



# Understanding and Sustaining Brazilian Biome Resources

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**Application Deadline: 2 September 2015, 16:00 (BST)**

## 1 Summary

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) are inviting research proposals under the 'Understanding and Sustaining Brazilian Biome Resources' call. The UK supports this call through the Newton Fund, which forms part of the UK government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment. The call is only open to joint UK-Brazil applications.

### 1.1. Funding Principles

NERC and FAPESP have defined this call as an equal research partnership where comparable research effort will be funded by the agencies. NERC will provide up to £2m of funding (80 per cent FEC) to eligible UK-based researchers and FAPESP will provide matched equivalent effort<sup>1</sup> to eligible São Paulo State-based researchers. It is expected that two to three project proposals lasting up to three years will be funded, depending on the quality of proposals received. Applications to this call must be in English.

In the UK, research costs are estimated as Full Economic Costs (FEC), as defined below by RCUK:

*FEC is "a cost which, if recovered across an organisation's full programme, would recover the total cost (direct, indirect and total overhead) including an adequate recurring investment in the organisation's infrastructure." Proposers must demonstrate the full economic costs of the project regardless of which funder is covering them. Costs can include institution facilities, estates, direct and indirect costs. FEC costs must also include values of salary expenses of the research team, including faculty and staff, proportional to the weekly hours dedicated to the proposed project. The individual funder's financial forms will provide more information on this. In accordance with RCUK policy, the UK funders will contribute up to 80 per cent FEC.*

<sup>1</sup> Applicants do not need to request equal amounts from both sides. The difference in values should reflect the difference in costs covered and local prices. The agencies also expect the costs on each side, to accurately reflect the research effort to be carried out. What is expected is that the research effort on both sides be comparable. Total funds available are £2 million.

Considering the above, costs in São Paulo must also be demonstrated as FEC. Applicants from São Paulo must include in their proposals the summary budget worksheet specifically designed for this purpose: [FAPESP-RCUK Funding Summary](#), which also includes the budget asked to NERC.

In all cases, in the budget request to FAPESP, applicants must include the values for the applicable FAPESP Overheads (“*Reserva Técnica*”), including Additional Benefits (“*Benefícios Complementares*”), RTP (“*Reserva Técnica de Infraestrutura Direta do Projeto*”) and RTI (“*Reserva Técnica para Infraestrutura Institucional de Pesquisa*”), as presented at [www.fapesp.br/rt](http://www.fapesp.br/rt).

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Science Background

Tropical forests are hotspots of terrestrial biodiversity<sup>2</sup> and a key area for carbon cycling. The loss, fragmentation and degradation of these forests are drivers of global biodiversity loss<sup>3</sup> and have important implications for the global climate system, as well as a range of other ecosystem services<sup>4</sup>. Deforestation is second only to the combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation as a source of greenhouse gas emissions. Continued biomass export and certain management practices such as converting forest into alternative land-uses (particularly agriculture) has major implications for biogeochemical cycles. Uncertainty in how the tropical biosphere will respond to global change is one of the major constraints on predicting the climate of the end of this century and therefore in assessing threshold values of greenhouse gas emissions that may avoid dangerous climate change<sup>5</sup>.

The UN’s Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)<sup>6</sup> programme is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. REDD+ goes beyond deforestation and degradation to include biodiversity conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Significant knowledge gaps exist, particularly with respect to the role biodiversity plays in regulating biogeochemical cycles in tropical forests (including biosphere-atmosphere interactions) and the links between these processes and species of conservation concern, which is a key component of REDD+. Developing the science requires integrated observations and modelling linked to gradients in forest modification (loss, fragmentation, degradation) and derived land-uses (e.g. agriculture).

Tropical biodiversity is poorly described compared with temperate regions. Above-below ground interactions will play a key role in regulating biogeochemical cycles. While tropical plants above ground are routinely censused, other key biodiversity groups such as soil organisms and consumers are not. This means that there is a need for basic assessments (distribution, abundance, community composition) of these important groups as well as links with measurements of their functional roles.

<sup>2</sup> Olson, DM & Dinerstein, E. (1998) The global 200: A representative approach to conserving the Earth’s most biologically valuable ecoregions. *Cons Biol* 12, 502.

