



Request to the WRS Committee

To: WRS Committee
From: Grow Wellington
Subject: **Application for NZTE Regional Strategy Fund: to develop the Centres of Excellence concept**

Introduction

A key part of the Wellington Regional Strategy is the development of Centres of Excellence (CoEs).

The Wellington Centres of Excellence are envisioned to be national industries that are centred in Wellington. The objective is to develop the infrastructure to create sustainable globally recognised industries.

In order to achieve the WRS goal there will need to be considerable investment in projects, this is beyond the scope of the WRS funding hence it will require central government investment.

The CoE concept has been developed by Grow Wellington in 2008 and a strategy document has been presented followed by a discussion held with central government regarding their commitment to CoEs.

Central Government Response

The Government's economic transformation agenda is driven by MED with operational investment via the trilateral group made up of NZ Trade and Enterprises (NZTE), Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FRST).

The response from the trilateral group is

From a Trilateral perspective the highlights of this proposal are:

- Clear evidence of consultation and some advisors of considerable standing
- Demonstration of Wellington capability strengths and using these as a base to develop your strategy
- Some great ideas for specific projects to make the CoE tangible and focused on specific outcomes
- Clear evidence of passion and enthusiasm from Grow Wellington to make this happen

Next Steps

We suggest that the proposal needs to be taken from the form of a strategy document (as presented to us) and turned into a commercial feasibility study before Trilateral could assess the potential viability of the CoE or projects.

We have discussed this with MED, and are in agreement that NZTE could facilitate the development of an application to the Regional Strategy Fund (RSF) in 2008-09. This funding (up to \$375,000) could be used to develop the essential elements of this strategy in order to distil the strategy into a business case for investment consideration.

Once a business case has been developed, we would present this to the Chairs and Chief Executives at the Trilateral Forum to determine their interest in proceeding.

We suggest preparing an application as soon as possible so that the business case can be developed between September and December 2008. This would mean that should this be warranted, any further investment (beyond the RSF) could happen in the 2009 calendar year.

Use of Fund

The \$375,000 will be used to fund:

- Establishing a range of key CoE projects which will draw stakeholders together around the CoEs.
- Communication with governance, business and community stakeholders on the development programmes for each CoE.
- Supporting the governance development programme as appropriate for each CoE.
- Supporting the engagement of international advisory panels to monitor progress against research and business development goals.

WRS Approval

The Regional Strategy Fund is administered by NZTE and is available to each of the fourteen regions in New Zealand. The application requires sign off from the region's strategy group which in the case of the Wellington region is the WRS Committee.

The Regional Strategy Fund will be made available to develop the CoE concept further in line with central government requests.

The request is for the WRS Committee to **approve** that Grow Wellington can present a proposal to NZTE for a \$375,000 grant to develop the CoE concept further. The intended result will be a proposal which will be successful in obtaining further central government investment for the Wellington region.