



# Expression of Interest

## Information pack

2015



# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from the TLRI Project Leader</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TLRI project information</b>	<b>5</b>
Partnerships between researchers and practitioners	5
Types of projects and levels of funding	5
Two-stage selection process	6
Contractual arrangements	6
<b>Management and co-ordination of the TLRI</b>	<b>8</b>
Advisory Board	8
NZCER's co-ordination role	8
Eligibility of NZCER for funding	8
Selection process	8
Appeals and complaints procedure	9
<b>Submitting an Expression of Interest</b>	<b>10</b>
Key dates	10
Submitting your proposal	10
<b>Expression of Interest content guidelines</b>	<b>11</b>
Format and presentation of an Expression of Interest	11
<b>Criteria for selection</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Expression of Interest cover sheet (2015)</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.





## Letter from the TLRI Project Leader

2 March 2015

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your interest in the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative: Nāu I Whatu Te Kākahu, He Tāniko Taku.

The Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) seeks to support research that will lead to an improvement in outcomes for learners. Partnerships between researchers and practitioners are central to the TLRI. The fund is open to proposals from all education and training agencies, including the early childhood, school, and post-school sectors.

The TLRI was established by the government in 2003 and 125 projects have been funded to date. The funding for the 2015 round is \$1,555,556 (excluding GST).

This information pack sets out the requirements for Expressions of Interest and the criteria for selection. We encourage you to read it and consider submitting an Expression of Interest. Enquiries about the TLRI and/or the Expression of Interest process should be directed to [tlri@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:tlri@nzcer.org.nz), or Jo MacDonald on (04) 802 1459. Further information about the TLRI can be found on the TLRI website: [www.tlri.org.nz](http://www.tlri.org.nz)

There is a two-stage process for submitting research proposals. Stage 1 requires an Expression of Interest. Shortlisted applicants from Stage 1 will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Stage 2 requires a Full Proposal.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is 5pm on Thursday 7 May 2015. Those shortlisted at Stage 1 will be notified by Friday 26 June 2015 and will be invited to submit a Full Proposal by 5pm Thursday 20 August 2015.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Jo MacDonald**  
TLRI Project Leader



# Overview

**The desired outcome of the initiative is to support research which will lead to significant improvement in outcomes for learners.**

The Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) aims to:

- build a cumulative body of knowledge linking teaching and learning
- enhance the links between educational research and teaching practices—and researchers and teachers—across early childhood, school, and tertiary sectors
- grow research capability and capacity in the areas of teaching and learning.

The growth of research capability and capacity is a reciprocal process that:

- builds the capability of researchers to undertake quality research through engaging in high-quality research and working with other researchers with varied levels of experience
- enables teachers to gain expertise in systematic enquiry, as they engage as active members of a research team
- builds the capability of teachers to improve their teaching practice by learning from the findings of research
- deepens researchers' understanding of teaching and learning by engaging with teachers.

## TLRI PRINCIPLES

**The TLRI's research projects and related activities will be guided by five principles.**

### Principle One

The research projects within the TLRI will address themes of strategic importance to education in New Zealand.

### Principle Two

The TLRI research projects will build upon New Zealand-based research evidence, draw on related international research, and may be forward looking.

## PROJECT PRIORITIES

**The projects will have strategic value, research value, and practice value.**

### Strategic value *ngā hua rautaki*

The projects must align with current and future priorities for teaching and learning within and across the early childhood, school, and tertiary sectors. Of special interest is a focus on deepening our understanding about how we might address current inequities in educational outcomes and on creating the teaching and learning processes that will support success for all types of learners in the 21st century. Projects can focus on teaching and learning in informal settings as well as in early childhood centres, schools, and tertiary institutions.

The proposed research needs to:

- *Consolidate and build knowledge.* The questions must align with the most vital research areas in each of the education sectors. Proposals should acknowledge existing knowledge on teaching and learning and research paradigms and methodologies, and demonstrate how the research can build on the knowledge base. Secondary analysis of existing datasets is encouraged as a component of a TLRI project.
- *Identify and address gaps in our knowledge.* Questions need to be posed that will increase our knowledge and understanding about key educational issues within New Zealand. Proposals need to show how new knowledge about teaching and learning would be created to complement, and address gaps in, existing knowledge.