<sup>3</sup> Barlow, J et al. (2007) Quantifying the biodiversity value of tropical primary, secondary and plantation forests. *PNAS* 104, 18555; Gardner, TA et al. (2009) Prospects for tropical forest biodiversity in a human modified world. *Ecology Letters* 12, 561

<sup>4</sup> Foley, JA et al. (2007) Amazonia revealed: forest degradation and loss of ecosystem goods and services in the Amazon basin. *Frontiers in Ecology & the Environment* 5, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend, AR et al. (2011) Multi-element regulation of the tropical forest carbon cycle. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 9, 9.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un-redd.org/aboutredd/tabid/102614/default.aspx>

Furthermore, there are major challenges in bringing state-of-the-art observational science associated with biosphere-atmosphere interactions into the field.

The existing Human modified Tropical Forests programme addresses these challenges by improving our understanding of the links between biodiversity and biogeochemical cycles in tropical forest, through the following five goals: (i) Improve our understanding of the role of biodiversity in major forest biogeochemical cycles (C, N & P); (ii) Explore the spatial correlations between ecosystem function in terms of biogeochemical cycles and the distribution of species of conservation concern; (iii) Critically assess the potential of forest management and policy options to protect both key ecosystem functions (biogeochemical cycles) and biodiversity; (iv) Develop and test new technological capability for sustainable long-term observations of biogeochemical cycling; and (v) Explore whether the methodologies and approaches adopted by the programme at the Sabah site in Malaysia can provide insights into comparable biodiversity and ecosystem function issues in contrasting tropical locations.

Research is being undertaken at a detailed single site study, in Sabah, Malaysia with a smaller parallel study in other tropical forest biomes in Brazil, which addresses the fifth goal.

Building on this existing collaboration, NERC and FAPESP are seeking to extend this relationship through a joint programme of research in complimentary Brazilian biomes (including Amazon, Atlantic rainforest, *Caatinga* and *Cerrado* biomes) which will improve the understanding of the role of biodiversity in the functioning of ecosystems, the drivers and impact of change, and management and restoration options. A desired outcome is research which will inform the restoration of effective biogeochemical cycling as part of habitat restoration, in order to ultimately deliver on targets in National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans<sup>7</sup> (NBSAP).

## 2.2 The funders

NERC – the Natural Environment Research Council – is the leading funder of independent research, training and innovation in environmental science in the UK. NERC invests public money in world-leading science, designed to help us sustain and benefit from our natural resources, predict and respond to natural hazards and understand environmental change. We work closely with policymakers and industry to make sure our knowledge can support sustainable economic growth and wellbeing in the UK and around the world. NERC is supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

FAPESP – the São Paulo Research Foundation – is an independent public foundation with the mission to foster research and the scientific and technological development in all fields of knowledge in higher education and research institutions in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. FAPESP maintains cooperation agreements with national and international research funding agencies, higher educational and research institutions and business enterprises.

## 2.3 The Newton Fund

The Newton Fund is an initiative intended to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging knowledge economies, developing partner countries long-term sustainable growth and welfare through building research and innovation capacity.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/default.shtml>

The Fund forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee list<sup>8</sup> and is administered with the promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective. Newton Fund countries represent a sub-set of this list.

The Newton Fund requires that the funding be awarded in a manner that fits with ODA guidelines. All applications must therefore be compliant with these guidelines. Note that this applies to UK funding only, and not the partner country, however as these are collaborative projects, it's expected that the project as a whole is ODA compliant and makes clear that its primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of the partner country. For further information of Newton Fund see <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/newton/>.

Any Newton Fund project must make it clear how the main research outcomes will promote the economic development and welfare of the partner country, rather than merely creating the conditions where development might occur. Applicants should consider how their project will:

- address poverty and development issues
- address the issue identified effectively and efficiently
- use the strengths of the UK to address the issue
- demonstrate that the research component is of an internationally excellent standard.

