

NPM Māori Data Sovereignty Guidance

This guidance document helps researchers address Māori data sovereignty (MDSov) considerations when applying for a Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Matakiteanga Research Grant.

MDSov refers to the inherent rights and interests that Māori have in relation to the collection, ownership and application of Māori data. Māori data encompasses digital or digitisable data, information or knowledge that is about, from or connected to Māori. Māori data is a taonga.¹

Upholding MDSov in research requires us to think critically about how we work with Māori data—as kaitiaki—throughout the entire research lifecycle, including after the project has formally concluded.

This means thinking about:

- Collection
- Analysis
- Storage (location)
- Storage (findability)
- Dissemination
- Use or reuse (secondary use)
- Return or destruction

There are many ways to give effect to MDSov in research. The most suitable approach for your proposed project will depend on a number of things including the communities you are working with, the types of data you plan to collect or access (e.g., if the data are collected and held by others), any restrictions related to the tapu nature of the data, and existing institutional responsibilities.

There are numerous resources on MDSov and Māori data governance that are open access (see the list at the end of this document). To help you get started, we have provided some prompts to guide your thinking around MDSov as it relates to your proposal. You do not need to have an answer to all these questions—they are just a guide.

1. What does MDSov look like in your community or field of research?

- Does the community you are working with have its own MDSov plan or aspirations?
- Are there frameworks, models or case studies from your field that apply to your research?

2. What are your institution's MDSov commitments?

- What policies, guidelines or statements does your host institution have?
- Consider how your institution's ethics processes, research data management plans², and storage infrastructure either support or constrain MDSov in practice.

3. At what points in your research will MDSov be actively upheld?

- Applying for ethics
- Storing the data (storage in Aotearoa is strongly preferred)
- Labelling the data
- Publication of research

¹ Kukutai, T., et al. (2023). *Māori data governance model*. Te Kāhui Raraunga.

² For an excellent example of MDSov research data management guidance, see Timutimu, L. (2026).

- Intellectual Property (IP) or Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) negotiations

4. How will you protect the mana and mauri of the research data?

- What can you put in place to ensure that any Māori data generated from your project is collected, stored, labelled, analysed, shared, and/or returned in ways that reflect your kaitiaki responsibilities?
- If your institution generally requires data involving 'human subjects' to be destroyed after a specific duration, what MDSov options might be available?

List of resources

- Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance (2025). *Preliminary recommendations guidelines for the governance of Indigenous data in scholarly publishing*. * For reference only, do not cite. <https://indigenoustatalab.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Preliminary-Recommendations-Guidelines-for-the-Governance-of-Indigenous-Data-in-Scholarly-Publishing-AGU25.pdf>
- Kukutai, T., Campbell-Kamariera, K., Mead, A., Mikaere, K., Moses, C., Whitehead, J., & Cormack, D. (2023). *Māori data governance model*. Te Kāhui Raraunga. <https://www.kahuiraraunga.io/maoridatagovernance>
- Maher, B., Walter, M., Small-Rodriguez, D., Clark, V., Hohaia, H., Kukutai, T., Prehn, J., Ellenwood, C., Cormack, C., Lucas-Jones, P., Tuffery Huria, L., Selwyn, K., & Baltus, B. (2024). *Indigenous data sovereignty masterclass workbook*. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga.
- Prehn, J., et al. (2023). *Indigenous data governance and universities communiqué*. Global Indigenous Data Alliance. doi: 10.6084/m9.figshare.24201585. <https://www.gida-global.org/gidacommunique>
- Sterling, R., et al. (2023). *The research data landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand: A report undertaken in partnership with the Aotearoa New Zealand Committee on Data in Research*. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. <https://doi.org/10.15663/UoW.RDLA.DEC2023>.
- Te Mana Raraunga (2018). *Māori data sovereignty principles*. Te Mana Raraunga, available at https://www.otago.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/321044/tmr-maori-data-sovereignty-principles-october-2018-832194.pdf
- Timutimu, L. (2026). Data sovereignty: Te ara raraunga | Data Lifecycle. Information about Māori, Pacific and Indigenous data sovereignty. University of Waikato. <https://libraryguides.waikato.ac.nz/DataSov/lifecycleMDS>

How to cite this document

West, K. & Kukutai, T. (2026). *Māori data sovereignty guidance for Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Matakiteanga Research Grant*. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. <https://maramatanga.ac.nz/funding-opportunity/matakiteanga-research-round>.