

Announcement of Opportunity

Future Climate for Africa (FCFA)

To advance scientific understanding and prediction of African climate variability and change and, through interdisciplinary research, develop the knowledge, data and tools to better integrate this science into medium-term investments, policies and plans.

2014 Regional Consortium Grants – Outline Proposals

Critical Deadlines:

Outline Proposals to be submitted by 15th July 2014 16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (BST / GMT +1 / UTC +1)

Information about your application, including the personal information provided on the forms, will be processed and stored electronically by the FCFA Secretariat and representatives of FCFA's Funders (NERC and DFID). The Information contained in your application may be passed on to external reviewers in confidence. Reviewers will be asked to destroy information after the review and selection process is complete.

Your application and personal information will be stored by the FCFA programme for management purposes but will not be shared with other organisations outside the FCFA partnership. We will use details provided in the application for correspondence about the call and may also use this information for future analyses of the performance of the programme.

By submitting your application to the FCFA Programme you have indicated your acceptance of these data protection terms and conditions.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Summary	ii
Abbreviations	iii
Important Terminology (Related to the Call)	iv
1 The FCFA Programme	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Social and Environmental Context.....	1
1.3 Programme Objectives	2
1.4 FCFA: The Programme Vision.....	4
2 Scope of the Call for FCFA 2014 Consortium Grants	6
2.1 Objective	6
2.2 Overview	6
2.3 Detailed scope of the call for FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants	6
2.4 Outputs of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants	9
2.5 Required Approach.....	10
2.6 Summary.....	11
3 Focus and Geographic Scope of this Call	12
3.1 Focus of the Research and its Location.....	12
3.2 Where can Research be Conducted?	12
4 Organisation Eligibility	13
4.1 Overview	13
5 Research Roles and Eligibility	15
5.1 Overview	15
5.2 Role Descriptions and Eligibility.....	15
6 Including Project Studentships on a Proposal	18
6.1 Overview	18
7 Demonstrating the Pathway to Impact	19
7.1 Overview	19
7.2 Outcomes of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants	19
7.3 Impacts of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants	19
7.4 Defining a Pathways to Impact Strategy	19
8 Summary of the Outline Proposal Application Process	22
8.1 Overview	22
8.2 FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grant Outline Proposals (<i>Closing Date 15th July 2014, 16:00 UK local time (BST / GMT +1 / UTC +1)</i>)	22
8.3 Outline Proposal Form.....	23
8.4 Further Details.....	24
9 Selection Criteria (Outline Proposals)	25
9.1 Overview	25
10 Full Proposal Call Timeline	26
10.1 Overview	26

Summary

The Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) research programme is funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). FCFA is an international programme which will fund world-leading interdisciplinary research to enhance scientific understanding and prediction of sub-Saharan African climate on timescales to inform medium-term adaptation decisions (5 to 40 years), and enhance knowledge, tools and methods to better integrate this science into decision making.

This call for FCFA Regional Consortium Grants provides an opportunity for the world's best researchers to undertake large-scale, complex and interdisciplinary natural and social science research targeted at improving knowledge and providing tools to support adaptation in a specific climatic region of sub-Saharan Africa and, through working closely with African stakeholders, bring this science into use in a series of targeted pilot studies focussed on particular medium-term decisions, such as infrastructure investments, urban planning and national policy.

Applications are invited for funding of up to £4M Full Economic Cost (FEC) per consortium. This call has a total available budget of up to £12M. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of four years with an expected start date of April 2015.

Projects will be selected through a two stage process. This document describes the first stage of the process: submission of Outline Proposals.

**Outline Proposals must be submitted via email to fcfa@nerc.ac.uk
by 16:00 BST/GMT +1 /UTC +1 on 15th July 2014**

Abbreviations

AMO	Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation
AO	Announcement of Opportunity
BST	British Summer Time
CCKE	Coordination, Capacity Development and Knowledge Exchange (Unit)
Co-I	Co-Investigator
CV	Curriculum Vitae/Resume
DFID	Department for International Development
EOI	Expression of Interest
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
FCFA	Future Climate for Africa
FEC	Full Economic Cost
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GBP	Great British Pound
GFCS	Global Framework for Climate Services
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
HEI	Higher Education Institution
Je-S	Joint Electronic Submission
LIC	Low-Income Country
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
MIC	Middle-Income Country
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDRA	Post-Doctoral Research Assistant
PEC	Programme Executive Committee
PI	Principal Investigator
PMU	Programme Management Unit
RC	Research Council
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RO	Research Organisation
RPC	Research Programme Consortia
ROD/S	Research Outputs Database/System
TRAC	Transparent Approach to Costing
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Country
USD	United States Dollar
UTC	Co-ordinated Universal Time

Important Terminology (Related to the Call)