### 3 Scope of programme and requirements

#### 3.1 Scientific objectives

The projects funded through this call will undertake research at the biome spatial level. Projects should also endeavour to make use of existing long term data sets that are available from other projects (eg: RAINFOR<sup>9</sup>, ForestPlots network<sup>10</sup>, Global Ecosystems Monitoring Network<sup>11</sup>). Specific goals are to:

1. Improve our understanding of the role of biodiversity in major biome biogeochemical cycles (C, N & P) at the whole-biome level to explore resilience to, and potential regional impacts of environmental change, including human and climatic disturbance.
2. Explore the spatial correlations between ecosystem function in terms of biogeochemical cycles and the distribution of species of conservation concern, within a range of Brazilian ecosystems including forest and non-forest biomes.
3. Critically assess the potential and trade-offs, of ecosystem management and policy options (e.g. REDD+) to protect both key ecosystem functions (biogeochemical cycles) and biodiversity and other ecosystem services;

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<sup>8</sup> [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dac/directives](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dac/directives)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.rainfor.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.forestplots.net/en>

<sup>11</sup> <http://gem.tropicalforests.ox.ac.uk/>

4. Projects should seek to utilise new or novel technological capability for the sustainable long-term observations of biogeochemical cycling and biodiversity.

Improved technological approaches may improve our understanding of biodiversity and its responses to human and climate perturbation, including links with land use and land use change. For example, the use of satellite monitoring to examine biodiversity responses to climatic/topographic and disturbance gradients, remote land-based telemetry such as for soil/water quality and water related services.

This research will extend and compliment research already being undertaken through the Human Modified Tropical Forests programme<sup>12</sup>, and seek to create synergies to maximise the potential impact.

Proposals that utilise existing FAPESP-funded infrastructure are encouraged; this includes the Biota Programme's research platform in the Atlantic Rainforest of Brazil<sup>13</sup> and the sites supported by the LBA experiment<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.2 Non-scientific objectives

The Newton Fund requires that the funding be awarded in a manner that fits with ODA guidelines (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/newton/>). All applications must therefore be compliant with these guidelines. In order to qualify for Newton funds, projects must demonstrate how the projects main research outcomes will promote the long-term economic development and welfare of the partner country, rather than merely creating the conditions where development might occur. Applicants should consider how their project will:

- Address poverty and development issues
- Address the issue identified effectively and efficiently
- Use the strengths of the UK to address the issue
- Demonstrate that the research component is of an internationally excellent standard.

It is expected that through collaboration the projects should seek to increase the skills and knowledge base at partner institutions in this area, improving their ability to undertake and disseminate research in order to maximise the countries impact on issues of poverty and economic growth.

Any benefit to the UK has to be the secondary consideration and should not lead to a project being funded if it doesn't primarily deliver the development objective.

Applicants should demonstrate how their proposal addresses ODA guidelines, both in the JeS summary and then more fully, in the case for support.

#### 3.2.1 *Developing the research base in São Paulo, Brazil*

One of the main challenges to promote the long-term sustainable growth in Brazil is to develop its research system by enlarging its science base at universities and research institutes. This Newton

<sup>12</sup> See [http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/list\\_them.asp?them=Tropical+Forests](http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/list_them.asp?them=Tropical+Forests) for list of funded projects

<sup>13</sup> For further information on FAPESP's Atlantic Rainforest infrastructure, see <http://www.biotaneotropica.org.br/v12n1/en/abstract?article+bn01812012012> and related references, or [http://www.fapesp.br/biota/biota\\_joly.pdf](http://www.fapesp.br/biota/biota_joly.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.lbaeco.org/lbaeco/sites.htm>

Fund-FAPESP call aims at contributing to this objective through the addition of new researchers in universities and research institutes in the State of São Paulo, Brazil.

To this end, FAPESP will favour proposals in which the Brazilian side of the research collaboration will be led by either:

- a) One or more **Young Investigators**, who will receive funding from FAPESP under the foundation's Young Investigator Award Program (<http://www.fapesp.br/en/4479>) as outlined below; or.
- b) A PI leading a **São Paulo Excellence Chair (SPEC)** grant
- c) Proposals under the **FAPESP Thematic Grant program** led by PIs associated to universities or research institutions in São Paulo, Brazil will also be considered. However if the scientific merit is comparable proposals in categories (a) and (b), above, will receive preference.

