



# TEMPLETON WORLD

CHARITY FOUNDATION

## Big Questions

### Funding Category Guidelines

The Big Questions portfolio—understanding the universe and humanity’s place within it—is the largest core funding area, constituting more than 60% of the Templeton World Charity Foundation’s resources. This area promotes an open-minded willingness to find new information through different perspectives, and a self-sustaining culture of asking core questions that are pivotal to beneficial progress. Using the discipline and logic of the scientific method and other forms of cognitive inquiry, research should produce new, verifiable information. More specifically, *scientia*—the Latin root of “science”—captures the full range of intellectual disciplines focused on progress and truth in three categories:

#### **The Nature of the Human Person and the Potentials for Personal and Societal Well-Being**

This encompasses discoveries concerning what it is to be human, as well as the various ways human beings can progress. It covers human faculties and abilities, complexity in human sciences, and free will. This category includes dimensions of human flourishing, the role of competition in well-being, the fostering of mental and spiritual frameworks, and the role of values in shaping worldviews. It can include projects on the mind’s role in intellectual creativity, future-mindedness, and self-control. The Foundation may also support projects that aim to strengthen the human spirit, or that positively study notions such as purpose, meaning, prayer, love, and thanksgiving. We encourage studies of interventions that, by word and example, foster positive character virtues. Studies may also analyze the objective ethical and spiritual principles underpinning these virtues, the nature of moral truth, and transformative spiritual development.

#### **The Fundamental Structures, Constituents, and Laws of the Natural World**

This covers highly original explorations of topics such as cosmology, time, quantum reality, emergence, the ontology of mathematics, extraterrestrial life, multiverses, dark energy and matter, life and biological evolution/genetics, new concepts of order and form in biology, causation, information and communication, and order and chaos. Programs on the nature of progress and discovery in these core areas are also eligible for funding. This list is illustrative

rather than exhaustive. Some of the concepts listed in category 3—mind, infinity, complexity, free will, and purpose—can also be considered under this heading. We may also support projects concerning the nature of science and scientific inquiry, as well as those that promise to shed light on the existence or operation of laws governing these objects of inquiry. Because the highest level of scientific research should reveal more about the nature of ultimate reality, proposals must articulate the project’s theological or philosophical impact.

### **The Nature, Essence, and Purposes of Transcendent Divinity**

This includes projects on the nature of God, creation, divine creativity and human participation in it, divine action, providence, the fine-tuning of the universe, the nature of divine goodness, and unlimited love. It also includes studies of human responses to the divine, such as the nature of religion, awe and wonder, the power of gratitude and future-mindedness, religious experience, and the efficacy and significance of prayer. We do not not advocate any religious theme over any other.

### **Communication and Dissemination of Discoveries**

Dissemination of information, with the intention of making a sustainable impact, is as important as discovery. We therefore support projects that promise research of the highest academic standard, communicated to both the scholarly and the wider worlds. In particular, we fund projects that promise concrete results with evidence and compelling examples, or that encourage and sustain openness toward the spiritual dimensions of reality—and ultimately a fuller sense of meaning, purpose, and gratitude.