



ST HELENA RESEARCH POLICY DOCUMENT

POLICY TITLE:	St Helena Research Policy
LEAD OFFICER:	Director of Education & Employment
DATED APPROVED:	May 2019
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW:	May 2020
APPROVED BY:	Education Committee
ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:	Environmental Protection Ordinance, 2016; St Helena Research Institute Policy, May 2019.
TEAMS AFFECTED:	But not limited to: Environmental Management Division; St Helena National Trust; Enterprise St Helena; Tourism; Lifelong Learning Sector; Immigration; Museum

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to researchers who wish to undertake research on St Helena or within its territorial boundaries.

As set out in the Island's 2018 Sustainable Economic Development Plan, St Helena is eager to enhance global academic links and to welcome researchers, archaeologists and conservationists. St Helena contains a third of all endemic species known to exist in the UK and its territories as well as many native species. There is a significant level of environmental expertise already in existence on the island. In addition, St Helena's history and heritage also elicit significant academic interest.

The St Helena Government (SHG) supports the development of local research capacity as well as partnerships with international researchers and research institutions. Research in St Helena is, however, guided by the Environmental Protection Ordinance (EPO), 2016 as well as government policy. While research focused on development and on better understanding and protecting the environment and heritage of St Helena is given priority, more academic and theoretical research is also encouraged wherever possible.

Generally speaking, St Helena encourages high-quality and reputable research. However, the island has a small population and limited resources and the SHG is cognizant of the risks posed by unregulated research. This policy is designed to ensure that research undertaken on St Helena is beneficial and in the best interests of the St Helena community.

2. DEFINITION OF 'RESEARCH'

A clear definition of research for the operation of this policy has been adopted. The internationally recognised definition is taken from the *Frascati Manual*, an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication which has become a standard reference and which is widely used in the UK and throughout the OECD member countries.

The Frascati definition of research

Research and experimental development comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

Research and experimental development cover three activities: basic research, applied research and experimental development.

Basic research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.

Applied research is also original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective.

Experimental development is systematic work, drawing on existing knowledge gained from research and/or practical experience, which is directed to producing new materials, products or devices, to installing new processes, systems and services, or to improving substantially those already produced or installed.

For the purposes of this policy, the term research is deemed to include all activities covered by the Frascati definition of research, i.e. basic research, applied research and experimental development.

3. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles under which research on St Helena may be conducted and to establish the **St Helena Research Council** to authorise and oversee research on St Helena.

The key outcomes which this policy seek to assure are:

- Protection of St Helena's vital interests, including the protection of the Island's people, environment and heritage
- Positive development for St Helena through
 - knowledge transfer
 - equitable benefit sharing
 - long-term capacity building.

Knowledge transfer and benefit sharing are key themes of international research conventions and the SHG believes that the benefits of scientific research should accrue to all stakeholders in a fair and equitable manner.

These include benefits to the researcher and their institutions through academic recognition, career advancement and the furthering of institutional goals; benefits to local agencies through training opportunities and gathering of the evidence base to support local decision making; and benefits to the local community through increased international exposure, access and links to global academic and research communities and an enhanced understanding of St Helena's environment, history and context.

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

- **Honesty** – Information is presented truthfully and accurately at all stages in the research process.
- **Rigour** – The quality of research is assured through care, accuracy and appropriate methodology and care is taken to avoid and/or manage bias.
- **Openness** – Research methodology, data and findings are shared and communicated openly and accurately and researchers are open in disclosing and addressing potential conflicts of interest.

- **Fairness** – All those involved in and affected by the research activity are treated fairly and justly and their rights and contributions are recognised.
- **Respect** – Researchers demonstrate respect and care for research participants, the wider community and the environment. This includes recognition of the right of St Helenians to be engaged in research that affects them or is of particular significance to them.
- **Accountability** – Research is undertaken in a manner that complies with all relevant legislation, policy and guidelines and with due consideration for the impact and outcomes of the research activity.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The St Helena Research Policy aims:

- To contribute to the sustainable development of St Helena;
- To protect St Helena's people, heritage and natural environment;
- To encourage quality research that will directly benefit St Helena and increase the body of scientific knowledge as a whole, especially with reference to this territory;
- To secure the data and results of research work undertaken in St Helena;
- To document and monitor all research work going on in St Helena and have a data base of centrally available information on such work;
- To eliminate the unauthorised collection and transfer of research information and materials and especially such collection or research as may present a risk to the St Helena people, environment or heritage;
- To ensure that research in St Helena is conducted according to professional ethics;
- To ensure that relevant local institutions are informed of the intended and on-going research in their mandated areas and that they are given an opportunity to participate in the course of the research being undertaken where this may be reasonably achievable;
- To support excellence in education through building partnerships and connections with overseas institutions, researchers and academics;
- To discourage unnecessary duplication of data collection for on-going research projects or research already undertaken or research about to be undertaken;
- To promote the principles laid out in key strategic planning documents for St Helena;

- To promote and protect the interests of the community through knowledge transfer, benefit sharing and capacity building.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

Anyone wishing to conduct any research in St Helena or within its territorial boundaries must first obtain a research licence in compliance with this policy. All research licences and enquiries will be handled by the St Helena Research Council, regardless of the field of study.

