vinetur

Bragato Research Institute Launches NZ$300,000 Funding Round for Wine Sector Innovation

New Zealand researchers and industry partners invited to propose projects targeting sustainability, efficiency, and resilience in viticulture and winemaking.

Monday, March 23, 2026



The Bragato Research Institute in New Zealand has opened its 2026 contestable funding round, inviting researchers and industry partners to submit proposals for projects that will benefit the country’s wine sector. The call for proposals was published

on March 4 and will remain open until March 25. The total funding pool is approximately NZ$300,000, which will be distributed among several projects. Funding is sourced from the New Zealand Winegrowers' levy.

This year's funding round focuses on research aligned with seven priority outcomes identified by the industry. These include improving the circularity of grape and wine production, advancing vineyard efficiency and agritech adoption, developing innovative wine products, reducing chemical inputs through biological control solutions, improving vine productivity and grape quality, enhancing plant genetic resilience against environmental challenges, and improving soil health while protecting water quality and supply.

The Bragato Research Institute encourages proposals that can be completed within one to two years and are likely to provide short-term benefits to the wine industry. Projects may be either applied or exploratory in nature. The institute anticipates supporting small pilot projects, proof-of-concept trials, or seed funding initiatives that could lead to larger research programs if successful. Collaborative projects involving multiple organizations are also encouraged.

Eligible applicants include researchers from universities, public research organizations, independent consultants, technical staff from viticulture or winery teams, and growers. Each project must have a designated BRI liaison who will manage the project. Applicants are advised to contact the BRI team early in the process for feedback and support.

The application process is divided into two phases. In the first phase, applicants submit a high-level proposal focusing on strategic alignment with industry priorities, scientific merit, and expected research outcomes. These initial proposals will be reviewed by the BRI Leadership Team to create a shortlist. In the second phase, shortlisted applicants will present their proposals to the Research & Innovation Committee on April 29. This stage includes a Q&A session that can be attended in person or online.

Following this review, successful applicants will be asked for more detailed information about project deliverables, intellectual property considerations, and phased budgets. The final funding decisions will be made at the BRI Board meeting on June 9. Successful

applicants will receive feedback on June 10, while those not selected will receive feedback by the end of June.

Funding for approved projects will be available starting July 1. The Bragato Research Institute encourages anyone interested in submitting a proposal or discussing a potential project idea to contact them at info@bri.co.nz. Applications must be submitted through the official portal; hard copy forms are available for drafting but not for final submission.

The initiative aims to strengthen New Zealand’s viticulture and winemaking capabilities by supporting high-quality research that addresses key challenges facing the industry today.