

## Newton: Using Critical Zone Science to understand sustaining the ecosystem service of soil and water, Q&A document.

- Q1.** Should the £3M allocated to the call be considered as 80% or 100% of project costs for all projects funded?
- A.** The £3m is the total funds available from NERC for the call and is therefore 80% FEC of the project costs.
- Q2.** Is the upper limit of any one proposal £750K (80% FEC)?
- A.** There is no *strict* upper limit of £750K per project. However as stated in the AO 'It is expected that 4 projects will be funded, dependent on the quality of proposals received – two focussed on soils and two on freshwater', and therefore we would expect proposals to be costed in the near region less or more of this figure.
- Q3.** Am I correct in thinking that all our Chinese partner PIs should be listed on the grant as project partners rather than as Co-I's? Unlike other standard calls, are we also required to submit a CV and a letter of support for these?
- A.** Yes. UK applicants should list their Chinese partner PI's as project partners on JeS with their NSFC costs added as the partner contribution. This will allow us to report more accurately to BIS. JeS will require you to upload a letter of support for each project partner for validation purposes. You are only required to list the PI from each Chinese Institution in this section; all other collaborators from the institution will be captured on an additional attachment.
- We do also require CV's of all the Chinese research team (max 2sides A4). We are happy for these to be one combined pdf document.
- Q4.** Do we need a letter of support from the Chinese partners documenting the total funds they will be applying for?
- A.** Whilst you do need to include a letter of support for validation purposes it doesn't have to include the costs applied for. There is an additional template document which will capture this information.
- Q5.** Can you confirm if we need to have a translated (English) version of the partner application uploaded to our JeS document or are the partner applications an exception to this rule?
- A.** There is no requirement to submit to NERC a translation of the longer document Chinese applicants are required to submit to NSFC . The English joint common case for support (encompassing the track record, description of project, and management plan) is the one which will be sent to reviewers. All documents uploaded to JeS should be in English as stated in the AO.

**Q6.** Do you plan to top-slice travel for over-arching CZO meetings of all funded groups or should we cost this individually?

**A.** No, we will not be top-slicing the grants for T&S. All Travel and subsistence should be calculated and included in your application.

**Q7.** The Chinese proposal has a different format to the English proposal; do we need to provide a translated version of the Chinese application?

**A.** No, we recognise that NSF require more detail in their applications, but it won't be sent for review with the English component and we don't require a translation.

A.

**Q7.** Can we cost studentships into this proposal (as per the large grant proposal guidelines)?

A. No.

#### '4.3 Full proposal Stage

Studentships will not be supported under this call.'

**Q8.** Although NERC are keen to see a 50% institute investment in any equipment bid for, as equipment purchased under the CZO call will be left in China to fulfil ODA development expectations, can we justifiably seek 100% NERC funding of this equipment?

A. No. Usual rules for the purchase of equipment apply; we will expect to contribute a maximum of 50%.

'Requests for capital will only be considered if the proposed equipment is to remain in China 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. For items of equipment which cost less than the OJEU threshold but more than £25,000, it is optional to provide quotations and up to three can be uploaded. 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<sup>10</sup> and further guidance can be found on the RCUK website<sup>11</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)

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/grantshandbook.pdf>

**Q9.** The AO states a closing date of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 4pm (tbc), is this still the deadline?

A. Yes this closing date has now been confirmed.

**Q10.** Can you confirm that our project is able to start in January 2016 as the guidance that I currently am working from quotes November 2015 for the projects to start?

A. Yes, there has been some flexibility in the timetable and projects can start Jan 2016.

**Q11.** I can't find the call on JeS, can you advise where it can be found?

A. From the three drop down menus please choose the following options in order.

- Standard
- Directed International

- Newton: Using Critical Zone Science to understand sustaining the ecosystem service of soil and water.