

CO-DESIGNING A RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR IMPACT

Doing science differently

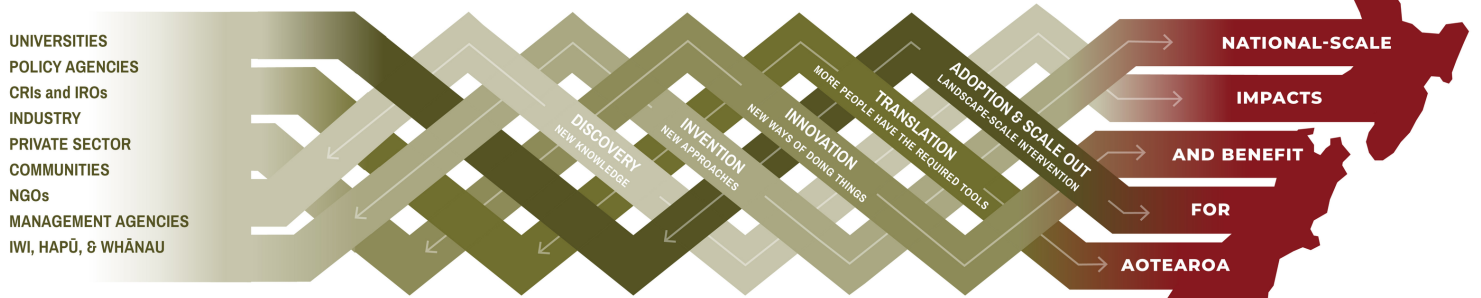
BioHeritage's mission is to reverse the decline of New Zealand's biological heritage, through a national partnership to deliver a step change in research innovation, globally leading technologies, and community and sector action.

Collective input from many participants with diverse knowledge systems is necessary to achieve such a large mission so in 2019, BioHeritage convened 11 scoping groups of 8 to 10 people including Māori partners, researchers, stakeholders, and end-users from a diverse range of organisations to co-design a set of goals and impact pathways for a nationwide strategy of research in the biodiversity and biosecurity sectors.

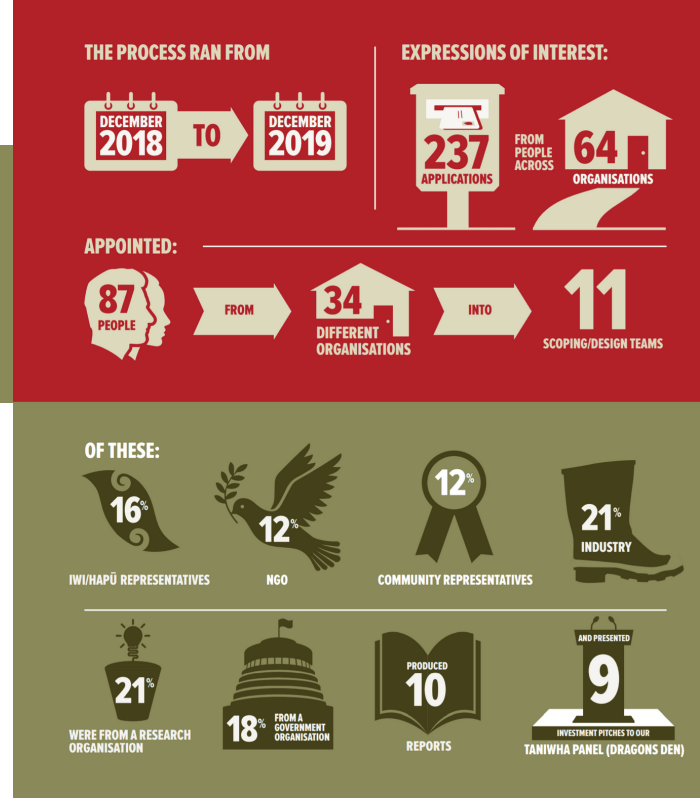
An EOI process was held to select participants with 237 applications received from 64 organisations. People took part as individuals, not representing organisations, and brought input from their wider networks. We paid people for their time so they could devote attention, and recognised that this sort of input doesn't come for free.

