



Superu Children and Families Research Fund – Background paper for applicants

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1. This paper outlines the Superu Children and Families Research Fund (the Fund) dedicated to funding policy relevant research using Growing Up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) external data.
2. This paper was developed in consultation with members of the GUiNZ policy forum and the GUiNZ Data Access Committee.
3. All funding figures in this paper are GST exclusive.

Background

4. GUiNZ is a longitudinal study of child development that follows a sample of 6,800¹ children born between 2009 and 2010 in Auckland/Waikato as they grow through childhood and into adulthood. It documents their development in multiple domains of well-being, including health, education, social adjustment and behaviour, as well as factors that influence development. To date, main data collection has been during the pregnancy (antenatal), and when children were nine months, two years, and four and a half years of age. Collection of eight years age data will begin in early 2017.

The study has been designed and conducted by the Growing Up in New Zealand study team, led by the University of Auckland and made possible by the commitment of child and family participants.

5. The objective of the Government's investment in the GUiNZ study is to generate research that informs current government priority policy decisions. The proposed Fund is intended to support the undertaking of policy relevant research projects using the GUiNZ data.

Characteristics of the Fund

6. This is an enabling Fund designed to maximise the value of the Government's investment in GUiNZ. While applicants will compete for funding, the process is designed to ensure that the multiple objectives of the Fund can be met. The process therefore recognises potential benefits in applicants discussing their proposals with Superu. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback and will be able to improve the proposals for resubmission in a subsequent round.

¹ For the 8 Year Data Collection Wave, the overall sample size will be reduced to approximately 2,000 children, in which Māori, Pasifika and Asian ethnic groups will be retained proportionately similar to the current sample sizes for these groups.

7. Proposals must make significant use of GUiNZ data and constitute a discrete research project in its own right.
8. The indicative total fund budget is \$750,000 per annum.
9. The Fund is anticipated to provide for a limited number of proposals each year with a maximum individual value of \$150,000 although special consideration may be given to the nature and breadth of the research envisaged.
10. The maximum duration of funding is 12 months from the date of data access provided to a successful proposal.
11. The Fund does not include provision for its administration. All Fund administrative and operational costs will be funded from other sources.
12. Every attempt will be made to fully allocate the funding each year; however, Superu will not fund proposals that do not meet a suitable standard as advised by the assessment panel.
13. Any uncommitted funds in a year may be used to run a second application within the same financial year or carry the funds over into the next financial year.
14. The primary objectives of the Fund are to:
 - a. increase the volume of high quality, high impact policy relevant research using the GUiNZ data
 - b. function as a tool for directing research efforts in order to better align these with current policy concerns and policy relevant topics
 - c. build up a community of GUiNZ data users outside the immediate GUiNZ research team
 - d. encourage linkages/partnerships between Government policy makers and researchers across New Zealand; and
 - e. promote the development of research skills in the analysis of longitudinal data.
15. As such, the Fund's objectives are broadly split between generating research outputs in the short to medium term (objectives a and b) and longer-term capacity building (objectives c, d and e).
16. This fund is not intended to be the exclusive source of funding for GUiNZ related research. Other agencies may choose to independently purchase research using the GUiNZ data, or researchers may access funding from other sources such as the Health Research Council or the Marsden Fund under existing conditions for external data access.
17. Current options for collaborating directly with or commissioning bespoke reports using the expertise of the GUiNZ team at the University of Auckland remain unchanged.

Eligibility

18. The Fund is open to government agencies, non-government organisations, academics, and public or independent research organisations with demonstrated research capability.

19. Applicants will note that there are two application processes involved – a funding application to Superu and an external data access application to the GUINZ Data Access Committee (DAC).
20. Agencies with a representative on the DAC may submit applications to the Fund. In doing so they are required to declare conflicts of interest that will be managed by both Superu and DAC.
21. Applicants will be required to show familiarity with external GUINZ datasets through reading available documentation or attending GUINZ data workshops. It is expected that all researchers using the GUINZ data will familiarize themselves with the Data Access Protocol terms and conditions.
22. Applicants will be required to state in their DAC application form that they will be applying to the Fund. Applicants will be required to use the existing DAC application forms to maintain consistency with GUINZ data access requirements².

