

Research Grant Application Notes

Background

One of SoBRA's core objectives is to co-ordinate and encourage research that would benefit the assessment of land contamination and, where appropriate, explore funding arrangements to support it. SoBRA has identified resources which could be used to undertake such research and this document sets out SoBRA's policy for awarding funds to be used in this manner, termed a Research Grant.

Aim

The aim of the research is to support technical excellence in the assessment, estimation and evaluation of risks and associated uncertainties from land affected by contaminants. It must comply with the core objectives of the society (see <https://sobra.org.uk/about-us/>). It must demonstrate how it will create value and enhance knowledge relating to land contamination risk assessment.

SoBRA wishes to administer the research funding via an application process which will be administered by the Executive Committee.

Funding available

The research grant funding available will vary depending on the money the Executive Committee considers surplus to other expense commitments on an annual basis. In January each year, the Executive Committee will agree on the value of the total funding pot available (including VAT) for that calendar year. The money available for each subsequent year will depend on the amount already committed to on-going items and available SoBRA financial reserves (noting that the money available at inception of this Research Grant has been accumulated over the last ten years). Prior to applying it is recommended the applicant contacts info@sobra.org.uk to confirm the budget that is currently available although we hope to make this information clear on the SoBRA website each year.

The funding may be awarded to a single research grant application or divided between grant applications based on the number, merit and funding requirements of the applications received.

For some research projects the grant(s) awarded by SoBRA will fund the research project(s) in its entirety. For other research projects the applicant may seek additional sources of funding, which should be disclosed to SoBRA in the completed application form. SoBRA's permission will be required should additional/further sources of funding be obtained after a successful SoBRA application. SoBRA reserves the right to withdraw funding if this is not complied with.

The application window will run between 31 January and 30 March each year. Successful applicants will be informed of the award no earlier than 30 April.

Application Process

Applications will be assessed via a two-stage process:

1. Applicants are requested to submit a written application (full details within the application form) to info@sobra.org.uk which will include:

- A description of the proposed research including the aims and objectives of the research, research methodology, relevance of the research to SoBRA's areas of interest and benefits of the research (including the public benefit)
 - Anticipated timescales for completion of the research with milestone deadlines and deliverables clearly identified in a Gantt chart (or similar) together with a proposed payment schedule
 - Project risks (e.g. potential for programme to slip, outcome to change, reliance on third parties); and
 - Completed application form by the applicant(s) / lead researcher(s)
2. Applicants will be notified whether they have been successful at the first stage. Successful applicants will progress to the second stage of the application process and will be invited to give a 10-15 minute presentation to the SoBRA Executive Committee, with questions following the presentation.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a member of SoBRA (includes all the team directly involved)
- Be based at a UK organisation and a UK resident at the time of application and the programmed/expected duration of the research project
- Have access to the necessary facilities and technical supervision to enable delivery of the research proposed for the duration of the project
- Provide evidence that any proposed Host Organisation is supportive of the research grant application (see also references below)
- Undertake the entirety of the research in the UK
- Be taking the lead role in the research project
- Be prepared to provide a quarterly progress update by email and/or video call to the Executive Committee meetings
- Acknowledge SoBRA's contribution to the project
- Propose new/novel research that has not yet taken place or been documented
- Advise whether once published outputs can be made freely available to members
- Intend to publish their findings to the benefit of the wider UK scientific community; and
- Be able to present their work at a SoBRA conference.

A research project **is not eligible** for a research grant :

- If the applicant will not be the lead researcher
- If the proposed research has already been undertaken (i.e. an application cannot be retrospective)
- If the proposed research does not have a clear start and end point (i.e. the proposed research project should be standalone, or be part of a wider research project but have clearly defined milestone boundaries that can be met within the grant sum applied for and timescales proposed)
- If the grant is to meet a perceived shortfall in the budget of an existing research project (other than in exceptional circumstances)

- If it will be used solely for commercial benefit and gain
- If SoBRA has already funded a research grant application and there is an anticipated shortfall in the previous application
- If it is not directly relevant to the assessment, estimation and evaluation of risks and associated uncertainties from land affected by contaminants in the UK or is outside SoBRA's core objectives; and
- If any of the funding will be used to support general travel or subsistence, with the exception of essential field work required for the research project.

Diversity and Inclusion

SoBRA is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all those working across the field of land contamination. No applicant will be disadvantaged or receive less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Applications are welcomed from those working in industry and academia and those in full and part time education.

Assessment and Prioritisation Criteria

The assessment and prioritisation criteria are:

- the quality/capability of the lead applicant (the lead applicant must hold a BSc(Hons)) as a minimum)
- the quality and novelty of the proposed new research in relation to SoBRA's objectives (e.g. initiating or developing specific investigations that will improve our understanding of land contamination risk assessment, entering a promising new or modified field of research specific to land contamination risk assessment, developing improved or novel methods for land contamination risk assessment etc.)
- the feasibility of the proposed research plan in relation to the grant sum applied for and timescales presented
- the potential application(s), value and benefit(s) of the proposed research work to the UK, specifically science relating to land contamination risk assessment
- the possibility of obtaining further funding from other bodies resulting from the proposed research on completion of the current project (if relevant)

References

The lead applicant should be prepared to provide a supporting statement and/or reference from their academic supervisor (or similar).

The referee must be able to demonstrate the intended Host Organisation (if relevant) is supportive of the application.

Contact Information

Enquiries about this scheme (or about the separate SoBRA bursaries and scholarship awards) should be made by email to info@sobra.org.uk.

Use of Data

Your data will not be shared with any third party. The SoBRA Privacy Protection Policy is available at <https://sobra.org.uk/about-us/privacy-and-data-policy/>.