

THE BROOKE'S RESEARCH POLICY



PURPOSE

The objective of The Brooke's Research Policy is to define the framework within which The Brooke makes research activity-related decisions.

This document provides a definition of research at The Brooke, background information on the context and principles within which Brooke's research is conducted and cross references to other Brooke policies and guidelines which must be taken into account when planning and conducting research. A glossary of key research-related terms is attached as an annex; words defined in the glossary are highlighted in **red bold font**.

Based on this definition and context, the document then sets out the research-related responsibilities of Brooke and partner staff in order to adhere to the principles of the policy. These are designed to ensure that The Brooke engages solely in high quality evidence-based research that is relevant to benefitting working equids.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS (hyperlinks to each document will be inserted once policy is ready to circulate)

The Research Policy must be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The Brooke's Good Research Practice (BGRP)
- The Brooke's Animal Welfare Policy
- Guidelines on the use of animals in training: creating a culture of responsible use
- UK Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Interactions with and around working equids
- Small Initiative Fund Guidelines
- The Brooke's Basic Ethical Frameworks Policy
- Working with Universities
- The Brooke's Advocacy Policy

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH POLICY

Within the Brooke, research is defined as an in-depth, one off and time bound investigation that seeks to answer a currently unanswered question in order to inform programmatic activities and/or inform and support advocacy activities. All research activities undertaken at The Brooke must comply with the Research Policy and The Brooke's Good Research Practice (BGRP).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities comprise regular monitoring of progress against plans and impact outcomes that is part of every project cycle and is used to reflect on

previous actions and inform future ones. Neither M&E activities, nor Advocacy policy mapping activities are covered by the Research Policy or BGRP.

UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH AT THE BROOKE

Research is fundamental to our strategy

The Brooke's Global Strategy incorporates **evidence** as one of the four strategic objectives. Programme and Advocacy strategy and activities must be informed by the best available **qualitative** and **quantitative** evidence. Research is therefore an integral part of The Brooke's work. We must understand locally relevant welfare problems in order to design and evaluate appropriate interventions as well as to underpin our advocacy initiatives. Research is critical for us to be recognised as a global authority on working equine welfare and to provide evidence of the impact of our work to all key stakeholders.

Research origination

Research at The Brooke is primarily, but not exclusively, originated by Country Programmes (CPs). The need for research is derived from needs/knowledge/evidence gaps and potential solutions identified by the Brooke's CPs and HQ staff in discussion with the communities and/or other stakeholders including policy makers, with whom they work. It may also arise from issues they have identified within the policy, legal and socio-economic environments in which they operate.

Research process

In order to protect and promote our credibility as an evidence-based organisation, ensure effective use of donors' money and minimise research-associated risks, including reputational risk, it is essential that Brooke research should stand up to peer review and:

- is practically applicable for CPs and / or
- is capable of informing, enriching, and/or advancing the policy agenda

All research must be **ethically** sound in accordance with standards expected by the wider research community outside The Brooke.

The structured approach to research that must be adopted by Brooke researchers is outlined in detail in the BGRP. The BGRP sets out guidelines on the sequence of steps involved in the process, the Brooke parties involved in each step and the format of documentation required. Each CP must designate a Research Focal Point who holds a copy of the current Research Policy and BGRP. The Focal Point is responsible for ensuring access to and understanding of these documents for all relevant CP staff.

The Brooke does not carry out **invasive** research. The Brooke's Animal Welfare Ethics Review Body (AWERB), previously known as the Ethics Committee, assists in the review of research proposals and protocols. It ensures compliance with appropriate ethical principles in relation to minimising both human and animal welfare risks and contributes to protecting Brooke's reputational risk.

Although the context can vary widely, the majority of research projects undertaken at The Brooke directly involve equids. Some research projects inevitably involve close contact examination and a few, clinical sample collection. All research projects undertaken at The Brooke must adhere to The Brooke's Animal Welfare Policy.

