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SUGAR RESEARCH AUSTRALIA LIMITED

# 2019/20 SMALL MILLING RESEARCH PROJECT INVESTMENT

APPLICATION KIT



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## Introduction

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and adoption (RD&A) projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry.

The Small Milling Research Project (SMRP) investment scheme was developed to deliver investment in relatively low cost, short-term, industry-identified and preferably industry-led research projects. These projects should be targeted to develop a product, service or process to solve specific problems in sugar mills and deliver tangible outputs with almost immediate outcomes. In the process, the scheme will strengthen collaborations between industry and research through the direct involvement of the milling sector in SMRPs and increase research skills and capability in sugar mills.

SMRP investment is specifically aligned with Key Focus Areas (KFA) 5 (Milling efficiency and technology) and KFA6 (Product diversification and value addition). As SRA has recently commissioned a project to review industry diversification options, the scheme will not address projects in KFA6 for 2019 investment.

SRA expects that all outcomes and intellectual property (IP) generated from SMRPs will be made freely available within the Australian sugar industry.

SMRP proposals will be competitively awarded and assessed against the selection criteria outlined in this Application Kit, or may in special circumstances be specifically commissioned to solve a high-priority industry-identified problem.

SMRP investment by SRA will be restricted to a maximum of \$75,000 per project, with the entire scheme capped at \$250,000 per year. There is also a capital expenditure restriction on SMRP investments to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. All successful projects are expected to be completed within 12-months of the starting date.

This application kit provides information to assist applicants in the preparation of SMRP applications for competitive funding in 2019.

## SMRP research investment process

All proposals will be rigorously assessed by an evaluation group comprising of the Milling Research Advisory Committee (MRAC) and at least one member from each of the SRA Research Funding Panel (RFP) and the Research Funding Unit (RFU). This evaluation group will ensure that only projects that address industry-identified issues and meet the selection criteria will be shortlisted for investment. SRA may appoint an alternative delegate(s) to the evaluation group if RFP/RFU members are unable to participate.

For projects submitted for potential immediate investment, the evaluation group will provide an opinion on whether an immediate funding allocation is warranted. Applications must clearly indicate the reasons why early commencement is critical and the significant impact that project outcomes will provide. Applicants should gain expressions of support from other milling companies in favour of an immediate commencement.

The evaluation group will provide their assessment and project rankings to the RFP, who will subsequently make an investment recommendation to the SRA Board. Contracting and project management of successful projects will be the responsibility of the RFU.

Finalised applications must be completed using the SMRP Application Form and submitted to SRA by email to [funding@sugarresearch.com.au](mailto:funding@sugarresearch.com.au) by **16 February 2019**.

## Guidelines for applicants

In order to maximise the likelihood of success, applications must be of high quality and clearly align with milling and SRA RD&A priorities. Generally speaking, attractive projects will not be repeating work that has been done before or appear to include business as usual activities.

Proposed research projects should be attempting to solve industry identified problems and aim to deliver almost immediate outcomes that will be readily adopted. Examples of SMRP project activities are the development or testing of new products, services or processes to provide solutions for sugar mills. Applicants are encouraged to communicate broadly across our industry and develop projects that will have impact if successful.

The scheme encourages applications from milling organisations, equipment manufacturers/suppliers, consultants, research organisations or other organisations. **However, at least one of the project participants must be from a milling organisation.** This will ensure that projects are practical and focused on delivering industry benefit.

All applications must specify the industry need for the proposed activities, provide a clear description of outputs, outcomes and industry benefit and describe plans for their subsequent adoption. The industry benefit or business case part of the application is particularly important – if the application cannot demonstrate a significant and believable value proposition, it is unlikely to attract investment.

The potential attractiveness of applications will be enhanced by financial co-investment within the project.

## Other information

The evaluation group will consider the following issues during their assessment of applications:

- How significant is the issue being addressed?
- Can you define (preferably in economic terms) the positive impact your project will have if successful?
- Are participating organisations making appropriate financial and other contributions, especially time?
- To what extent are mill-based technologists involved in the project?
- What is the likelihood of delivering the desired outcomes?
- Project outcomes must have a plausible adoption route and a significant likelihood of takeup.

What can I use SMRP funds for?

- Research funds can be used for salaries, capital, travel and operating expenses.
- Salaries can only be requested for staff and/or contractor inputs that are essential for the project. Small staff inputs into projects should be provided as in-kind contributions.
- As SMRP projects are relatively small, salary and contractor overheads should be minimised and may be subject to review.
- All travel requested must be essential in order to conduct project activities. International travel will not be supported.
- Capital purchases may be considered but must be essential in order to conduct project activities or they will not be approved. Capital expenditure is capped at a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

## Timelines

The table below outlines the timeline for the conduct of the complete research project call leading to 2019 project investment. These dates may be subject to minor changes but are not expected to change significantly.

Activity	Key Dates
Project call for SMRP applications	1 October 2018
Completed SMRP applications lodged with SRA	15 February 2019
Notification of outcome	22 April 2019
Contracted project to commence	13 May 2019 or after