The proposed research may also be *forward looking* and *innovative*. It may focus on the development of new constructs and concepts in teaching and learning and on new research paradigms and/or methodologies. It may also focus on innovative policy and practice.

### Principle Three

The TLRI research projects will be designed to enable substantive and robust findings.

### Research value ngā hua rangahau

The projects must be designed in ways that contribute to the TLRI aims of building knowledge and developing research capability in the area of teaching and learning. The projects also need to be designed as partnerships where the collective knowledge of researchers and practitioners is applied to problems in practice.

### Principle Four

The research projects within the TLRI will be undertaken as a partnership between researchers and practitioners.

The proposed research needs to:

- pose a research question (or questions) that advances learning in the field and contributes to what is already known
- clearly describe data collection methods which follow a logical line from the questions themselves
- create a data-analysis plan that gives an idea of how the data will be managed and analysed and how these data will then answer the research question(s)
- detail the processes for ethics and quality assurance
- show consideration of the context of practice in which the research will be conducted and give careful thought to the relationships and roles within the project team and issues such as knowledge, ownership, power, and decision making
- involve a team of researchers and practitioners that is led either by an experienced researcher or an experienced practitioner. If the latter, the team needs an experienced researcher acting as an adviser
- provide opportunities for developing the expertise of less experienced researchers.

### Principle Five

The TLRI research projects will recognise the central role of teachers and students in learning, and the importance of the work being useful in practice.

### Practice value ngā hua ritenga

The projects need to contribute to improving practice and outcomes for learners. Projects must give priority to dissemination strategies that maximise opportunities for critique and dialogue with the teacher and researcher communities, and that demonstrate their practical application, especially with regard to their potential to impact on learning.

The proposed research needs to show the:

- *Likely impact on practice.* It should demonstrate how the research might inform current and future practice. This could occur as part of the research process itself as well as through dissemination and application of the findings. Dissemination strategies need to be designed to share findings with the community of interest and engage practitioners with research-informed practices that are known to have a positive influence on learning.
- *Impact on learning.* The proposal must demonstrate potential for practical application and indicate how it could lead to improvements in outcomes for learners.

# TLRI project information

## Partnerships between researchers and practitioners

To be eligible for the fund, proposals need to come from partnerships involving education and training practitioners and researchers. Practitioners may include, but are not limited to: teachers in kindergartens, early childhood centres, kōhanga reo, and Pasifika language nests; teachers in kura, primary, intermediate, and secondary schools; and lecturers, tutors, and trainers working in post-school settings such as universities, wānanga, polytechnics, private training establishments (PTEs), industry training organisations (ITOs), and workplace settings.

The TLRI is open to researchers working in organisations (e.g., tertiary institutions) or working independently. However, the TLRI will not enter into contracts with individuals, requiring that contracts be with incorporated societies or similar legal entities. Staff members of the Ministry of Education or other government departments are not eligible to apply.

## Types of projects and levels of funding

There are two types of research project: **Type I** and **Type II**. The requirements for Expressions of Interest and the selection criteria are slightly different for each type. These are detailed in the notes included in the relevant sections.

### **Type I** Research projects: *Building knowledge about teaching and learning*

There are two categories of Type I project—**A** and **B**.

**Category A** are large-scale projects of **three years**. Each of the major projects in 2015 will be eligible for up to \$450,000 GST exclusive, with a maximum of \$150,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

**Category B** are projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$200,000 GST exclusive will be granted for any one project, with no more than \$100,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

These research projects need to explicitly address the TLRI aims: to build cumulative knowledge about teaching and learning, and to build research capability. They are to build knowledge by clearly drawing on existing evidence and by taking account of learning from completed TLRI projects and other relevant New Zealand-based research initiatives. To assist project teams to select a fruitful area for investigation, refer to *TLRI 2015: Building knowledge about teaching and learning*, included as an appendix to this package.

Type I research projects need a very clear research design with specific questions that come from an exploration grounded in the literature. They are to be led or co-led by an experienced principal investigator and designed in a way that explicitly offers opportunities for emerging researchers to develop their skills (so that in time they might develop the expertise required of a principal investigator).

