



31 March 2025

s9(2)(a)

Mālō e lelei s9(2)(a)

RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST (REF: DOIA034-2024/25)

On 3 March 2025, you contacted the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information regarding the Tauola Business Fund application and selection process. I have outlined your specific request and my response below.

1. Decision making processes regarding funding application outcome.

All applications are required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- An ability to create employment opportunities for Pacific peoples
- A commitment to improving Pacific participation in the labour market
- An ability to increase productivity and scale up
- Job creation within six months of receiving funding
- Build capacity and capability to participate in economic development projects
- Good health and safety practices

High value applicants were also required to provide the following financial documents:

- Balance Sheet Statement for two consecutive periods: 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 and 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024
- Profit and Loss Statement for two consecutive periods: 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 and 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024
- Cashflow Statement

All applications underwent a structured, multi-stage assessment to ensure alignment with the Fund's objectives. Businesses were evaluated at each stage based on economic potential, job creation impact, and business maturity, demonstrating key elements such as financial management, risk strategy, and marketing capability.

Applicants also had to meet strict quantitative benchmarks to ensure financial viability and scalability. Those that successfully passed all stages were then reviewed by an independent evaluation panel, including external experts, ensuring fairness, transparency, and strategic alignment.

Auckland

9 Ronwood Ave, Manukau
PO Box 97005,
South Auckland Mail Centre 2240
P: 09 265 3200

Wellington National Office

Level 2, 44 The Terrace
Wellington, 6011
PO Box 833, Wellington 6143
P: 04 473 4493

Christchurch

Level 1, BNZ Centre
120 Hereford St
Private Bag 4741,
Christchurch 8011

2. How are conflict of interest managed?

The Ministry requires all personnel (internal and external) involved in the assessment of applications for funding to complete and sign the Ministry's conflict of interest and confidential agreement form at the commencement of the process and further again once all participants are confirmed by the Ministry.

Where a potential or perceived conflict of interest is disclosed, a conflict-of-interest management plan is agreed to manage the declared conflict of interest, considering the effect on the persons role and responsibilities in the application/ funding activity, as well as the risks to the process and the Ministry's reputation.

All conflict management plans are managed by Ministry staff not directly involved with the application process. For the Tauola Business Fund where conflicts of interest were disclosed, those who made those declarations removed themselves from the process.

3. What company or organisation was successful within the same funding pool?

We are in the process of contract negotiations and therefore cannot release this information at this time. The Ministry however will publish all successful applicants to our website. A Ministry staff member can be arranged to contact you once this information is publicly available.

Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information requested will soon be publicly available.

4. How was s9(2)(a) funding application assessed against other company/organisations within the same funding pool?

Your funding application was assessed against the eligibility criteria and process which I have outlined in my response to your first question.

5. What funding applications were compared against s9(2)(a) ?

I am refusing access to any personal information the Ministry holds relating to other funding applications, under section 50(a) of the Privacy Act as the information is evaluative material and the disclosure of that information would breach an express or implied promise.

6. What external/other information was considered if any, such as that by the Pacific Business Village advisors?

As previously mentioned, all applications were assessed through a structured, multi-stage process aligned with the Fund's purpose and eligibility criteria. While no additional weighting was given to businesses engaged with Pacific Business Village advisors, external information, such as data from the New Zealand Companies Register, was used to verify business status. Every application underwent rigorous due diligence, including financial and business maturity assessments, ensuring transparency, fairness, and alignment with the Fund's strategic objectives.

In line with standard OIA practice, the Ministry proactively publishes some of its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter may be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you or your organisation.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: oia_requests@mpp.govt.nz.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Mālō 'aupito

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Tu'amoheloa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Tu'amoheloa

Deputy Secretary, Commissioning and Partnerships