### 3.2.1.1 Description of the FAPESP Young Investigator Award Program

Grants are offered with duration up to four years as described at [www.fapesp.br/en/6251](http://www.fapesp.br/en/6251) (or in Portuguese at [www.fapesp.br/jp/](http://www.fapesp.br/jp/)). The PI, a Young Investigator, who does not have to be Brazilian, will be based full time in a university or research institution in São Paulo, Brazil. This will allow the building of links between the UK and Brazil, contributing directly to capacity building of skills and knowledge in partner institutions. The Young Investigator program offers funding for equipment, consumables, travel, services, and fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students. The proposer must demonstrate an outstanding track record in research, typically with 3-7 years post-doctoral experience in an advanced research group outside Brazil, and demonstrating excellent leadership capacity. The selected Young Investigators will have the possibility to participate in a public selection process for permanent positions as professors or researchers at their hosting university or research institute. FAPESP has criteria for eligibility so interested researchers are strongly encouraged to consult with FAPESP (via [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)) before starting to prepare a proposal. Failure to do so might result in proposal rejection without review.

For further information, please see [www.fapesp.br/en/6251](http://www.fapesp.br/en/6251) or contact Mr. Alexandre Roccoatto at [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br).

### 3.2.1.2 Description of the FAPESP São Paulo Excellence Chair (SPEC) Award

The São Paulo Excellence Chairs (SPEC) have the objective of fostering the association of top level foreign researchers to qualified higher education and research institutions in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. Proposals for this program will be led by the foreign researcher who must be associated to a higher education or research institution in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, with a commitment to spend at least 12 weeks per year for at least 3 years at the host institution (the 12 weeks do not need to be consecutive). Eligible items for funding are: fellowships for students in the modalities Scientific Initiation (for undergraduate students working in a research project) and Fast Track Doctoral (graduate students going directly from graduation to a doctorate work, without before getting a MSc), scholarships for Post-doctoral fellows, research equipment, consumables, field trips, travel to and from the host institution for each period of stay (see below), and other items (details are equivalent to: [www.fapesp.br/en/thematic](http://www.fapesp.br/en/thematic)). FAPESP has criteria for eligibility so interested researchers are strongly encouraged to consult with FAPESP (via [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)) before starting to prepare a proposal. Failure to do so might result in proposal rejection without review.

For further information, please contact Alexandre Roccoatto at [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)

### 3.2.1.3 *Description of the FAPESP Thematic Project Grant*

Thematic Projects aim to support research proposals with bold scientific objectives with a research team coordinated by an experienced researcher in the field. The projects are expected to result in significant findings for the advancement of knowledge. Details can be found at [www.fapesp.br/en/thematic](http://www.fapesp.br/en/thematic). FAPESP has criteria for eligibility so interested researchers are strongly encouraged to consult with FAPESP (via [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)) before starting to prepare a proposal. Failure to do so might result in proposal rejection without review.

For further information, please contact Alexandre Roccatto at [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)

## 3.3 Data Management (UK applicants)

NERC believes that datasets collected as a result of projects are an important resource that must be adequately managed. Investigators should therefore make sure that a NERC Environmental Data Centre is aware of any significant datasets to be compiled as a result of their projects, so that the long-term future of these data can be planned.

A mandatory, single page, outline Data Management Plan (ODMP) is required for all proposals. The ODMP will identify data sets likely to be made available to NERC Data Centres for archiving and reuse at the end of the grant. From April 2014, the ODMP is a separate, mandatory attachment, on all grant schemes. The ODMP and Case for Support for successful proposals will be made available to the NERC Environmental Data Centres (see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/>) and where appropriate, used by them to draft, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a full Data Management Plan (DMP).

This full DMP should be mutually agreed between the Data Centre and the Principal Investigator within three to six months of the start date of the grant. At the end of an award Investigators are required to offer the appropriate Data Centre a copy of any dataset generated, so that the data can be made available for other researchers to use.

## 3.4 Knowledge Exchange and Impact

Knowledge Exchange will facilitate the communication of the science delivered from this initiative to a variety of users including policy makers and industry, and exchange of views and knowledge from these stakeholders.

All research proposals submitted to NERC should be accompanied by a Pathways to Impact document. There will be a requirement to identify the target communities/stakeholders, consider how these various groups/individuals are likely to benefit from (or be affected by) the research, and create a plan to engage with them which is appropriate and goes beyond communication, timely and happens early in the design stage.

Due to recent changes in NERC relating to Pathways to Impact, applicants are advised to read the guidance at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/pathwaystoimpact/>.

In summary, in the Pathways to Impact applicants should consider what will be done during and after the project to increase the likelihood of the research reaching the intended beneficiaries and maximise the likelihood of identified benefits being achieved.