Researcher–practitioner partnerships should be integral to the design of the project. The partnership, however, is to guide the research question(s) but not drive the project. There needs to be a focus on the individuals in the team using their *collective* expertise, and on all team members having the opportunity to learn from each other, rather than on explicitly developing the research skills of the practitioner members of the project team. In this partnership, practitioners might take the role of advisory board, data gatherers, informants, etc. and not necessarily be integral to *all* aspects of the thinking inside the partnership.

## **Type II Research projects: Exploratory studies**

Type II projects are smaller scale projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$130,000 GST exclusive will be granted for any one project, with no more than \$65,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

These studies are to be more innovative, with both practice and research valued together. Drawing on the idea that imagining new possibilities requires a team with diverse expertise and interests—so expanding the thinking and solution space—the projects are to focus on questions where both researchers and practitioners are exploring new ideas together as “thought partners”, possibly examining uncharted territory. Projects are to be constructed in a way that explicitly draws on the questions of the whole project team and focused not on practitioners themselves (as this makes them the subject), but on emerging issues in curriculum, on student learning and/or student voice, or any other important area that researchers and practitioners can examine *together*. It is expected that these projects will mostly be in areas where there is much less research known, perhaps where innovative research designs or topics might be central.

## **Two-stage selection process**

There is a two-stage process for submitting proposals. Stage 1 is an Expression of Interest proposal and Stage 2 is a Full Proposal. Expression of Interest proposals are now being sought and must be submitted by **5pm, Thursday 7 May 2015**.

The purpose of requesting Expressions of Interest is to establish a shortlist of applicants who will be invited to submit Full Proposals. At the Full Proposal stage, applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is a partnership agreement in place between researchers and practitioners. The two-stage process provides time for such agreements to be established.

There is no limit on the number of Expression of Interest proposals that can be submitted by individuals or organisations. At any one time a person can be named as principal investigator for only one project unless otherwise negotiated with the NZCER-based TLRI team.

## **Contractual arrangements**

A contract is signed between the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) acting as co-ordinators of the TLRI, and the principal investigator’s institution (the Contractor). NZCER will not enter into contracts with individuals, requiring that contracts be with incorporated societies or similar legal entities. The following conditions will apply to those who are successful at the Full Proposal stage:

- Funding beyond one year is conditional upon continued government funding of the TLRI and satisfactory performance in the first year of the project.
- The TLRI must be acknowledged as the funding source in any publications, presentations, or similar materials that result from the project.

## **Funding period**

Funding for the successful projects in 2015 will commence on 1 January 2016, subject to contracts being signed. It is expected that research projects will start from the date of commencement stated in the successful applicants’ contracts.

## Use of funds

The TLRI seeks to obtain the best value for its funds. This means that purchases of large-scale capital items, such as computers, will not be funded, nor will overseas travel. Depending on their purpose within the project, it may be possible for smaller items such as tablets to be funded.

## Reporting

All projects will be required to provide quarterly progress and financial reports. Specific requirements will be stipulated in the contract.

# Management and co-ordination of the TLRI

## Advisory Board

A TLRI Advisory Board, consisting of sector representatives, has been convened by the Ministry of Education. The Advisory Board provides strategic leadership to the TLRI and makes recommendations to the Minister of Education about research priorities.

## NZCER's co-ordination role

The Ministry of Education, on behalf of the Advisory Board, has contracted NZCER to co-ordinate and administer the fund. The role of the NZCER-based TLRI team is to:

- provide leadership and operational implementation
- build awareness of the TLRI and its research programmes and results
- implement quality-assurance policies and processes for the TLRI
- create opportunities for building research capability in teaching and learning for researchers and practitioners.

## Eligibility of NZCER for funding

NZCER has established a team to co-ordinate the implementation of the TLRI. NZCER staff members involved with any aspect of the selection or shortlisting process are not eligible to apply for funding from the TLRI or to be members of project teams applying for funding in that particular year. However, it has been agreed with the TLRI Advisory Board that NZCER staff not involved in shortlisting or selection will be eligible to put forward proposals for funding and/or to be members of collaborative teams applying for funding. They must adhere to the conflict of interest guidelines for programme co-ordination.

