity on behalf of the Panel and is responsible for the coordination of the Panel; the development and management of the Regional Investment Plan; managing the relationship between the four regions and MBIE; and to provide administrative duties to facilitate the management of the Thermal Explorer Highway Regional Events Fund (REF).

The Panel will utilise their background, skills/experience, events and tourism industry knowledge and contacts to assess and validate the application and information contained within.

There is a conflict of interest with one of the panel members assessing/viewing my event/EOI, what should I do?

The above-mentioned MOU that the panel have signed, requires panel members to identify when/if there is a conflict of interest with discussing an event application. That panel member will stand down from discussing that event, and this will be noted on our administrative records of that events assessment.

If there is an issue for you with one of the panel members assessing your event (family, friend, involved in my event, involved in a competing event), please raise this in your EOI. That panel member will stand down from discussing your application. This will be noted on our administrative records of your event assessment.

If you have specific concerns, we are happy to discuss – please email thermexref@waikatonz.com in the first instance.



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What will not be funded?

There are some events that will not be funded. Details of this can be found on page 7 of the Guidelines.

What timelines do I need to be aware of?

The timelines are all provided on page 10 of the Guidelines. Please ensure you meet these timelines; we will not be accepting any applications after the closing time.

What event planning documentation should I have available or updated? What information is required to complete in the EOI application?

This is outlined on page 10-12 of the Guidelines. Information will be contained in your business plan, event budget, marketing plan, feasibility study, Health & Safety plan, waste management plan.

How will my EOI be evaluated?

The evaluation of applications will be based on an evaluation criteria:

- an initial assessment upon receipt of Expression of Interest application followed by;
- review and recommendations from the Panel; and
- a final evaluation for shortlisted applications during and following their presentation.

How will the panel assess my Expression of Interest?

The Panel will assess applications for event funding as per the application and assessment process and successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive an official notification from Hamilton & Waikato Tourism (Lead Entity) before any announcements are made. All funding decisions made by the Panel are full and final.

What will I need to prepare for my presentation if I am shortlisted?

You will be sent presentation guidelines and advice on additional supporting documentation required should you be shortlisted. Details are provided in the Guidelines document.

Will there be funding agreements?

Yes, once funding decisions are finalised, agreements will be established. Funding may be divided between pre- and post-delivery of the event, dependent on meeting contracted KPIs (will be indicated in your approval letter).

Will funding of my event be publicly available?

We are required to inform MBIE of events funded through the Thermal Explorer REF contestable fund. As this is central government funding, MBIE are likely to list your event on their website. We expect this to be event name, region, and dates. We are not sure, as yet, whether MBIE will list funding amounts; however this information would be made available through any Official Information Act requests.

What measurement and reporting requirements will there be if my funding application is successful?

We are required to provide event measurement to MBIE, as such, you will be required to provide information for this event measurement. This will be in line with MBIE's chosen methodology and reporting requirements. All funded events will have an event measurement KPI included in their funding agreement which outlines the key information you will be required to collect, measure and report on. The Panel will then collate and prepare reports from all funded events and present to MBIE as per reporting requirements.

Will the REF be available to pay for Economic Impact Study of existing events?

At this stage, we do not expect to be providing funding for economic impact studies – this fund is to activate visitation. However, if we have funds available after the second round of applications, we may consider utilising some for this activity in order to build capability within the regions. This is not confirmed at this stage.

Is there financial support for feasibility studies (for new events) or for event strategic planning (for existing events)?

We expect events to apply who have already conducted their own feasibility or have their event strategy in place – this will form part of the evaluation of the sustainability of the event. It is important that an event manager/owner/developer has already invested in their own event sustainability. However, the panel will look at including a strategy session within the capability building workshop schedules.

Contact details

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