

## The George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment

### Call For Proposals July 2023

The GMCNE is a multi-disciplinary research centre in the Faculty of Science at the University of Auckland with a focus on the following areas of research;

- Environmental Restoration
- Environmental Conservation
- Environmental Sustainability

It is intended to support a diverse range of research projects to address questions within and across different natural ecosystems that demonstrate a direct impact on issues of environmental restoration, conservation and/or sustainability.

The GMCNE will promote relevant areas of research not only across the University of Auckland, but also those engaged as part of a team undertaking research in conjunction with other tertiary institutions, Crown Research Institutes, companies, NGOs or civil society with similar objectives.

This RfP provides an opportunity for researchers at UoA and colleagues to seed projects and support students that enhance the aims of the GMCNE. Projects will be selected on the criteria specified below. The Expert Advisory Panel will also be looking to identify and foster the connection between projects that lead to thematic research to expanded funding opportunities for research and application. It is an opportunity to extend and link your research to foster a wider capacity and capability in finding solutions to environmental problems.

**Request for Proposals: Due date Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

#### Research funds

Research funds enable GMCNE investigators to take advantage of exciting new ideas that require interdisciplinary research to support solutions to environmental challenges, while simultaneously building links across the GMCNE's network, especially between institutions.

Through the George Mason Scholars initiative there is also the opportunity to build capacity in solution focused interdisciplinary environmental research. Workshops or think-tanks offer the opportunity to bring together researchers from within New Zealand and overseas to shed new light on vexing environmental problems or unaddressed directions.

The GMCNE will help to identify new solutions and to draw public attention to the role of the GMCNE, academe and interdisciplinary science in contributing solutions to restoration, conservation and sustainability challenges in our natural environment.

This document describes the intention of the programme, and how investigators can access support.

The underlying theme for all proposals should align with supporting Environmental Restoration – Conservation – Sustainability. Areas of Research may include but not be exclusive to:

- Environmental Change (developing techniques for monitoring, forecasting and analysing change and environmental future scenario development)
- Hilltops-Ocean (restoration, ecosystem services, flows and implications for integrative management, cumulative effects)
- Resilience (tipping points and bottlenecks to restoration)
- Socio-ecological systems (citizen science; governance-science-society; psychology; education; investment; new economies)
- Emerging technologies for the environment (Green Chemistry; sampling technologies; monitoring and mapping; models)
- Plastic pollution: ecological effects, particle transport, breakdown, environmental and engineering solutions
- The principles of Vision Mātauranga particularly Taiao, achieving Environmental Sustainability through iwi and hapū relationships with land and sea

We will consider new projects and project that add to and develop current projects and programmes (see [on our website](#)).

## Assessment Criteria

All projects should be strategically aligned with the vision and aims of the GMCNE.

Opportunities to link projects within the GMCNE and into broader research and societal networks are encouraged. All working expenses provided for collaborative projects should be aligned with available support and post-graduate students, thereby enhancing the training environment for post-graduate students across the University and other institutions.

Research projects will be assessed by the GMCNE Expert Advisory Group, and international/independent reviewers as appropriate.

The assessment of proposals will focus on the following:

- **Project Alignment:** Projects must relate to the conservation, restoration and sustainability themes of the GMCNE
- **Affecting Change:** Research must have the potential to demonstrate impact and accelerate change
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Evidence of interdisciplinary research (projects demonstrating involvement of researchers in more than one discipline)
- **Scientific Merit:** Knowledge development; rigor and merit
- **Building Connections:** Evidence of building connections and synergies
- **Expansion:** Evidence of potential pathway to expansion of research

Overall, the GMCNE Expert Advisory Group will prioritise projects where it is clear how the project advances the GMCNE, and lead to potential connections across the GMCNE and broader research and community networks that enhance the potential to attract further research support. A key

factor the GMCNE will consider in determining the potential value of the proposed collaboration is whether it is likely to establish innovative research that supports the vision, aims, & purpose of the GMCNE.

Please Note:

- For student supervision, the primary supervisor must be a UoA investigator. If a primary supervisor is listed as the primary supervision on more than one MSc or PhD scholarship application, in this round, then only one application will be funded. If more than one application is considered by the Expert Advisory Group as fundable, then the Director will consult with the investigator to determine which application should be awarded funding. New and existing students (i.e. new or in their 1st, 2nd, 3rd year of study) are all eligible.
- Projects can be submitted with or without a named student or PDF. If a suitable student or PDF is not named and the project is approved, a timeframe within which a suitable student should be identified will be indicated in the approval letter, usually a period of six months. If a PDF is named, please include an up-to-date CV.
- The GMCNE is committed to ensuring representation of the Maori and Pacific Island communities amongst its trainees. Applications for support of students from these groups are encouraged.
- Once funded, researchers should expect to provide reports to the GMCNE Centre to meet requirements of the Governance group; support media and other outreach; contribute to and build networks to expand funding and activities of the GMCNE.

### The GMCNE invites applications for:

<b>Seed Projects</b>	Up to \$10,000 to cover research expenses for one year (including travel, equipment etc. but not salary or buyout)
<b>PhD Scholarships</b>	\$33,000 per annum for 3 years plus fees (\$126,000.00 total)
<b>MSc fees</b>	\$10,000
<b>Post-Doctoral Fellowships</b>	\$102,033 (1 year of L/RF1 including ACC and Superannuation) – up to 2 years available
<b>Workshop</b>	\$5,000 (Maximum)

An individual project can be submitted with any combination of the above types of funding. The Expert Advisory Group reserves the right to negotiate with relevant PIs over project costs and potentially seek to combine them into larger solutions-focused programmes.

A total of \$400,000 is available in this round, with that sum in total spread over up to 3 years.

Successful projects will be funded from January 2024 and run for the appropriate time period from this date.

## Key Dates For 2023

<b>RfP issued</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
<b>RfP closing date</b>	<b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
<b>Results Announced</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
<b>Project start date from</b>	January 2024

## Contact

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Please email applications to [gmcne@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:gmcne@auckland.ac.nz) . Include GMCNE application and the PI name in the email subject.

## Reporting Requirements

The reporting template will be supplied and will require the researcher to provide information and updates on their active projects.

You will be required to contribute brief project updates for key GMCNE presentations and reports, such as progress reports for the Board.

Successful recipients of George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment Funding may be asked to present their project findings at a Research Symposium, meetings or events arranged by the GMCNE.

**Final Report:** A written report on the research project should be submitted to GMCNE email by the researcher within one month of the expiry date of the funding award.