## Selection process

Expressions of Interest will be shortlisted by a selection panel using the criteria set out in the *Criteria for selection* section of this information pack. The selection panel comprises members of the NZCER-based TLRI team, including researchers from Te Wāhanga, the kaupapa Māori research unit within NZCER.

As part of the selection process, proposers may be contacted and asked to provide additional information or to discuss the proposal. The NZCER-based TLRI team reserves the right to recommend consultation and/or collaboration if the selection panel believes this will enhance the contribution of the proposed project to the overall aims of the TLRI.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Full Proposals will be assessed by a selection panel using the criteria set out in the *Criteria for selection* section of this information pack. The selection panel at this second stage comprises leading researchers external to NZCER who have expertise in research methodology and research into teaching and learning. It will also include researchers with expertise in rangahau Māori or kaupapa Māori research. Only those people who are not involved in submitting a bid themselves may undertake this role. The decisions made by the selectors at this stage are independent of the NZCER-based TLRI team.

At each stage (Expression of Interest and Full Proposal) the selection panel will make recommendations to the TLRI Advisory Board who make the final decisions about project funding.

Feedback will be provided to all applicants at each stage of the selection process. The process at each stage will be subject to independent audit.

## **Appeals and complaints procedure**

It is important that the New Zealand educational research community sees the administration and selection processes involved with the TLRI as sound, robust, fair, and transparent. NZCER has established procedures to minimise the likelihood of conflicts of interest or breaches of privacy during the handling and selection of the TLRI project proposals.

NZCER has also established an appeals and complaints procedure. The appeals procedure is for appeals against decisions taken in relation to shortlisting and funding. The complaints procedure can be invoked in situations where an organisation or individual has reason to believe that they have not been appropriately dealt with, or that NZCER has not acted properly in its role as co-ordinator.

Where an organisation or individual is aggrieved and believes grounds exist for an appeal or complaint, they should signal their intent in writing to the TLRI Advisory Board within 10 working days of receipt of the funding decision or of becoming aware of the problem. The Project Leader will provide contact details if required. Alternatively, an organisation or individual can approach the director of NZCER with their appeal/complaint. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, the aggrieved party should proceed with a written complaint. The Advisory Board will then appoint two members to deal with the appeal or complaint.

# Submitting an Expression of Interest

## Key dates

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Call for Expressions of Interest	Monday 2 March 2015
Closing date for Expressions of Interest	5pm, Thursday 7 May 2015
Notification of shortlisting decision	Friday 26 June 2015
Closing date for Full Proposals	5pm, Thursday 20 August 2015
Notification of funding decision	Tuesday 13 October 2015
TLRI funding commences for 2015 funding recipients	January 2016, or as in contract

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## Submitting your proposal

The closing date for receipt of submissions of Expression of Interest proposals is **5pm, Thursday 7 May 2015**. The hard copies should be couriered to arrive at NZCER by this time.

An electronic copy should be emailed to [tiri@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:tiri@nzcer.org.nz) and three unbound hard copies should be couriered to:

Teaching and Learning Research Initiative  
C/- NZCER  
Level 10, Education House  
178–182 Willis Street  
PO Box 3237  
WELLINGTON 6140

# Expression of Interest content guidelines

## Format and presentation of an Expression of Interest

Please follow the specified format and numbering system. It is acceptable to cross-reference information you feel you may be repeating. A completed cover sheet should be attached. Please use a typeface, point size, line spacing, and layout that are easy to read. Expressions of Interest should be 6–10 pages, with a maximum of 10 pages (this does not include project team biographies, CVs, or the cover page). Note that the Expression of Interest is the first stage of a two-stage selection process.

### 1. Cover page

This is supplied as a template to fill in and must accompany all applications.

### 2. Title of the research project

Please provide a short working title for your research. This should reflect the nature of your project.

### 3. Project type, category, and total amount sought

Please indicate which type of research project (**Type I or Type II**) you are applying for. If your project is to continue beyond 2016, you must state clearly the amount of funding you seek for the second year (2017). Note that future funding is subject to ongoing government funding, and to satisfactory performance in the first year. **All figures are GST exclusive.**

**Type I:** *Research projects: Building knowledge about teaching and learning*

**Category A** are large-scale projects of **three years**. Each of the major projects in 2015 will be eligible for up to \$450,000 GST exclusive, with a maximum of \$150,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

**Category B** are projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$200,000 GST exclusive will be granted for any one project, with no more than \$100,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

**Type II:** *Research projects: Exploratory studies*

Type II projects are smaller scale projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$130,000 GST exclusive will be granted for any one project, with no more than \$65,000 GST exclusive available in any one year.

