

Collaborative Research Programme Guidelines



Background

The themes (Wireless Research Centre and Software Engineering) within New Zealand ICT Institute (NZi3) are about delivering world class, industry led applied research. In order to deliver this research one mechanism is the collaborative research programme (CRP), which provides industry partners a structured approach to defining and running research projects, whilst supporting the engagement of researchers, through providing a collaborative approach to the scoping and structuring of a project, with a focus on long term research objectives.

Aim

The aim of the CRP is to offer industry focused research projects to research institutions in a structured framework, which enables NZi3, project providers (normally industry) and research institutions to enter in a relationship where the operating mechanisms are defined prior to the commencement of the project.

The CRP process intends to allow project providers to identify projects, which can be responded to by researchers in an open manner, to enable them to take the initial project definition and provide their ideas in how the project can be undertaken to leverage their research expertise.

In addition the process intends to give researchers the opportunity to see where industry is focusing its application of technology, so that researchers can suggest related initiatives that can add further value to the industrial partner.

The process defined and the undertaking of research via the projects is aimed to ensure that all stakeholders' needs are effectively managed; so long term relationships can be established to create a natural follow on to further research in the initial project's area.

The CRP Process

Stage 1 - Identification of Industry Projects

The themes in NZi3 will be actively working with industry partner's to identify research areas, where they want to focus their research activities. From these research areas will come projects to support the growth of knowledge in these research areas. Projects that are offered will not normally be within the existing capability of either the theme or project provider.

Stage 2 – Offering of Projects

On the NZi3 website will be posted project definitions, with details of the project and dates for response, the process is aimed to nurture communication, hence interested parties are encouraged to contact the theme lead (the manager or director of a theme who will be listed in the project definition) to discuss any queries they may have on the project. Where amendments to the project definition are identified they will be updated on the NZi3 website. Where matters need to be discussed directly with the industry partner, it is requested that this is via NZi3, who will facilitate this communication; this is to ensure equitable treatment of all interested parties.

Stage 3 – Call for Notice of Interest.

To obtain initial interest and provide an opportunity for potential applicants to suggest related areas of research, a 'Notice of Interest' is requested. This will be used for two purposes, firstly to identify researchers from which to request a full application and secondly to create a database of researchers expertise and ideas for related projects. Where individuals are not able to undertake a project by themselves, they may be introduced to others in order to discuss collaboration in delivering a project.

Stage 4 – Selection

Collaborative Research Programme Guidelines



Each letter of interest will be reviewed to assess their compliance with the needs of the project and the project provider; successful parties will then be invited to submit a full application. As part of this process individual applicants may be approached and be advised on changes, which could enhance their chance of success of a full application. In addition discussions may take place to clarify points, for example limitations on the Non-disclosure and Intellectual Property schedules.

Stage 5 – Full Application

The full application aims to elicit specific information as to how the applicant intends to undertake the project. It provides the opportunity to detail benefits the research organisation can provide to the theme and the project provider through undertaking the project. At this stage applicants are encouraged to elicit information that they feel will strengthen their application, this should be done via the theme lead who will endeavour to ensure open and equitable treatment of all parties.

Stage 6 – Selection

All projects will be judged on equal terms based on a set of criteria, with the opportunity for the selection panel to provide objective opinions to the selection of a provider. This will be a closed process, but NZi3 will endeavour to provide feedback to applicants.

Project Budget

Unless otherwise specified the value of the Project Budget provided is to give an indication of the level of funding that is available. The amount of funding provided will be finalised once the project is fully scoped between the project provider and research deliverer. This is to provide flexibility for the research organisation and the project provider to adjust the project requirements and level of delivery during the discussions prior to the finalising of contracts for delivery. It gives the opportunity for small groups to undertake a small component of research or for groups to undertake investigative work prior to a request for a larger amount of funding, upon successful findings.

Project Reporting

There are two main areas of project reporting, one is regular updates to NZi3 and the project provider on project progress in terms of findings, this mechanism should be defined by the research institute in their application for funding, secondly is financial control, which will be controlled by NZi3. The need for financial control is to

- i. Identify how well a project is progressing against its outline budget defined in the initial application. Providing an additional feedback mechanism to the regular reporting
- ii. Enable NZi3 themes to control their overall budgets to ensure the whole programme of spending is balanced.
- iii. Provide an additional mechanism to evaluate the various models of engagement, so best practice can be built in to future projects.

Therefore researchers are asked to complete the CRP Project budget.xls form both at the application stage and to provide quarterly updates to the actuals as the project progresses, with significant variances being notified to the theme lead as soon as possible. Researchers are only requested to provide such detail that will be beneficial to analysis, this can be agreed with the theme lead.

Where research identifies an unexpected occurrence that can financially impact a project NZi3 will work with the project provider to address this issue, in order to remove / minimise this impact.

Intellectual Property / Non-Disclosure Agreement

This area will need to be carefully worked through between all parties, to ensure parties do not compromise existing agreements and are at ease with the relationship they are entering into. Hence it is anticipated that as well as covering technical issues in defining a project that non disclosure agreements and intellectual property will form a significant component of the scoping of a project.

Collaborative Research Programme Guidelines



NZi3 and its industry partners are committed to enabling researchers to use their research to further knowledge; hence all parties will actively work together to support the publication of research and its use in learning, by addressing the constraints of intellectual property and non-disclosure agreements.

Promotion

A key component of NZi3 is to demonstrate a holistic approach to research, where all parties work together for mutual benefit; Thus demonstrating to stakeholders and the wider community that a collaborative approach to research can provide a greater benefit than individualism. Therefore it is expected that all partners will work together to maximise the promotional benefits to all participants.