



# 2021 ITRC Pre-Proposal

## EXAMPLE PRE-PROPOSAL PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW

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### Proposed Project Title

Use of Soil Background Concentrations in Risk Assessment

### Proposal Contacts

#### Full Name

Job Title Here

Agency/Company/Organization Name Here

Email, Phone Number

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### Problem Statement and Highlight the Importance to the States and to the Broader Environmental Community

Soil background concentrations are important to consider when conducting human health and ecological risk assessments. Regulators use soil values specific to contaminants commonly found in soil to evaluate whether they will pose risks to people or the environment. These soil values are health-based values; they are derived using toxicity data, exposure parameters and chemical specific parameters. For some chemicals, health-based values calculate to be below what is found in our soils from natural or ambient sources. In these cases, since it is not common practice to require regulated parties to take action if the amount of the chemical in soil is less than background, *regulators often allow soil background values to be used instead of the health-based value.*

However, there is inconsistency in the way stakeholders define background for use in risk assessment, and there are different recommendations regarding appropriate sampling methods to determine background. A consensus among stakeholders regarding *appropriate statistical methods to use to establish default background values and site-specific background* has not been reached. Stakeholders also use a variety of statistical methods to compare site concentrations to a default background value or site-specific background, but there is also a lack of consensus regarding situations where it is appropriate to use averages and upper end estimates.

Although some state and federal agencies and other entities have various guidance documents regarding this subject, there is *no one nationwide comprehensive guidance* for risk managers, hydrologist scientists, and consultants working on cleanup sites or with other projects that require assessment of risks to contaminants in soil or soil like material. This project would address many of the key issues surrounding soil background concentrations, addressing a major gap in the environmental community.

### ITRC Products

The proposed deliverables include:

- ITRC technical guidance document
- Online training