RESEARCH

An independent evaluation of the co-design process was conducted in 2019-2020 to foster reflection and learning about co-design within and beyond the BioHeritage. The evaluation was based on process observations and 25 structured interviews with BioHeritage leaders and process participants. The researchers applied co-production quality assessment principles to identify critical factors in fostering collaboration between mātauranga Maori and other science knowledge systems and delivery of impact-focused research.



The innovation pathway: from generation of new ideas, to achievement of impacts, recognising diversity of contributions from a range of individuals and organisations. BioHeritage funded work, and brought together people together, at various stages along the pathway.



AT A GLANCE

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What happens when a research funder gets serious about impact? They might not actually fund a lot of research. New evaluation of a @MBIEsci programme in New Zealand shows the rest of the world how to fund genuinely co-productive, impactful research tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.108...

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This article highlights the role of BHNSC's values to facilitate collaboration between mātauranga Māori and Western #scientific knowledge systems, ultimately to #impactful biodiversity and biosecurity #research.

06 Sep 2023

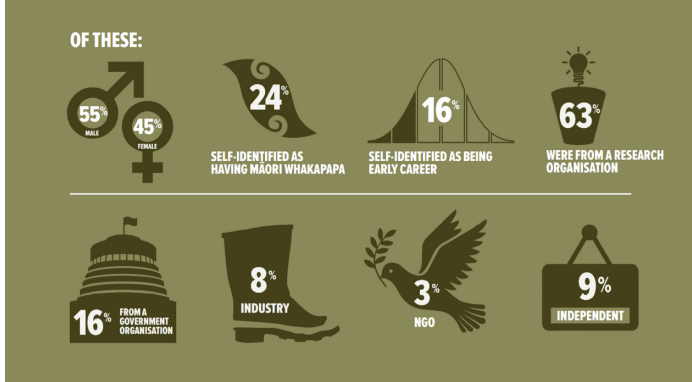
OUTCOMES/ IMPACTS

Diversity within the scoping groups was high with 87 people from 34 different organisations selected to participate in design of seven strategic outcomes. Participants reported that they found the working environment to be inclusive, safe, and equitable and that the research programmes developed reflected the diversity in the scoping groups:

“I thought it was fantastic. Our group was a really good mix from early career researchers to old grey heads... The cultural mix as well, the mix of science and end users. I thought if you were to encapsulate a cross section of the research world in just six or eight people, I thought the [BioHeritage] did really well.”
(Researcher evaluation participant)

The independent evaluation identified that BioHeritage’s values* were central to its success in designing a diverse, transparent and inclusive research programme which supported collaboration between different knowledge systems and disciplines. The values were enacted in the co-design process. For example, co-leadership positions were taken up by Māori participants and agreements were put in place to support safe sharing of ideas and concepts, and data and information, including mātauranga Māori.

That [co-everything] allowed for relationship building, and for me, that’s the key underpinning thing that makes the difference, building that relationship, building that trust and sharing the learning as a part of that, so the process of co-everything, building relationships and the values [worked well].
(Māori evaluation participant).



IMPLICATIONS & POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS

BioHeritage has shared all documentation that underpinned the scoping and subsequent contracting of research including: terms of reference for scoping group participants; non-disclosure agreements; a code of conduct; policies on equity, diversity, access, and inclusion; and other guidance documents on how to conduct culturally safe research with Māori.

These instruments protected the ideas and intellectual property of all participants and set the standard for respectful authentic participation and knowledge exchange. These principles and approaches have been picked up by scoping group participants and used in their own organisations to design inclusive, impact-focussed research programmes.

FIND OUT MORE

Duncan R. & Robson-Williams M. (2023) Co-designing a research programme for impact: lessons learned from practice by Aotearoa New Zealand’s Biological Heritage National Science Challenge. *New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences*, DOI: [10.1080/1177083X.2023.2227675](https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2023.2227675)

*BioHeritage Values: <https://bioheritage.nz/about-us/our-values>

