



**SOILLSE RESEARCH FUND**

**STÒRAS RANNSACHAIDH SHOILLSE**

**Information for Applicants – 2015/16**

# STÒRAS RANNSACHAIDH SHOILLSE

## Purpose of the Soillse Research Fund

The Soillse Research Fund has been established to support small-scale research projects on Gaelic language development topics of relevance to the aims and objectives of Soillse. The principal aim of the fund is develop the research capacity of existing and potential researchers within the Soillse academic partnership. However, it is also expected that researchers from within the Soillse academic network will work on collaborative research projects with other Higher Education institutions and organizations/individuals who have an interest in the revitalization of Gaelic. Creating a collaborative research environment will enable knowledge exchange, develop research expertise and capacity and create a greater awareness of the dynamics of Gaelic development. Such a partnership will contribute to building Gaelic language-based research capacity by engaging individuals and groups in projects which they would otherwise have been unlikely to be able to participate in.

### **The Soillse Research Fund will provide support for research projects up to the value of £3,000.**

Each project will also need an additional 40% of match funding to the value of the grant received from the Soillse Research Fund. All research proposals will be considered as long as they relate to aspects of Gaelic language development. For example, research proposals can be submitted in relation to Gaelic acquisition and use in the community and the family; aspects of Gaelic identity and self-confidence, the appropriateness and impact of public policies as they relate to Gaelic; use of technology to support Gaelic development; Gaelic and new media technologies; and the application of Gaelic in learning environments and educational practices. Joint-applications for research funding from members of the Soillse academic partnership in collaboration with partners from across the public and private sectors are particularly welcomed.

In the 2015-16 round the fund will particularly welcome proposals that tie in with the Soillse Islands Gaelic Research Project, launching in September 2015. This is a multi-modal research project which will examine current language data, generate independent quantitative data, generate qualitative data and initiate a process of community consultation on language planning endeavours, with a view to establishing the process as an on-going concern and a monitoring process in support of effective language planning. The 7 modules are briefly indicated here:

- Module 1: Preparatory Module - Planning and Review phase and Establishing the Statistical Base: Detailed analysis of the language ability data in the national census as they pertain to na h-Eileanan Siar and the districts in the Isles coming within the scope of the project
- Module 2: Questionnaire-based survey administered in pre-schools to assess family language practice of infant age cohort
- Module 3: Demographic survey of the sociolinguistic dynamic in indicative Gàidhlig-speaking communities
- Module 4: Questionnaire-based quantitative survey of the language attitudes, reported abilities and practices and family sociolinguistic background of teenagers in the 4 secondary schools of the Isles

- Module 5: Public and official consultation on language aspiration and policy concerns for the Isles
- Module 6: Integration of L1 and L2 language planning practices as a model for language initiatives in the Isles
- Module 7: The write-up, reporting and data dissemination phase will entail the publication of a detailed report and plan of action, backed up by a media strategy aimed at encouraging communal and institutional support for the proposed language planning initiatives.

### **About Soillse**

Soillse has been established in recognition of the strategic requirement to provide a much enhanced research capacity to inform public policy towards the maintenance and revitalisation of Gaelic language and culture.

If policy development and professional practice in relation to increasing the use of Gaelic in Scotland is to be informed, stimulated and influenced then there is a need for an enhanced and highly coordinated national research capability that will inform Scottish Government policies and priorities as well as the priorities of the National Plan for Gaelic.

### **A Partnership Approach**

Soillse is based around an academic partnership that comprises the University of the Highlands and Islands, Aberdeen University, Glasgow University and Edinburgh University. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Lews Castle College represent the research elements of UHI in the consortium.

The establishment of a meaningful partnership between the academic partners and the Gaelic communities of Scotland will also be a central element in ensuring the long-term success of Soillse.

### **Soillse Funding**

The total research funding allocated to Soillse is £5.29million. The Scottish Funding Council has invested £1.86million; Bòrd na Gàidhlig, £541,000 and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, £400,000. £2.49million of new and matched funding contributions will come from the academic partners participating in Soillse. Over the duration of the project, 9 PhDs will be recruited alongside the 5 Research Fellows. The project will also be supported by 3 international experts who will act as advisers/consultants to Soillse. In addition to the existing academic expertise within the partnership, Soillse has recruited a Research Professor and a Project Manager.

Soillse represents the largest ever investment in Gaelic-related research and a unique pooling of resources by the key academic Institutions that are involved.

## **Research Aims and Themes of Soillse**

Soillse aims to pool research capacity from across the participating academic Institutions to develop and establish:

- An international-quality research capability that will support, inform and influence policy at national and local levels in the effort to maintain and revitalise the Gaelic language in Scotland and beyond; and
- A powerful research network across the participating Scottish Higher Education Institutions, linking national researchers with expertise and interest in contemporary Gaelic language matters, with international minority language research Institutions.