#### 4. Description of proposed project and its context: Its strategic value in terms of the TLRI programme

The proposal must demonstrate how the project will address Principles One and Two in the *Overview* section of this information pack and the TLRI strategic priorities of *consolidating and building knowledge* and *identifying and addressing gaps in our knowledge*.

Refer to *Appendix 1: Building knowledge about teaching and learning* included with this information pack.

The rationale for the proposed project must be explicitly stated and the problem it seeks to address described. **Pose a research question that advances learning in the field and contributes to what is already known.** You need to make a convincing argument that this question is necessary for New Zealand at this point. What else has been written about this field, both in New Zealand and internationally? What is known? Why is this a central question to investigate at this time?

#### 5. Research design and methodology: The project's research value in terms of the TLRI

Projects should have a clear line of sight to the learner. When designing your project, ask yourself: How will we know if this intervention has made a difference? What data should we collect to help us do this? What change might we expect to see in student outcomes such as achievement or attitudes or behaviours?

The proposal must demonstrate how the project is consistent with Principles Three and Four and how it provides research value (see the *Overview* section). Note that this section is of key importance to the selection panel, and our past experience suggests that having an outside reader review this section is a helpful practice. Please be sure that you do all of the following.

##### Outline of research and methodology

1. **Clearly describe research design and data collection methods that follow logically from the questions themselves.** In both Type I and Type II projects you need to provide a clear methodology so that the selection panel is convinced that these methods will provide valid and reliable data and enable you to answer the questions. What types of data do you intend to collect and how? Why did you select one method over another? How can the selection panel be convinced that your data collection is appropriate for your study? For Type II projects please include a rationale that clearly states why your project is suitable to be a Type II. Note that Type II projects are qualitatively different from Type I projects rather than simply smaller versions of Type I. The most successful applicants will explain these differences clearly, showing that their proposed project is innovative and exploratory.
2. **Create a data-analysis plan that gives an idea of how the data will be managed and analysed and how these data will then answer the research question(s).** What will you do with all the data once they come in? By what method will you create statistical analyses or qualitative coding systems? Because Type II projects may rely on more innovative

methodologies and investigate topics where there is less known, it is very possible that you will not know exactly what you will discover until after you have collected your data. This is to be expected. It needs to be clear, however, that you will have a strategy for dealing with whatever comes up and that you will be able to make good use of the data in order to answer the questions.

3. **Detail the ethical and quality-assurance processes.** Please be clear and specific about ethical issues you will need to consider and how these will be managed. It is not sufficient to refer only to writing an ethics application for an institutional committee. Please also specify your quality-assurance processes (for example, the peer-review processes you will use throughout the study). If a Type II project has a single researcher working with practitioners, the Expression of Interest needs to address the implications of this for managing the research and quality assurance.

Project team: People involved and their respective roles within the project

4. **Show consideration of the context of practice in which the research will be conducted and give careful thought to the relationships and roles within the project team and issues such as knowledge, ownership, power, and decision making.** Please discuss the rationale for the partnership and why the partnership is the right way for you to find the answers to your research questions. You should also think through your partnership model and be clear and specific about how you're going to be sure that each partner's knowledge is welcomed and each partner learns.

In Type I projects, please clarify what you mean by "partnership": which people will do which sort of tasks? Why? What kind of training will project members require? Who will supply the training? In Type II projects, you will need to make a convincing argument to show how the thinking of each partner will build and contribute to the data collection and analysis.

5. **Type I projects need to have a principal investigator who has experience leading research projects (if co-led, at least one of the leaders needs to be an experienced researcher).** In the proposal it needs to be demonstrated how opportunities will be provided for developing the expertise of less experienced researchers: Who will be mentored and what is the process you will use?

**Type II projects will involve a team of researchers and practitioners that is led either by an experienced researcher or an experienced practitioner. If the latter, the team requires an experienced researcher acting as an adviser.** The selection panel will be looking for assurance that the team has the research experience and capability to conduct the proposed research, and the practice experience and capability to ensure close connections to practice. Applicants from an institution that does not have access to an experienced researcher may contact the TLRI [tlri@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:tlri@nzcer.org.nz) who may be able to link you with an appropriate person.