GUINZ external data

23. This funding is dedicated to research using GUINZ data. This specifically refers to GUINZ ‘external’ data sets that are anonymised according to DAC and DAP processes. Data guardianship will remain with the University of Auckland (UoA) via DAC.
24. The GUINZ research team, UoA manages the GUINZ data and leads research using this data. While information on the GUINZ data and data access is available publicly, applicants will be required to become familiar with this information (through on-line training or workshops). Data queries not provided through these mechanisms will be directed by Superu to a specific point of contact at the University of Auckland.
25. Access to the GUINZ data will be enabled through the UoA Remote Access Data Platform (eResearch Centre).
26. Applicants must note that the GUINZ external data sets cannot be linked to any other data. Where specific administrative data has been collected after gaining consent from participants and providing agencies, *derived data* from such administrative data will be available as part of available GUINZ external data sets.

High-level design features

27. The Fund’s operational structure will consist of:
 - a. a designated decision maker who has overall responsibility for the operation of, and funding decisions associated with, the Fund;
 - b. an independent advisory panel of 4 who assess research applications and provide funding recommendations to the decision maker through its Chair; and
 - c. a small secretariat team to support the Fund’s operation.

² Superu will endeavour to align relevant aspects of the funding application with the DAC external data access application.

28. Key considerations in developing fund processes include: transparency, efficiency, consistency and objectivity including management of potential conflicts of interest. In this regard, Superu will ensure functional boundaries between its operational role and that of its advisor on the panel.
29. It must be noted that the recommendation by the Fund assessment panel for funding is conditional upon approval for external data access by the DAC.

Assessment panel

30. The panel is chaired by a representative of the Social Science Expert Panel (SSEP).
31. Panel members will have experience and expertise relevant to research, investment processes, and outcome delivery. They have high peer regard and recognition from the research and policy sectors. Collectively, they provide policy development and implementation knowledge (both short/medium term and longer term strategic focus), and methodological and research perspectives to the assessment process. The panel is not based on representation from all relevant sectors.
32. The assessment panel will:
 - familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria (e.g. fit with Fund objectives, policy relevance and utilisation, design and methodology, professional expertise)
 - declare conflicts of interest with any applicant, person or organisation named in a proposal, or associated with the fund process
 - assess proposals and recommend which proposals should be funded

Secretariat team

33. The secretariat team will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Fund, including:
 - managing the call for proposals and application processes
 - responding to requests or information supporting the assessment process
 - notifying funding decisions and contracting successful applicants
 - quality assurance and conflict management processes
 - monitoring and reporting including financial management
 - developing Ministerial briefings and inter-agency communications
 - identifying opportunities to extend knowledge dissemination activities associated with the Fund or proposals supported through it.

Application and assessment processes

34. A flow diagram outlining the application and delivery process, from initial scoping to submitting the final research output is appended (Appendix A).
35. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their initial scoping with Superu to test the policy relevance of the proposed research, enhancing policy collaboration and how GUINZ data underpins this policy research endeavour. Applicants are encouraged to take up Superu's suggestions but recognise it is their decision to do so (or not) and any such advice does not influence the assessment process.

