



## **BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE – RESEARCH COMPETITION**

### ***INFORMATION SHEET***

The St Helena Research Institute, in conjunction with St Helena Government and the Fibre Optic Cable and Satellite Ground Station Board, are seeking to attract research proposals from local and international researchers that will help realise the social objectives of the European Development Fund (EDF 11) 11<sup>th</sup> round project funding.

The specific social objectives of EDF 11 are:

- Improved connectivity of households and businesses which will have a substantial positive impact on all socio-economic conditions on the Island
- Reduction in overseas referrals for health diagnostics and treatment which will enable people to remain close to their families while receiving medical interventions. Increased Internet bandwidth which will enable access to modern medical procedures, not currently available on the Island
- To enable people with disabilities or a special educational need to reach their true potential and to gain further independence.

As part of the EDF 11, St Helena Government is required to conduct an evaluation of the changes occurring as a result of the landing of the fibre optic cable. We are running a competition to encourage research work which would contribute to this evaluation of a pre and post cable environment on St Helena. This could be developed similarly to the project considering the impact of TV introduction on behaviour (Charlton et al, 2000), or could have a wider or different scope. Amongst other things we are interested to understand, in relation to St Helena:

- How educational achievement changes when students gain access to unlimited internet
- The impact of telemedicine in remote places
- The contribution of technology to mental health, well-being, independence of people with disabilities, speech and language therapy
- The costs and benefits of telemedicine and influence of medical referral budgets
- The impact of access on culture, relationships and networking
- The impact of internet on globalisation for a small remote island
- Changes in the connectivity of households and businesses and related impact on socio-economic conditions and business opportunities on the Island.

The competition is open to individual researchers and consortia of academics, and could comprise more than one academic institution based internationally, on St Helena or, both. The lead applicant must be age 21 years and over. Partnership

approaches with St Helena organisations are encouraged and multi-disciplinary studies will be considered. The start date of the project should preferably aim to be on or before October 2021.

Research proposals will need to set out clearly:

- The lead applicant's name, organisation or institution and contact details and names and organisations of other partners and collaborators who will be involved in the study
- Proposed start date and duration of project
- The aims and methodology of the proposed research (keep to a max 500 words in answering this question)
- Describe intended outcomes and how the outcomes of the proposed research will benefit St Helena, including any local capacity building or public engagement activities
- Total magnitude of the research project budget, other agreed or potential funding sources, and an indication of how much of the funding of the total project would be spent in St Helena
- Consideration of social and environmental impacts and mitigation measures

Applications should be submitted via an application form that can be emailed or collected from Sheralee Yon at the Research Institute, Carnarvon Court, or via email: [enquiries@sthenaresearch.edu.sh](mailto:enquiries@sthenaresearch.edu.sh). The closing date for proposals to reach the Research Institute is 12 February 2020.

The proposals will be reviewed by the St Helena Connected Group and the St Helena Research Council and the research proposal which is considered to best support the EDF 11 social objectives, offering real benefits to the community and meets the Research Council criteria, will be awarded a grant of £5,000 to go towards the costs of travel to the Island or for local researchers, the sum of £5,000 to contribute to the costs of conducting the study.

For an application form or for further information please contact:  
[enquiries@sthenaresearch.edu.sh](mailto:enquiries@sthenaresearch.edu.sh)

**SHG**  
**20 November 2019**