

New research investment announced

The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology today announced almost \$8 million of new research funding in projects with potential to deliver long term benefits to improving New Zealand's knowledge base and productivity.

Successful bids for the government investment came from Environment Waikato, AgResearch Ltd and Motu Economic and Public Policy Research Trust.

Investment totaling \$4.6 million to AgResearch Ltd is for research to help protect the future of New Zealand's agricultural and forestry sectors by developing a tool to assess and predict environmental impacts of new biotechnologies. It will enable better decision making based on scientific evaluation and better informed public debate. The research is a collaboration with other crown research institutes, HortResearch and the Institute of Environmental Research (ESR).

Environment Waikato is developing a new approach that will support long term planning for local and regional authorities. This project receives \$400,000 annually for the next four years. Environment Waikato leads a team that includes a number of crown research institutes and universities.

Similar funding, totaling \$1.6 million over four years is being invested in Motu Economic and Public Policy Research Trust, focused on infrastructure development in New Zealand. The Motu programme seeks to assess the benefits of different types of infrastructure investment, such as road, rail, irrigation, technology, social services and processing. This will allow funding to be directed into projects with the highest pay-off for New Zealanders.

"The projects involved are each closely aligned with the Government's objectives of investing in research and development that extends knowledge and capability. These projects represent exciting, robust work, focused on issues of importance to New Zealand," says Foundation Chief Executive Murray Bain.

An independent advisory panel, comprising scientists and researchers alongside policy and regulatory practitioners, assessed the scientific quality and potential returns to New Zealanders of the applications and gave advice to the Foundation.

"The experience of the advisory panel assessing projects was well matched to the broad scope of competing projects. Their diverse expertise and experience mean we are confident that we have chosen the best investments for New Zealand," says Mr Bain.

Further Information:

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Note to Editors

About the Foundation:

The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology invests over \$460 million a year on behalf of the New Zealand Government, in innovation and fostering the creation of new knowledge through a range of funds and schemes. These investments are made to enhance the wealth and well being of New Zealanders.

To find out more about Foundation investments visit:

www.frst.govt.nz