Please note that postgraduate students can be on project teams, but the TLRI cannot directly fund PhD or Master's study.

## **6. Practice value**

The proposal must demonstrate how the project is consistent with Principle Five and the TLRI strategic priorities of having an *impact on practice* and an *impact on learning*. It must illustrate how the research might inform current and future practice and its potential to provide insights into student learning. It also needs to outline the team's approach to dissemination. Refer to *Overview* section.

The nature and scale of your project will determine both what is possible and what is appropriate.

## **7. Project timetable**

Please provide an indicative timetable for your project, including starting and finishing dates and key milestones. This can be in the form of a short table or a list that sets out each stage of the project and details key project milestones.

## **8. Appendix: Project team curricula vitae**

Please provide CVs for the key members of the project team, giving relevant experience, qualifications, recent relevant publications, and research experience. These should be no longer than one page for each team member, so please highlight the most relevant work experience for each project team member, and how this will benefit the intended research.

## **9. Referees**

Please provide the names and contact details of two people who can comment on researchers' capabilities to complete the proposed research successfully. It is important that these referees can comment in a professional, work-related capacity.

# Criteria for selection

The selection panel will assess each Expression of Interest in terms of the proposed project's relevance to the aims, principles, and project priorities of the TLRI (please see the *Overview* for a fuller description of the principles and the project priorities they align with).

Expressions of Interest are assessed on three key criteria—strategic value, research value, and practice value.

## 1. Strategic value

The strategic value of the proposed project will be assessed in terms of how well it addresses Principles One and Two and, in particular, how the research will *consolidate and build knowledge* and *identify and address gaps in our knowledge*. This includes the extent to which the proposal:

- has an explicit focus on learning
- provides a clear rationale for the project and the problem it seeks to address
- links to relevant research in the field
- has a focus on contributing new insights into inequities in educational outcomes, and/or teaching and learning processes that will support success for all learners
- poses a question(s) that potentially will increase our knowledge or address gaps in our knowledge in a particular area.

## 2. Research value

The research value of the proposed project will be assessed in terms of how well it addresses Principles Three and Four, appropriate to the application type (Type I or Type II) and the scope of the proposed project.

This includes assessment of the:

- research design and data collection methods
- data analysis plan including how data will be managed, analysed, and then used to answer the research questions
- quality assurance processes
- consideration of ethical issues
- partnership model—clearly articulated and consistent with the intent of the TLRI and the project type
- principal investigator experience (Type I)
- project team's research and practice experience (Type II)
- opportunities for a team member(s) to be mentored (Type I).

## 3. Practice value

The practice value of the proposed project will be assessed in terms of how well it addresses Principle Five and, in particular, how well it addresses the practice priorities (*likely impact on practice* and *impact on learning*). This includes the extent to which the project:

- has the potential to impact on practice in terms of process, dissemination, and application of findings
- has the potential to impact on learning and could lead to improvements in outcomes for learners.



## Expression of Interest cover sheet (2015)

<b>Title of proposal:</b>				
<i>Research focus: (indicate which option)</i>	ECE	School	Tertiary	Cross

<b>Principal investigator details: (up to two)</b>		
<i>Name</i>		
<i>Email address (for receiving notification of decision)</i>		
<i>Phone</i>		

<b>Institution/organisation details:</b>	
<i>Name of institution/organisation</i>	
<i>Contact person</i>	
<i>Email address (for receiving notification of decision)</i>	
<i>Phone</i>	

<b>Address details:</b>	
<i>Physical address (for receiving hard copy documents by courier)</i>	
<i>Attention:</i>	

<b>Brief description of project: (up to 100 words)</b>

<b>This application is for: (please indicate)</b>		
<b>Type I</b> - Category A (up to \$450K) (Max. \$150K in any one year)	<b>Type I</b> - Category B (up to \$200K) (Max. \$100K in any one year)	<b>Type II</b> (up to \$130K) (Max. \$65K in any one year)
<b>N.B. Figures are <u>exclusive</u> of GST</b>		