Request for Proposals (NZARI RFP 2017-1):

Submission Guide

Type A - Research Projects of Excellence in Antarctic, Subantarctic and Southern Ocean Research

The New Zealand Antarctic Research Institute (NZARI) is seeking investigator-initiated proposals for short-term research projects (1-2 years in duration and requests of up to a total of $100,000 excl. GST).

Deadline: Friday, 16 September 2016 (5pm)

1. Requirements

1) Proposals need to address the research sought in this “Request for Proposals” (RFP).
2) The lead institution must be in New Zealand.
3) The lead PI must reside in New Zealand.
4) Applicants may be a PI on only one proposal.
5) Funds requested from NZARI cannot exceed $100,000 (excl. GST) regardless of project duration.
6) Proposals must include cost-sharing either in cash or as resources-in-kind allocated to the proposed project.
7) Salary support is restricted to New Zealand-based researchers.
8) Proposals should be collaborative.
9) Applicants who are resubmitting previously declined proposals need to clearly indicate revisions/improvements to the prior version and respond to the reviewer feedback. Proposals that have been declined twice will not be considered any further.
10) Applicants who require Antarctic Logistics support must also submit a logistics support request to Antarctica New Zealand by Friday 16 September 2016.
11) Applicants who wish to be considered in the postdoctoral fellowship category should also submit a postdoctoral information form.
12) Applicants will not be considered if they have reports outstanding from previous NZARI grants or Antarctic fieldwork.

2. Research Sought

NZARI is primarily concerned with the impacts of a changing global climate on Antarctica (its physical- and eco-systems) and how the resulting changes in Antarctica influence New Zealand and the wider Earth- and biological systems.

Proposed research should deliver on NZARI's strategic initiatives outlined in the NZARI white paper.

NZARI recognizes the complexity of Antarctica’s natural systems and realizes that addressing issues of change and associated impacts requires a wide range of research programs, which may include, but not be limited, to a better understanding of fundamental cryospheric processes; interactions between ocean, ice and atmosphere; the links between biological, ecological and physical processes; and proposals that are concerned with novel ways of understanding and measuring change in Antarctic environments and attributing change to particular drivers.

NZARI projects should be output focused and able to demonstrate clear links to societal need.
Projects outside of the thematic foci described above will only be considered if they are exceptionally timely, present a unique opportunity, propose groundbreaking research in an emerging frontier, and/or have great potential for high impact in the near-term. These projects should be discussed with the NZARI Director prior to submission. Additionally, the proposals need to explicitly outline why they are exceptionally timely or present a unique opportunity.

2.1 Characteristics of NZARI Research Projects

NZARI Type A Research Projects will have some or all of the following characteristics:

- High-risk/high impact, short duration projects that address critical, time-sensitive questions.
- Develop collaborative approaches to address multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary research questions.
- Include, where possible, matching support or resources-in-kind.
- Are directly responsive to the evaluation criteria below.
- Be well formed and clear in questions, objectives, approaches and the value of outcomes.

NZARI will issue a RfP each year with an evolving focus as the NZARI research portfolio matures. Applicants are encouraged to refrain from submitting proposals until they are prepared to make their best and most compelling case for funding and when the proposed research topic aligns with the focus of the RfP.

2.2 Logistics Support

Applicants who are requesting logistics support from Antarctica New Zealand as part of the NZARI Type A application also need to submit a logistics support request to Antarctica New Zealand by Friday 16 September 2016.

Antarctica New Zealand uses the logistics support requests to assess the co-funding required to undertake Antarctic fieldwork. In many cases, logistics support will be of a significantly greater value than funds allocated by NZARI. Therefore, clarity of requirements and justification will need to be to the same high standard as expected in the NZARI science proposal.

Antarctica New Zealand have statutory requirements to spend their resources on achieving Government strategic goals in Antarctica, comply with environmental permitting requirements, and contribute to raising public awareness of Antarctica. Sections seeking detail on these aspects of Antarctica New Zealand’s support form part of the logistics support request.

A logistics support request template and guidelines are provided, and all applicants are encouraged to discuss their logistics requirements with the Science Programme Advisor, Dr Fiona Shanhun, before submitting their proposal. As with the research proposal, logistics support requests cannot be discussed with the applicant during the assessment phase.

Applicants may request Antarctic logistics support for the 2017/18 Antarctic season. In exceptional cases, and only where scientifically justified (e.g. retrieval of instruments or to replicate observations), logistical support may be considered for up to two seasons.