Soillse has three primary research themes:

- Gaelic as a family and community language;
- Gaelic in education; and
- Assessment of the impact of public policies directed towards the revitalisation of Gaelic.

## **Who can apply for funding from the Soillse Research Fund?**

The main applicant seeking a Soillse research grant must have a registered bank account. All applicants must also demonstrate that the proposed research team has the ability to deliver on the objectives of the research within the proposed timescales. Potential research projects seeking funding must be related to the research aims and objectives of Soillse.

Applications for funding can be made by the following:

- All members of staff, including senior graduate/postgraduate students, of the Celtic and Gaelic Schools and Departments of the academic partners involved in Soillse.
- Collaborative projects where a Soillse academic partner is the lead applicant.
- Applications from any School/Department of a Higher Education Institution, out-with the Celtic and Gaelic Schools/Departments of the Soillse academic partners.
- Individuals/consultants in collaboration with, and where the main applicant is the Soillse academic Institution.

## **Who is ineligible for funding?**

Applications cannot normally be accepted from individuals or groups without a bank account, or private companies seeking a profit from the project.

## **Projects eligible for assistance**

Research projects eligible for assistance must focus on a research question or a research capacity building/knowledge exchange exercise that is linked to one or more of the 3 main research objectives of Soillse. Each research proposal will be assessed against an agreed set of criteria to

ensure accountability and transparency in the decision making processes that will decide the research awards. The 4 criteria for assessing grant applications are:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>
1. Degree of research capacity-building inherent in the proposal	5
2. Originality, relevance and feasibility of research proposal	5
3. Potential of project to lead to other Gaelic language research activity	5
4. Gaelic language capability of research team	4

### **Projects that will not receive funding**

Research projects that will not ordinarily expect to be supported include the following:

- Gaelic language research projects already being funded through other sources.
- Gaelic language research projects which have already been established.
- Retrospective projects costs.

### **Maximum amount of funding to be awarded**

Applications are invited for funding up to a maximum of £3,000 per project. Each project proposal must also include an additional 40% of match funding<sup>1</sup>. The match funding element can include: additional finance from another source, the value of university staff time associated with the project, the value of the use of any university facilities associated with the delivery of the project and/or any other relevant input that will contribute to the completion of the research project.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a project seeking grant funding of £3,000 will require a match funding element of £1,200 making a total project value of £4,200.

### **Does Gaelic have to be part of the research project?**

The project team must include members who can speak Gaelic.

### **Decision on research funding awards**

Soillse will inform applicants of the outcome of their application by 29/02/16.

### **Use of research awards**

The funding awarded must be used specifically for the research project for which the award is being made. Awards made under the Soillse Small Research Scheme must not be utilised for match funding and/or leverage against other research projects/other applications for funding being made by the applicant.

### **Will there be other opportunities to apply to the research fund?**

A further round may be announced in 2016, but is not guaranteed.

### **Information required during the timescale of the project**

Soillse will require a progress report and an end of project report once the research is completed. Soillse staff may also contact applicants once the research project is underway for informal updates on progress

### **Research plan, timescale and outcomes**

Proposals should set out a clear research plan for a 8-month project which minimally specifies:

- Aims and rationale of the proposed research
- Month by month progress plan
- Procedures for the collection and analysis of data
- Brief profile of each member of the research group, and their roles within the project
- Nature of matched funding (e.g. financial input; use of office space, equipment and facilities ....)
- Financial plan (e.g. covering fees for project members, travel & subsistence ...)
- Ethical procedures, e.g. protecting the anonymity and rights of those who provide data for the project; obtaining of informed consent from respondents ...)

By the end of Week 20 of the project a *Progress Report* should be submitted to enable the Soillse Management Team to monitor progress and offer constructive feedback.

A *Draft Final Report* of approximately 5,000 -7,000 words should be submitted by the end of the 8-month project. The Management Team will read and offer further feedback on this, with a view to the report's being published on the Soillse website.

### **Closing date for applications**

The closing date for completed applications is 31/01/16. No applications will be considered for this round of research proposals after this date.

## **How to apply for research funding**

The main applicant must complete an application form which can be downloaded from the Soillse web page or paper copies can be made available by contacting the Soillse Project Manager.

Any additional information on the Soillse Research Fund can also be provided by the Project Director.

Completed application forms should be sent by email to [fios@soillse.ac.uk](mailto:fios@soillse.ac.uk) or by post to the address below by 31/01/16.

Gordon Wells  
SOILLSE  
Fàs  
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig  
Slèite  
An t-Eilean Sgitheanach  
IV44 8RQ

Fòn - Tel: 01471 888559  
Post-d – Email: [fios@soillse.ac.uk](mailto:fios@soillse.ac.uk)