The SHG shall establish the St Helena Research Council which shall be responsible for:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive system for managing research on St Helena;
- Issuing research licences, including associated export permits, for research which is deemed to promote the aims and objectives of this policy. The Chief Environmental Officer has ultimate authority for research which requires a licence under the EPO 2016, s25. The Research Council shall consider such applications and may provide advice but it is recognised that the final decision in such cases shall be that of the Chief Environmental Officer as per the law;
- Coordinating the work of SHG directorates in matters relating to research;
- Offering advice and support to SHG in matters relating to research;
- Promoting capacity building, knowledge transfer and equitable benefit sharing for all stakeholders.

6.1. Membership of the Research Council

The St Helena Research Council will operate under the authority of the Education Committee and will include the following members:

- The Director of Education and Employment (or designate), who will serve as the Chair of the Research Council
- The Chief Environmental Officer
- The Chief Executive for Economic Development (or designate), Enterprise St Helena
- The Director of the St Helena National Trust (or designate)
- At least one additional member, appointed by the Chief Secretary
- A representative of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI), as an advisory and non-voting member
- The Coordinator of the St Helena Research Institute, as an advisory and non-voting member
- Staff member, Education and Employment Directorate, to be Secretary and non-voting member

Members will collectively require technical and specialist knowledge relevant to the work of the Research Council. Those members of the Council who serve by virtue of their post remain on the Council for the duration of their tenure, though designates may be re-assigned by the substantive member at will. Other members of the Research Council will have a two year term of office.

Non-members may be invited to Research Council meetings, or parts of meetings, as approved by the Chair for the purposes of sharing expertise on topics under review by the Council.

The Education and Employment Directorate will provide administrative support services to the Research Council.

6.2. Decision Making

The St Helena Research Council will agree procedures and guidelines which support the development of policies, standards, subject guidelines or other matters relevant to its role in managing and approving research in St Helena.

The St Helena Research Council will review and approve, or otherwise, all applications for undertaking research in St Helena. While it is preferable that decisions are reached by consensus, if this cannot be achieved, decisions will be made by straight majority vote with the Chair having the casting vote. In the case of research which requires a licence under the EPO 2016 s25, the Chief Environmental Officer shall remain responsible for the issuance of licences as set out by law.

A Council member shall not, without the consent of the Research Council, disclose confidential information obtained by him/her as a result of having performed duties as a member of the Council.

6.3. Quorum

The quorum shall be 3 voting members.

Members may attend by teleconference and this will meet quorum requirements.

6.4. Schedule of Meetings

It is envisaged that the Research Council will initially meet on a monthly basis to develop the necessary systems and structures to support its mission and role. Once this has been achieved, meetings will be scheduled as necessary to manage the research approval process.

The Chair of the Research Council may, with appropriate notice to members, schedule additional meetings as may be necessary to carry out the aims and objectives of this policy.

6.5. Conflicts of Interest

In the interests of openness, transparency and general good practice, members must declare any conflicts of interest, or potential conflicts of interests with regard to participation on the Research Council.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

In order to effectively implement this policy, the St Helena Research Council will establish and operate a research licence system to approve, or otherwise, all research to be undertaken in St Helena and within its territorial boundaries.

The St Helena Research Council will publish formal guidelines for research licences and guidance for the application process and will set out a fee structure for research, which will constitute an appendix to this policy, subject to the approval of the Education Committee. The guidelines will be informed by existing practice and requirements under the EPO 2016.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reasons for the refusal of their application and will have the opportunity to resubmit applications for reconsideration. Details of the appeals process, described in the appendix to this policy, will also be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. **The Education Committee** establishes and reviews the Research Policy, advocates for the importance of research in St Helena, and provides support for the St Helena Research Institute and the St Helena Research Council.

8.2. **The St Helena Research Council** is the decision making body which approves applications for research in St Helena. The Research Council provides technical expertise in relation to research issues, implements the Policy in approving research applications, recommends key actions to the Education Committee and other policy making bodies within the SHG, and manages research in St Helena.

8.3. **The St Helena Research Institute** advocates for and promotes research in St Helena, offers advice and guidance to current and potential researchers, serves as the main interface with the research community, and provides administrative support for the work of the St Helena Research Council. The St Helena Research Institute actively coordinates a network of government, private sector and non-profit partners, both in St Helena and abroad, who contribute to the research culture of the Island.

8.4. **The Environmental Management Division** offers expert advice and support to the St Helena Research Council in reviewing all relevant research applications and manages all licencing processes required under the EPO 2016.

8.5. **The Lifelong Learning Sector** provides managerial and administrative support to the St Helena Research Institute.

8.6. **The Education and Employment Directorate** manages the application of this Policy through the role of the Director of Education as Chair of the Research Council and by providing support for the administrative functions of the Research Council through the Lifelong Learning Sector.

9. APPEALS UNDER THIS POLICY

Any appeals under this policy shall be referred to the Chief Secretary for review and final determination. Appeals to decisions made under the EPO (2016) will follow the statutory appeals procedure as set out in the EPO 2016, s10.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The SHG is committed to fairness and equality and values diversity. The operations of the St Helena Research Council will reflect these values.

MANAGEMENT OF POLICY

The primary responsibility for adherence to this policy rests with the St Helena Research Council and the Lifelong Learning Sector who are accountable for implementing the policy.

The Education Committee has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied fairly and meets any legislative requirements in force.

Strategic policy direction is the responsibility of the Education Committee, as is the allocation of government funding to support the St Helena Research Institute.

This policy will be reviewed by the Education Committee on an annual basis or as may be required by legislative or policy changes or other exigencies.

11. CONTACTS

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