The Brooke acknowledges a clear distinction between clinical procedures which are acceptable when performed as part of diagnostic and treatment activities for an individual equid, and procedures performed as part of a research activity which may not be acceptable. The proposed use for research of any clinical procedure which may potentially inflict pain, suffering or harm to the animal is reviewed as part of the ethical review process by the AWERB prior to the start of any project. For example, a clinical procedure which may cause short term harm (e.g. needle injection) but results in direct benefit for that individual equid would be considered as a veterinary clinical procedure. However a clinical procedure which may cause short term harm (e.g. needle injection) but which does not result in direct benefit to that specific equid, yet might allow improved welfare in a wider population at a later date, would be considered a research (clinical) procedure.

Research projects that are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention through the use of a control group that is denied that intervention must be reviewed by the AWERB since this design could be ethically unsound in the working equid context.

Brooke often undertakes research involving direct interaction with equid owners and their communities. The welfare and rights of human participants in research activities must be protected at all times. The AWERB review includes consideration of human welfare risks.

Data management, analysis and protection

The Brooke research process requires seeking informed consent from owners and other participants. Ownership of research-related data and how they will be stored and shared must be defined in the research protocol, in accordance with the BGRP.

The Brooke has a limited number of organisational licences for proprietary software which must be used for any statistical analysis required for research purposes. Requests for a licence are made via email to the UK Research Co-ordinator.

Applying and sharing research findings

Each research project must have specific objectives in respect of informing programmatic or advocacy activities, a defined time scale, a precise methodology and be carried out systematically. It must add to the existing body of knowledge, through collection, analysis and dissemination of results. Each research project must be formally written up immediately after completion for local sharing. An appropriate time-bound plan for the application and dissemination of the project's findings both within and outside The Brooke is drawn up promptly after completion or during annual planning by the relevant Brooke team. This is designed to ensure that the use of the research is demonstrated to all stakeholders.

Funding research

Country-specific research projects are usually funded from individual CP budgets. The details of the research must be included in annual plans and in the national-level log frames. Multi-country research is generally funded through a UK-held budget. In both cases, the

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budget associated with the research is defined and agreed as part of the research proposal development.

Working with third parties (universities, research institutes, consultants, others)

The Brooke receives on-going requests to work with universities and other research/higher education institutes. The Brooke does not host individual external undergraduate or post-graduate researchers undertaking field work.

The Brooke may occasionally work with a third party to answer a research question generated by The Brooke. Clear timelines, roles and responsibilities and budgets must be agreed and in place in writing prior to any data collection. In this case, The Brooke must assess the following factors:

- benefit to working equids
- value for money in terms of funds paid to an external organisation as compared to the cost/viability of undertaking the research in house
- benefit of collaborating on a piece of research through added credibility or reach of the final research
- any organisational risks to The Brooke arising as a result of the collaboration

The Brooke may consider offering strictly delineated access to existing Brooke data for external under- or postgraduate researchers in return for payment-free analysis and write up of research questions that we have defined but lack time and/or expertise to analyse and write up ourselves. In such circumstances, Brooke's ownership of the associated Intellectual Property must be documented and agreed in advance of granting access.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy review and dissemination

The UK Research Team must make any necessary recommendations for revision to the Research Policy, including those required to ensure that the policy reflects UK legal and ethical requirements for research. The UK Research Team must submit recommendations to The Brooke Board of Trustees at least every two years.

The Brooke Board of Trustees must review and approve the organisation's Research Policy at least every two years, to ensure it continues to reflect The Brooke's approach.

The UK Research Team must disseminate the current Research Policy and BGRP to all designated CP Research Focal Points.

CP Research Focal Points must ensure that all staff engaged in research-related activities can access and are familiar with the key requirements of the Research Policy and BGRP.

CP Research Focal Points must ensure that an introduction to understanding research at the Brooke and to the Brooke's research principles form part of the induction process for all new staff who may engage in field work and/or research-related activities.

Research origination and design

CP staff involved in research must be aware of relevant organisational policies and guidelines and seek guidance when required to ensure that research proposals comply with them. They must comply with the research policy and BGRP at all times.