Applicants are expected to request funds to support project-specific activities and these should be included in the grant proposal and fully justified in the Justification of Resources statement.



### 3.5 Facilities (UK Applicants)

UK applicants can apply for access to any of the NERC services or facilities. Prospective applicants must first seek the advice of the appropriate facility contact before any formal proposal is submitted. For most facilities and schemes, the notional costs of using the facility should be included in the grant proposal. For some facilities the costs will then be removed from the grant and awarded notionally (where NERC provides the funding directly to the facility). Further details on how to apply to use facilities can be found: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/facilities/apply/>.

UK applicants wishing to use a NERC facility will need to submit a mandatory ‘technical assessment’ with their proposal (including aircraft but excluding ships and HPC). For NERC, this means a quote for the work which the facility will provide. A full list of the Facilities requiring this quote can be found here <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/facilities/apply/facilities-requiring-technical-assessment.pdf>

### 3.6 Intellectual Property rights (SP applicants)

In case of approval, a Letter of Agreement between the Partner UK Host Institution and the Host Institution to which the PI from São Paulo is affiliated, establishing how Intellectual Property rights, confidentiality, and publications will be treated jointly, in observance of the policies of each funding Party. The Letter of Agreement is not mandatory for the submission of proposals, but no approved project will be contracted before the presentation of a copy of the signed Agreement.

Ownership of IP generated during the project and rights to exploitation, as well as any costs regarding management of IP, are expected to be agreed between the collaborating research organizations before the research begins. The presentation of this Letter of Agreement is mandatory before the signature of the grant award in case of FAPESP funding.

## 4 Eligibility and restrictions

Individuals are restricted to being named on a maximum of two proposals submitted to this call, across both NERC and FAPESP – only one of these may be as a Principal Investigator (PI).

### 4.1 Specific criteria for eligibility by NERC

Applications for NERC funding are open to those organisations eligible to receive Managed Mode funding from NERC, i.e. applicants based in UK HEI’s, NERC Research Centres and Independent Research Organisations (IRO’s) approved by NERC. Please see the website<sup>15</sup> and Section C of the NERC Research Grants Handbook<sup>16</sup> for further details.

### 4.2 Specific criteria for eligibility by FAPESP

- a) Brazilian researchers requesting funding from FAPESP through FAPESP’s Thematic Grants Program must be associated to higher education and research organisations, public or non-profit, in the State of São Paulo.
- b) Researchers submitting under the Young Investigator Awards or the SPEC Grants do not need to be associated to a higher education or research institution in São Paulo, Brazil at the time of submission but must be prepared to agree to:

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/eligibility/orgeligibility/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/>



- i) Be associated full time to a higher education or research institution in São Paulo, Brazil for the duration of the grant, in the case of the Young Investigator Award.
- ii) Be associated to a higher education or research institution in São Paulo, Brazil for at least 12 weeks per year, for three years, for the case of the SPEC grant.

In all cases, Applicants should note that unlike NERC, FAPESP does not award grants to institutions, but directly to researchers.

Applicants requesting funding from FAPESP must note that the requirements for eligibility are those applied to each Program mentioned above:

- a) FAPESP Thematic Grants: described at [www.fapesp.br/176](http://www.fapesp.br/176), item 3.3;
- b) FAPESP Young Investigator Award Program: described at [www.fapesp.br/en/6251](http://www.fapesp.br/en/6251), item 3.3;
- c) São Paulo Excellence Chair (SPEC) Grants: outstanding experienced researchers with a permanent position abroad who agree to be associated to a higher education or research institution in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, with a commitment to spend at least 12 weeks per year for at least 3 years.

Please, note that for each Program there is a qualification phase (“*enquadramento*”) upon submission. Researchers are strongly encouraged to consult FAPESP (via [call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br)) regarding their eligibility before initiating the preparation of a joint proposal.

Failure to observe this procedure may result in the rejection of the proposal, without review.

## 5 Application process

**Closing date: 16:00 (BST) on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015**

One complete joint proposal is submitted to NERC with a case for support for the whole project including work undertaken by both UK and FAPESP funded researchers. The proposal should be a collaborative effort between the UK and FAPESP applicants. NERC will share the proposal with FAPESP.