In addition to access from Scott Base by vehicle or helicopter (to locations within ~200 km of Scott Base), Antarctica New Zealand can consider accessing other regions either by mounting specific expeditions or through collaborative arrangements with other Antarctic programmes. However, successful projects requiring complex logistics support may have their start date delayed to align with
the availability of logistic support. Successful proposals will be required to acquire all permits and ethics approvals before fieldwork can proceed.

Applications for research based on existing data sets or non-Antarctic field research activities are also welcome (these do not require a Logistics Support Request).

2.3 Budget

Funds are awarded to assist with the costs of the project. Investigators may propose directing NZARI support towards any item(s) or area(s) required to accomplish the research goals. Costs can include direct costs, personnel costs and an appropriate share of overhead costs. Each proposal must contain an explicit budget for each year of support requested and a total, overall budget. The amounts requested for each budget line item must be documented and explained in the budget justification. The budget should include total costs and detail where costs are requested from NZARI and where matching support is already available to the project or being sought from other sources. Please note that regardless of project duration, the total amount requested cannot exceed $100,000 (excl. GST).

NZARI will also consider applications that have access to other funding and only seek to apply for logistics support. In those cases, a budget outline is still required. Please discuss this with the NZARI Director or Research Advisor.

3. Postdoctoral Applications

Within this funding round, NZARI will provide one grant to a Type A project led by a Postdoctoral scholar. In addition to fulfilling the requirements outlined on page 1 under section 1 of this document, applicants also need to satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

1) Be the Principal Investigator for the proposed project
2) PhD degree awarded within 3 years of the application date

Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants are encouraged to move from their PhD-granting institution. Applicants requiring assistance to connect with potential host institutions and/or mentors are encouraged to contact the Research Advisor, Dr Rebecca McLeod.

International candidates are welcome to apply but the Postdoctoral Fellowship has to be tenured at a New Zealand institution. If awarded, the grant will be for a maximum duration of two years.

Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants are required to outline the matching support from their proposed host institution including a nominated mentor.

Postdoctoral Fellows are also required to develop an international connection through SCAR (something like a 2-3 month visiting position at an international partner institution).

The maximum available funding from NZARI is $100,000 (excl. gst). NZARI will consider part time applications on a pro-rated basis.

Applicants who are applying under the postdoctoral scholar scheme need also to submit an NZARI Postdoctoral Applicant Information Template.

4. Assessment Criteria and Processes

The assessment process will have four stages:
1) The NZARI Director will check submitted proposals for completeness and alignment with this RfP. Proposals will not be sent out for external review if:
   a) They are incomplete.
   b) They don’t align with the RfP or don’t provide an argument for timeliness.
   c) They require Antarctic logistics support but have not submitted a Logistics Support Request to Antarctica New Zealand.
   d) Applicants have not submitted reports from previous NZARI funding or Antarctica New Zealand logistics support.
2) The NZARI International Science Panel (ISP) will oversee an evaluation and review based on a merit ranking of research proposals. The ISP will co-opt additional experts to peer review as required.
3) Antarctica New Zealand will assess logistics requirements of each research proposal, alignment with the Government Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science Strategy, and compliance with New Zealand’s Antarctic Treaty obligations.
4) The NZARI Director will prepare a recommendation combining the ISP evaluations/recommendations, Antarctica New Zealand logistical and strategic alignment review, and budget realities for the NZARI Board who will make the final decision on funding.

4.1 Merit review

Excellence and the potential for high impact will be the overriding considerations in recommending research proposals for funding. The Evaluation criteria include elements that are judged to be essential for success and additional “added value” aspects that, if proposed, will result in a more positive assessment of the proposal but are not required (in other words, the absence of “added value” items will not negatively impact evaluations).

Reviewers will score proposals on an absolute scale of excellence based on global Antarctic scientific norms from 0 (inadequately addressed) to 10 (outstanding) for each criterion described below.

4.1.1 Proponents’ Qualifications

1) Record of accomplishment
   a. The proponents are qualified to conduct the work and have an established record of successfully completing similar projects.
   b. The project builds on previous accomplishment in the proponents’ area of research.
   c. Prior performance indicates a high likelihood of successful completion of the project on time and within budget.
   d. Added value (not required): The proponents included essential experts from outside of the Antarctic community.

2) Cross-disciplinary and/or multiple organizations and/or approach
   a. The proponents have assembled the expertise necessary to accomplish the project.
   b. Added value (not required): More than two organizations are involved in the project as essential elements.

3) Excellence of research plan and study design
   a. The project is well conceived and organized to ensure success.
   b. The resources outlined are sufficient to accomplish the goals.
   c. Added value (not required): Matching support from other sources.