CP staff who originate research proposals must define clearly the aim of the research and the use(s) to which the findings of each research project will be applied.

CP staff who originate research proposals must ensure that research projects are in line with all legal and ethical requirements in the country where the research is conducted.

CP staff who originate research proposals must ensure that the **concept note** and **protocol** include an explanation of why any clinical procedures involved in the research process are unavoidable for purposes of achieving the aim the research.

The CP CEO or Country Representative must ensure that for each research project the UK Research team and/or UK Advocacy team, according to the topic, are consulted regarding structured study design, data needs, analysis and management, data collection tool development and field work planning.

The UK Research team and UK Advocacy team must ensure each research project addresses pertinent question(s) relevant to working equid welfare in the Brooke context. They must ensure that each project is designed either to add to existing knowledge about the subject in question, to build the evidence on an issue in order to develop a position and recommendations, or to develop new methods for research into it.

The UK Research team must ensure that research proposals are subject to appropriate technical and ethical review, including AWERB where appropriate.

The UK Research team must ensure that constructive feedback on research proposals is provided to the CP Research Focal Point or lead researcher in a timely manner.

The UK Research team must provide appropriate research-related capacity building, support and resources to Brooke CP staff via group workshops, online resources and one to one support according to need.

Research field work activities

CP staff must ensure that procedures agreed as part of the BGRP review process are implemented during the course of field work and data collection.

CP staff must follow their own country's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which relate to health and safety and to follow instructions given by their country safety representative.

No Brooke researcher should knowingly put themselves, other people or any equid in danger or at risk of reduced welfare. CP staff who are directly interacting with equids must read the UK's SOP: Interactions with and around working equids.

CP staff carrying out work in communities must:

- seek informed consent and ensure that the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of research participants are considered and that any potential risks are mitigated
- ensure that the collection of data complies with ethical and legal requirements within the country in which the research is undertaken

- inform all participants of the intended use of the research
- ensure that all participants have the opportunity to receive feedback on the results of research in which they are involved
- ensure confidentiality of individually-attributable data in accordance with data protection requirements in the country of origin and relevant Brooke policies.

Research data analysis

The CP CEO or Country Representative must ensure that CP staff use only licensed versions of appropriate data analysis software packages.

The UK Research team must use only licensed software where required to provide support to CPs in research data analysis.

Research into use

The CP CEO or Country Representative must ensure that research findings are applied to inform programmatic activity and/or underpin or inform advocacy-related activities at individual country level on a timely basis.

UK teams (**terminology TBC under new structure, to include current AWR, Advocacy, M&E and Regional Desk teams**) must review CP reporting to ensure that evidence of application of research findings is included in all country-specific strategies and plans, and quarterly and annual plans and reports.

Programmatic research results dissemination

CP staff must write up programmatic research projects in the BGRP-prescribed format on a timely basis as soon as field work and analysis has been completed.

The UK Research team must provide support in writing up research in BGRP report format.

Once the plan for applying research findings within programmatic or advocacy activities has been agreed, the UK Research team must support CPs in preparing it for submission to The Brooke Journal if appropriate.

Once the plan for applying research findings has been agreed, if CP staff wish to disseminate details of a research project to an external conference or publication, they must seek support for this in a timely manner from the UK Research team. If this is agreed, the UK Research team must provide timely support to facilitate this.

Advocacy research results dissemination

CP staff must write up advocacy research projects field work in a pre-agreed format on a timely basis once field work and analysis has been completed.

The UK Advocacy team must provide support in writing up field work as required.

CP staff and the UK Advocacy team must work together, involving the UK research team when appropriate, to ensure that research findings are written up in a format suitable for

sharing with identified advocacy stakeholders including through advocacy events, as per advocacy strategy and implementation plans.

Research work plan and budget

The CP CEO or Country Representative must ensure that details of planned research projects and funding for country-specific research projects are included in their CP's annual work plan and financial budget.