**No documents are to be submitted directly to FAPESP at this point (please see below in section 5 item 7 the FAPESP-specific documents that must be included in the UK submission package)**

### 5.1 Proposal structure and composition

A proposal may encompass more than one grant submission to FAPESP, but each must be one of the award types mentioned in section 3.2 above. The joint case for support must refer to each of the grant requests submitted to FAPESP, describing how each one will contribute to the project proposed. Separate application/s, adhering to the application guidelines for FAPESP, should be submitted for those funds. A copy of this application, prepared as per FAPESP’s guidelines for the particular award type (see links in section 4.2), should be attached to the NERC application as a ‘non-UK component’ for information during the review process, but their costs should not be included in the costs requested in the NERC application.

## 5.2 Submission instructions

Applicants requesting support from FAPESP should be included as Project Partners on the JeS form. Along with the total FAPESP contribution applied for, and their role should be described in the Case for Support. Applicants to FAPESP funding must contact FAPESP prior to engaging in the preparation of a proposal to make sure they qualify as proposers. Guidelines for FAPESP proposal preparation are available at <http://www.fapesp.br/en/5339>.

Grant proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint electronic-Submission system (Je-S). To use this system, the applicant's research organisation must be Je-S registered, see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/> for further details.

Applicants should leave enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this date. Any proposal that is received after the closing date, is incomplete, or does not meet the eligibility criteria of this call, will be returned to the applicant and will not be considered.

The call will be listed under Scheme 'Directed International' and Call 'Newton: Understanding and sustaining Brazilian Biome Resources' and will utilise the standard Je-S pro forma. Guidance on the application process, including details of eligible costs, is available in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#).

NERC's normal grant terms and conditions will apply, and these are also outlined in the handbook. Additional conditions related to Newton Fund support may also be applied to these awards. This will be confirmed prior to award.

All documents should be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point Arial font, with margins of at least 2 cm including references. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

Please note that on submission to council ALL non PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

Additionally where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

In addition to the standard Je-S pro forma, the **lead** component of each proposal should include the following documents:

- 1) A joint **Case for Support** comprising:
  - a) a common **Previous Track Record** incorporating all UK and Brazilian Research organisations involved, (up to 3 sides of A4)
  - b) a common **Description of the Proposed Project** (up to 16 sides of A4 including all necessary tables, references and figures) to include:
    - i) Underlying rationale and scientific issues to be addressed.
    - ii) Specific objectives of the project, including their relevance to objectives of the call.
    - iii) Methodology and approach.
    - iv) Risks and mitigation strategies.
    - v) Programme and/or plan of research including a description of the research tasks and contributions expected from the UK team and the Brazil team. The tasks and contributions expected from the Brazilian team will be further elaborated in the Research Project(s) submitted under item 7.iii, below.
    - vi) How the proposal addresses Official Development Assistance (ODA) guidelines, including a justification about the gains to be obtained by working in research collaboration between UK and Brazil
- 2) **Management Plan** (up to 2 sides of A4). The management plan should include a description of the proposed management structures and plans, participant responsibilities and a scheduling chart.
- 3) **Outline Data Management Plan** (up to 1 side of A4) to include any relevant costs (see Data Management section above). Note that the Outline plan should now be submitted as a separate document of the type 'Data Management Plan', rather than as part of the case for support.)
- 4) **Justification of Resources** (up to 4 sides of A4 for all Research Organisations in the proposed grant) submitted as a separate attachment in the Je-S system and should explain why the requested costs from NERC and FAPESP are required. This should include justification for all Directly Incurred Costs, Investigator effort, use of pool staff resources, any access to shared facilities and equipment and for capital costs between £10,000 and the OJEU threshold. No justification for Directly Allocated Estates and Indirect Costs is required. As a public funding organisation, NERC must ensure that funding is allocated on a basis that ensures best value for money. For further information of what to include in the Justification of Resources, see section F in the NERC Research Grants Handbook.
  - a) All costs requested from FAPESP should be eligible under the general rules and procedures for the type of award/grant applied for. Applicants should contact FAPESP for further guidance.
- 5) **Pathways to Impact** (up to 2 sides of A4).
 