4) Synergism
a. The project brings together the best experts, from within and external to the Antarctic science community.

b. The project provides an opportunity for those that do not normally work together to do so.

c. *Added value (not required)*: The project includes a diversity of qualified New Zealand organizations (i.e., a mix of Universities and CRIs).

4.1.2 Scholarly Value

5) **Extraordinarily rewarding and discovery-based**
   a. The project has a high likelihood of advancing frontiers, challenging long held paradigms, and providing new insights.
   b. The project will likely advance knowledge and understanding within its own field and/or other fields.
   c. *Added value (not required)*: The project proposes a unique and/or never before attempted approach.

6) **Transformational**
   a. The project will likely produce game-changing, step-function increases in scientific understanding at a fundamental level.
   b. The project explores creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts.
   c. *Added value (not required)*: The project brings new technologies to polar science and works in ways not previously attempted.

7) **Innovative**
   a. The project reaches beyond traditional Antarctic disciplines.
   b. The project brings to bear the latest technological advances available.
   c. *Added value (not required)*: both a) and b) are true.

8) **Highly valued and well-timed**
   a. The project contributes to NZARI aims and objectives.
   b. The project creates knowledge that addresses the needs of New Zealand society and addresses issues that are important to current global debates.
   c. *Added value*: The project takes advantage of unique chances to expand knowledge and advance frontiers.

9) **Future-oriented**
   a. The project engages the youngest and brightest of the next generation to build capacity.
   b. The project results will be disseminated broadly enhancing scientific and technological understanding.
   c. *Added value (not required)*: A unique educational or outreach component is proposed.

10) **Globally Connected**
    a. The project is conducted within the framework of a larger international effort and/or global program.
    b. *Added value (not required)*: The project establishes New Zealand scientists in leadership positions in international and/or global projects/programs.
4.2 Feedback

NZARI wishes to enhance and improve the overall quality of proposal submissions and build the capacity for excellent research in New Zealand. To this end, NZARI will provide feedback on unsuccessful proposals. Successful proponents may be asked to provide a revised work plan that addresses any substantive issues raised during evaluations.

5. Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application deadline (5pm)</td>
<td>16 September 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications forwarded for external review</td>
<td>30 September 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review assessments received</td>
<td>30 November 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations to NZARI Board</td>
<td>20 January 2017</td>
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<td>Applicants notified of outcome</td>
<td>early February 2017</td>
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<td>Contracts and support agreements finalized</td>
<td>1 May 2017</td>
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<td>Research can commence</td>
<td>1 June 2017</td>
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6. Relevant documents

1) NZARI RFP 2017-1 Submission Guide
2) NZARI Proposal Template
3) NZARI CV Template
4) NZARI Postdoctoral Applicant Information Template
5) Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request Submission Guide
6) Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request Template
7) Antarctic Science Directions and Priorities 2010-2020
8) NZARI White Paper

7. Application Submission

Proposals are to be submitted as PDF files of no more than 3MB to Dr. Rebecca McLeod (r.mcleod@antarcticanz.govt.nz). The application deadline is Friday, 16 September 2016 at 5pm.

In the body of the email, applicants need to list up to three suggested reviewers (including institutional affiliations and email addresses). Proposed peer-reviewers must not have a conflict of interest. In broad terms this means they cannot be directly or indirectly involved with the project or have been co-workers or co-authors with the project participants in the preceding 5 years. Applicants may also designate persons they would prefer not to review the proposal, indicating why.

Regular applications will consist of the Proposal template combined with the CV template. If logistics support is requested, also submit the Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request as a separate file.

Postdoctoral Scholar applications will consist of the Proposal template combined with the CV template. Additionally, the Postdoctoral Applicant Information Template needs to be submitted as a separate file. If logistics support is requested, also submit the Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request as a separate file.
Receipt of submissions will be acknowledged within 48 hours. Incompletely filled out applications or applications missing required support materials will not be considered.

8. Submission Checklist

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<th>NZARI Type A Application</th>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal with CVs</td>
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<td>Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request (if required)</td>
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<tr>
<th>NZARI Type A Postdoctoral Scholarship Application</th>
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<td>Proposal with CVs</td>
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<td>Postdoctoral Application Information Template</td>
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<td>Confirmation of PhD-conferral (or submission if not yet conferred)</td>
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<td>Letter from mentor (send directly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antarctica New Zealand Logistics Support Request (if required)</td>
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Each individual PDF file should not exceed 3MB.

9. Key contacts

Dr Rebecca McLeod  Research Advisor  r.mcleod@antarcticanz.govt.nz
Dr Fiona Shanhun  Science Programme Advisor  f.shanhun@antarcticanz.govt.nz
Professor Gary Wilson  NZARI Director  gary.wilson@nzari.aq