Research-related collaboration with third parties

When proposing collaborative or third party-implemented research, the CP CEO, Country Representative or UK Director must provide clear statements of:

- the benefit to working equids from undertaking the work (or how it will support the achievement of identified target policy changes)
- the benefit associated with involving each third party in the research
- comparison of costs associated with involving a third party as compared with costs involved in Brooke staff undertaking the work
- the risks associated with the collaboration with each third party and how these are to be mitigated

In the event that a collaborative or consultant-implemented research project is agreed, the CEO, Country Representative or UK Director must:

- ensure that a written contract is drawn up and signed in accordance with Brooke contract guidelines, which defines project roles and responsibilities, specifies ownership of the data and associated intellectual property and specifies the format and content of the project report
- verify that work complies with all the relevant Brooke policies and guidelines.
- ensure that all staff involved in the project are aware of any external institutional policies and guidelines which need to be followed (e.g. when using laboratories for analysis of samples).

The CP CEO or Country Representative must ensure that Brooke staff do not facilitate access to communities and animals that The Brooke works with for students or non-Brooke researchers who are undertaking projects outwith the policy/BGRP guidelines.

GLOSSARY OF RESEARCH TERMS

Concept note

A Brooke research concept note is a document that summarises:

- the background to the identification of the need to undertake research,
- existing evidence relating to this topic and why it is insufficient for our needs
- the research question(s) that needs to be answered
- the proposed approach to answering the question
- how the answer to the question and other findings of the research will be applied to programmatic and/or advocacy activities within The Brooke

A research concept note template is provided as an annex to the Brooke Good Research Practice (BGRP) guidelines.

Ethical

Ethical research protects the interests of both the animal and human subjects of research, the researchers themselves, The Brooke's donors and wider stakeholders.

Evidence

The body of facts or information that indicates whether a belief or proposition is true.

Invasive research

Involves a procedure which penetrates or breaks the skin or enters a body cavity. Examples of invasive procedures in the context of The Brooke include those that involve inserting a needle through an equid's skin (for sample collection or administration of a fluid), an incision through skin with a blade or other entry into the body such as placing of a nasogastric tube or rectal sampling or examination.

Peer review

The process whereby a piece of research or a research proposal is checked by a group of suitably qualified people (sometimes described as experts) in the same field to ensure it meets the necessary standards before it is published or accepted for implementation.

Protocol

A detailed narrative that is developed by a Brooke researcher to complement the concept note. The protocol :

- describes the background to the identification of the need for research
- provides a review of existing literature on the topic
- states the agreed research question(s) that will be investigated
- describes in detail the data that will be collected and the data collection tools that will be used in the field
- outlines the data relationships that will be analysed
- explains the data management arrangements, including Intellectual Property protection
- provides a detailed explanation of how the findings of the research will be applied to programmatic activities and/or advocacy related activities.

A research protocol template is provided as an annex to the BGRP guidelines.

Qualitative research

Involves using open questioning techniques seeking information relating to opinions and feelings about a topic and motivations for behaviour. It generally focuses on words and their meanings and does not seek to count things. Qualitative research may be open to participants determining what the important issues are.

Quantitative research

Involves sourcing information that is either numerical or categorical. All the pieces of information to be recorded are defined in advance, either as a data collection table or as a structured questionnaire. Quantitative information are generally aggregated and summarised in the form of totals, averages and ranges as well as being subjected to statistical analysis techniques in order to answer a SMART research question.

Qualitative and quantitative research techniques may be used simultaneously ('mixed methods' research) so that qualitative information can provide explanatory details to help in understanding quantitative findings.

Robust

A study is said to be robust if it is anticipated that another researcher undertaking the same research into the same question would achieve a similar result. This involves :

- using a method and a study design suitable for the question you need to answer
- involving a sufficient number of people and/or animals to make it mathematically sound (if it's quantitative research) and that these participants were selected in such a way from the group to which you want to apply the findings of the research as to make it reliable (unbiased)
- using data collection tools that ask appropriate questions and avoid asking questions in a leading manner that might influence the response offered by the interviewee
- analysing data in a systematic way so that the findings you report represent the full picture of your findings rather than just the pieces that fit with what you hoped to find.

