

6 July 2021

J Bruning

By email: fyi-request-15610-6bd9a987@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear J Bruning

Official Information Act Request: CIBR funding

On 31 May 2021 you sent a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) to ESR as follows:

Please can ESR provide information regarding:

1. Annual funding provided to ESR to fund the Centre for Integrated Biowaste Research (CIBR) for the years 2017-2021 (recognising CIBR is virtual and that monies may be distributed between allied institutes).

2. CIBR budgets/annual reporting including details (as an itemized list of projects, including budget for each project) of all research and/or monitoring projects.

3. Information held with ESR or CIBR regarding: (a) Reports relating to regional emissions monitoring of trace elements/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern in biosolids released to land, or in influent wastewater (b) Analytical reports relating to the toxicity and environmental and human health risk of trace elements/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and their metabolites in post-treatment (influent) waste-water and biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge released to the environment. (c) Reports concerning the environmental fate and/or persistence of present chemical compounds and their metabolites in post-treatment waste-water and biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge/influent wastewater released to the environment.

(d) Analysis, reporting, discussion or policy advice relating to policy development, regulation and best practice treatment and extraction technologies in high income nation states.

4. Emails, correspondence, advice concerning the funding or withdrawal of funding of CIBR, between (a) ESR staff; - and (b) Emails, correspondence, advice between ESR staff and external Ministries or authorities concerning the funding of CIBR.

Our response to your request:

The Centre for Integrated Biowaste Research (CIBR) is the name that a group of collaborators from ESR, Cawthron Institute, Landcare Research, Scion and University of Lincoln (and later the University of Canterbury) gave to a project funded by ESR's Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF) to create an umbrella to work collaboratively and in a multidisciplinary way in this research field. CIBR was first funded by ESR in 2013 with the fund finishing in June 2020. CIBR was never a legal entity; it was an ESR SSIF funded project. All the work, reports, experiments etc, completed under the CIBR project are set out in the annual reports to ESR. Please see the annual reports attached to this response at Appendix 1. All the results are published in the scientific papers listed in the reports and can be accessed online in each

journal, in the CIBR newsletters that are publicly available on the CIBR webpage, and on the webpage: <http://www.cibr.org.nz/>

In answer to your specific questions:

1. ESR is the entity that funded the CIBR project through ESR's Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF) which is ultimately funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The CIBR project was funded by ESR's SSIF as follows: \$1,413,085 in FY2017-2018, \$1,413,085 in FY2018-2019 and \$1,530,059 in FY2019-2020, totalling \$4,356,229 for the three years. Those funds included funding our external collaborators Cawthron Institute, Landcare Research, Scion, University of Lincoln, University of Canterbury, NIWA, Northcott Research Associates, and Kukupa Research.
2. The CIBR project was funded by ESR's SSIF as explained in our response to the previous question. We *attach* all the annual reports, not only from 2017, but from the launch of the project in 2013 at Appendix 1. In the annual reports there is a list of outputs including conference presentations, scientific papers, and reports that CIBR produced. All the reports are publicly available on the CIBR webpage, including the regular newsletters.
3. All the reports requested by you at question 3 are listed in the annual reports. The work that we have performed is scientific research - we have not done regular monitoring as part of the CIBR project. If monitoring has been required for some specific experiments it is recorded in the reports listed in the annual reports, and is publicly available on the webpages specified in the reports.
4. The email correspondence concerning the funding of CIBR is mainly internal between the project leader and the ESR research office. These are annual emails with the call for SSIF applications and the responses from the research office confirming whether the project was successful in obtaining the funds. Due to the substantial amount of work that would be required to locate and collate email correspondence dating back to 2013, we are refusing this request under section 18(f) of the OIA. However, an example of the annual email correspondence regarding CIBR and SSIF funding can be found in Appendix 2 below.

Your right to seek a review

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Thank you for your request.

Yours sincerely



Libby Harrison

Joint General Manager Health and Environment - Environment

Appendix 1: List of attached final reports

- 2014-08-29_HORSWELL_CIBR annual report 2013 2014 250814
- HORSWELL CIBR annual report 2014 2015 DRAFT
- Horswell CIBR annual report 2015-2016_MASTER COPY 20160712
- CIBR annual report 2016-2017_FINAL
- Guitierrez_CIBR_Final rpt 2017-18
- CIBR_SSIF End of FY2018_19
- CIBR_2019_20 SSIF Final Report_end

Pending and unsuccessful grant proposals submitted may be revisited by ESR in the future. Therefore, grant proposals submitted that are listed as pending or unsuccessful are withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA, as making the information available would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of ESR.

Information relating to subcontracts and co-funding is also withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA, as making the information available would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of ESR and the subjects of the information.

Names of students listed in the final reports are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Appendix 2: Annual email correspondence example

REMINDER: SSIF applications due this Friday! Please note, the recently corrected Costing Model is attached here.

Call for proposals for the ESR STRATEGIC SCIENCE INVESTMENT FUND PROCESS FY2021

- *Applications should be made on the appropriate attached application form: New projects will use the New Projects form, and if your project is continuing next year from current funding, then the Continuing Form*
- *The application form should be no longer than four pages excluding the cover page, milestone and budget tables, references and CVs.*
- *All applications MUST have a signature from the appropriate line manager(s).*
- *Applications should be completed and submitted as a Word document using Arial 11 point font and single-spaced.*

Forward your applications to [name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy]@esr.cri.nz in the Research Office no later than noon, on Friday, February 28th 2020.

Projects will be assessed by a review panel consisting of the Chief Scientist, both operational GMs, Principal Advisor Māori Impact, and senior scientists, and recommendations made to SLT. External reviews may be requested by the panel. The project proposals will be assessed for:

- *science excellence*
- *alignment with strategy*

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- *contribution to ESR's impacts*
- *enhanced collaborations and capability development*
- *contribution to Vision Mātauranga and improved outcomes for Māori*

Customer requirements and co-funding/commercial advantage will also be taken into consideration. The SLT will review the recommendations of the panel and additionally assess projects for strategic fit with ESR and business group plans. Recommendations will go to the Board for approval. The two application forms for continuing and new SSIF proposals.

Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2020 2:11 p.m.

To: [name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy]>

Cc:

Subject: SSIF FY2021

Dear [name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy],

Thank-you for your application for SSIF for FY2020. Unfortunately your project "Wai and Circular Economy" has not been successful at this time. There were 18 excellent applications for the unallocated SSIF and we could only fund ten of these. We would be happy to provide feedback on the project if you wish and I can set up a meeting for myself and [name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy] to discuss the project.

As you are aware ESR was awarded an additional \$3M SSIF and we are currently working with MBIE on our SSIF contract variation. Once this has been finalised we will be working with staff to allocate the money as soon as possible in line with MBIE's expectations.

Please inform your project participants of the decision.

Kind regards,

*[name withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy]
on behalf of SLT and the Board*