36. Proposals will be assessed by the panel in accordance with the prescribed criteria and a scoring guide. While these ensure a consistent approach, the panel may be required to exercise judgement in determining the relative merits of similarly scoring applications or in recommending a final mix of proposals recommended for funding.
37. Applications provisionally recommended to be funded must proceed to submit an application to the Data Access Committee (DAC). GUiNZ external datasets cannot be used without the prior approval of the DAC that facilitates data access under the terms and conditions of the Data Access Protocol (DAP)³. The DAC comprises of representatives from the University of Auckland, key government agencies (Health, Education and Social Development) and Superu.
38. DAC approved proposals will then be contracted and funded by Superu.
39. A final report will be provided to Superu to confirm research objectives have been met. After this step, the report will be sent by the applicant to DAC for reviewing if the output meets the terms and conditions of the DAC. Where DAC has not approved and has provided feedback on reasons for doing so, applicants will revise the outputs and resubmit to DAC unless they agree with Superu not to resubmit.
40. After DAC approval, the final output will be sent by the applicant for peer review. Once peer review is completed, the applicant will provide the output to Superu for publication. Should the peer review suggest substantial analytical changes and the applicant undertakes these changes, the revised output will have to be resubmitted to DAC.
41. It is proposed that contract payments will be made in 3 instalments: 50% on confirmation of data access via the Remote Access Data Platform, 25% at a mid-point, and 25% following completion of the contract deliverables.

Monitoring and reporting

42. Successful applicants will be required to:
 - provide progress reports to Superu as per their contract conditions,
 - notify Superu immediately of any significant issues relating to data access or quality that could endanger the viability of the research or affect the contract conditions,
 - ensure and demonstrate that the deliverables meet appropriate peer-review and quality assurance standards, and
 - conform with Superu's publication specifications and quality standards.
43. Following contract completion, any research reports or summaries developed as part of the contract may be published on the Superu website. Applicants are also able to publish their research in parallel, but not in advance of web publication by Superu.

³ GUiNZ Data Access Protocol [https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/growingup/access-to-data/in_guinz_data_access_protocol_en_v9.pdf]

GUiNZ External Data Access Application form [https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/growingup/access-to-data/fm502_guinz_data_access_application_en_v3.1.pdf]

Timeline

44. The table below sets out an indicative timeline for the Fund:

Task	Indicative date
Publish Call for applications for 2017/18	22 August 2017
Assessment panel meets	November 2017
DAC reviews external Data Access applications	November 2017
Funding decision	January 2018

Promotion

45. Superu may consider steps to actively promote the Fund to maximise social sector agencies' engagement, in both commissioning policy relevant research and acting on the research findings.
46. Promotional and knowledge dissemination activities are likely to coincide with the Fund's annual operating cycle.
47. Applicants are encouraged to engage with social sector agencies to maximise policy relevance of research. Where appropriate and required by the researcher(s), the secretariat team can facilitate links with relevant agencies for the duration of the research and beyond. Applicants from all sectors (government agencies, non-government organisations, academics, and public or independent research organisations with demonstrated research capability) are encouraged to apply.

Publication, intellectual property, branding and media

48. Upon completion of the initial publications by Superu, successful applicants will be able to publish their work elsewhere. This can happen in parallel (but not prior) to the research going 'live' on the Superu website. Further publications are expected to carry the acknowledgment text: "This [product by successful applicant] was made possible with funding by Superu, using GUiNZ data collected by the University of Auckland and in accordance with the Data Access Protocol. The crown funding of GUiNZ is managed by Superu. The views reported in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Superu or the Growing Up in New Zealand study investigators.
49. Superu owns the intellectual property for the output produced under the funding contract but provides the applicant with a perpetual licence for use. Intellectual property of other publications by the researcher(s) remains with the researcher(s) or the publisher whichever the case may apply.
50. Superu will co-ordinate with relevant agencies and individuals to together manage media interests associated with funded research. For each major release by external parties, Superu will look to put in place a co-ordinated communications plan.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Fund

51. In addition to the regular annual monitoring and reporting cycle, a formal evaluation of the Fund is planned in the third year of its operation, in 2018/2019, to review the design and performance of the Fund.
52. The formal evaluation does not preclude Superu from modifying processes earlier as part of continuous improvement of Fund management. The continuous improvement will include assessing the alignment of DAC and Fund processes and how best to make this a seamless process for applicants.
53. The assessment panel will be involved in contributing to the milestone review of the Fund operation.