This should include an outline of:

  - a) those who may benefit or make use of the research;

- b) how they might benefit and/or make use of the research; and
  - c) Methods for disseminating data/knowledge/skills in the most effective and appropriate manner.
- 6) **Project Partner Letter(s) of Support** (up to 2 sides of A4 each).
- a) A Letter of Support is required from each named Project Partner. This letter should confirm that the support and facilities required to enable the associated collaborations will be made available. No other letters of support should be attached.
- 7) **Partner applications**
- a) FAPESP documents must be uploaded as 'non-UK components' combined as one single pdf file to include:
    - i) FAPESP Proposal Form with basic information regarding the proposal, specific for this Call: <http://www.fapesp.br/chamadas/2015/FAPESP-NERC-biome.doc>
    - ii) The summary budget worksheet: [FAPESP-RCUK Funding Summary](#)
    - iii) A Research Project following the FAPESP guidelines for the funding lines chosen (for Young Investigator Award, the 20-page PDF file described at <http://www.fapesp.br/jp/#1-roteiro>; for Thematic Grants and SPEC, the 40-page PDF file described at <http://www.fapesp.br/176#4611>). This is in addition to the Case for Support, which refers to the overall collaboration, and should mention this Research Project.
    - iv) After the submission deadline, further documentation may be required by FAPESP, to be supplied by the PI from the State of São Paulo in order to complete the analysis. Please find the list of documents at: <http://www.fapesp.br/en/9498>
- 8) A **CV** of up to two sides of A4 for each named PI (please note that there are at least one PI in the UK side and another one on the Brazil side), Co-I, research staff post, visiting researchers, and the members of the Brazilian research team. CV's for non-PI Brazilian researchers may be submitted as a combined pdf.
- 9) Each component proposal (including the lead) will additionally require the following attachments, where applicable:
- a) **Equipment costs** - Requests for capital will only be considered if the proposed equipment is to remain in the partner country for use after the project has completed. **If equipment is to be returned to the UK, this cannot be funded through Newton and an alternative source of funding should be sought.** The threshold for individual items to be classed as equipment is £10,000 (inclusive of VAT). For items of equipment costing between £10,000 and the OJEU threshold value additional information is required in the justification of resources, including evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. Proposals requesting single items of equipment costing more than the OJEU threshold value must be accompanied by a business case (up to 2 sides of A4 outlining the strategic need for the

equipment). Applicants are advised to read the NERC Research Grants Handbook and further guidance can be found on the RCUK website<sup>17</sup>.

- b) **Facility forms** (including aircraft) where applicable.
- c) PIs wishing to use **NERC facilities** will need to submit a mandatory 'technical assessment' with their proposal (including aircraft but excluding ships and HPC). For NERC, this means a quote for the work which the facility will provide (See facilities section above for full details).

## 6 Assessment procedure and criteria

The assessment process will be operated by NERC, with the agreement of FAPESP.

NERC will check all proposals submitted for compliance to ODA criteria prior to the peer review process. Proposals which do not clearly show how they meet these criteria will be deemed ineligible for funding and will be rejected at this stage.

Proposals will be subject to international peer review, before going to a Moderating Panel of independent experts. Applicants will be given the opportunity to provide a written response to the peer review comments prior to the Moderating Panel meeting.

All proposals will be assessment against the following criteria:

- Research excellence: a proposal that demonstrates excellence can be characterised by terms such as novel, timely, exciting, at the international forefront, adventurous, elegant or transformative, but need not demonstrate all of these.
- Fit to Call: proposals will be assessed against the extent to which they address the scope and requirements of the call as detailed in this AO. This will include:
  - Fit to scientific objectives
  - Fit to non-scientific objectives

## 7 Timetable

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ▪ Call for full applications announced | 10th June 2015                         |
| ▪ Application deadline                 | 2nd September 2015                     |
| ▪ Assessment panel                     | December 2015                          |
| ▪ Funding decision                     | December 2015/January 2016             |
| ▪ Grants awarded                       | January 2016                           |
| ▪ Grants start                         | March 2016                             |
| ▪ Starting certificates returned       | No later than 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2016 |

## 8 Reporting requirements

As with all NERC grant holders, there will be a requirement to report through the RCUK reporting system; this is required annually and continues for up to five years post grant end.

Additional reporting to the Newton funding may be required. This will be confirmed at a later date.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/publications/Equipment\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/publications/Equipment_Guidance.pdf)

Reporting to FAPESP must follow the norms for the grant type used.

## 9 Contacts

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FAPESP: Alexandre Roccatto ([call\\_nerc\\_biome@fapesp.br](mailto:call_nerc_biome@fapesp.br))