Term	Definition	Reference
Developing Country Research Institutions	A national or regional research institution or an NGO with the capacity to undertake high-quality research that is operating in a low-income or a middle-income country. FCFA does not consider that offices of international agencies and research organisations or international NGOs that are located in developing countries should be considered to be developing country institutions.	
Developing Country Researcher	An individual holding the nationality of a developing country (low-income or middle-income countries) who will undertake a research role in the FCFA project.	
Low Income Country (LIC)	As classified by the World Bank. http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications LIC countries have an average annual <i>per capita</i> income of less than US\$1,035 calculated using the World Bank Atlas Method .	World Bank Lending Groups
Middle Income Country (MIC)	As classified by the World Bank. http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications . MIC countries have an average annual <i>per capita</i> income of between US\$1,036–\$4,085 (lower middle-income) or US\$4,086–\$12,615 (upper middle-income) calculated using the World Bank Atlas Method .	World Bank Lending Groups

1 The FCFA Programme

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This programme, Future Climate for Africa (FCFA), is a five-year programme which is jointly funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). It focuses on advancing scientific knowledge, understanding and prediction of African climate variability and change together with interdisciplinary research and user engagement to support better integration of science into decision making. The programme specifically targets medium-term decision making (multi-annual to multi-decadal, or roughly 5 to 40 years), such as infrastructure investments, urban development plans, land-use planning and national-scale policy initiatives (for example Poverty Reduction Strategies or social protection systems)¹. The partnership between DFID and NERC reflects the triple focus of the programme on scientific excellence, achieving impact and strengthening scientific capacity and international collaboration.
- 1.1.2 This Announcement of Opportunity (AO) outlines the Regional Consortium Grants Call, which is for large (up to £4M), regionally-focussed, consortium grants that will run for 4 years. A total of £12M is available for this call. Applicants are expected to submit proposals which address the three pillars of FCFA. This project (hereafter the Regional Project) provides an opportunity for the world's best researchers to undertake large-scale and complex natural and social science research addressing the three pillars of the FCFA:
- i. World leading scientific research to advance understanding and prediction of African climate variability and change over medium-term timescales (roughly 5 to 40 years);
 - ii. Interdisciplinary research to support better integration of science into medium-term decision making;
 - iii. Pilot studies, co-produced with users, to demonstrate the use of climate information and tools in real decisions.
- 1.1.3 This call is looking for proposals of an interdisciplinary nature. Proposals should contain work covering, for example, natural science, economics, social sciences, decision making, engineering and behavioural science. Researchers from other relevant disciplines are also welcomed.
- 1.1.4 Achieving development impact is a key objective of FCFA and, to achieve this, this call is looking for proposals that take a co-production approach, generating climate services that fulfil user needs and that are designed and tested with users.
- 1.1.5 Projects will be selected through a two stage process and this document describes the first stage of the process: submission of Outline Proposals. Only applications successful at this Outline Proposal stage will be eligible to submit Full Consortium Grant Proposals.

1.2 Social and Environmental Context

- 1.2.1 Many African societies are highly vulnerable to weather and climate variability and are likely to be amongst the most severely affected by future changes in climate. The majority of livelihoods of African people depend on rain-fed agriculture and, in some areas, water resources are increasingly stressed. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region where vulnerability to weather extremes is rising; since 1980, more than 420,000 people have died and economic damages total at least \$9 billion USD². These disasters erode gains in poverty alleviation and can set back economic development by several years. Climate change will aggravate these existing risks.

¹ Research explicitly to support shorter-lived decisions, such as seasonal forecasting and early warning systems, is outside of the scope of this programme.

² Data from EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database – www.emdat.be – Université catholique de Louvain – Brussels – Belgium. Estimates are conservative.

- 1.2.2 The intensity of climate hazards, such as droughts, storms and flooding, is expected to rise over the coming decades (IPCC, 2013), with early evidence that climate change may have already contributed to the Horn of Africa drought in 2011 (Lott et al, 2013). By the 2030s sub-Saharan African countries are expected to dominate the global rankings of most vulnerable countries both in terms of poverty and climate hazards.
- 1.2.3 Therefore, in parallel to reducing climate-related risks today, there is an urgent need to account for future climate in long-lived projects, planning and policymaking. Sub-Saharan Africa is a rapidly developing region, where the population is expected to almost double by 2050 and GDP could increase more than 10-fold. A failure to properly account for long-term climate in decisions now could, for example, lock-in greater risks and costs down the line.
- 1.2.4 Improvements in climate risk management across Africa will bring immediate, cost-effective benefits in terms of protecting lives and livelihoods and safeguarding development gains. High-quality climate information is a crucial foundation, yet this is often not available or not accessible across many parts of Africa. This weak climate information stems largely from a lack of high-quality historical climate monitoring, the relatively low capacity of scientific and meteorological institutions in Africa and global and regional climate models being built by developed countries, with little investment in improving them for Africa.
- 1.2.5 Africa's climate is very diverse and highly variable, driven by processes that are interrelated in many complex ways that are not fully understood. Knowledge of African climate variability is relatively poor, with major gaps in the research base for Africa. For example, how will rainfall change in the future? And why are there discrepancies between observed and modelled climate trends in some areas?
- 1.2.6 To increase the quality, relevance and use of climate information in adaptation decision making requires more than world-leading natural science. First and foremost, research in this area requires an interdisciplinary approach with a philosophy of co-production. For example:
- There is an important role for economics and decision science in providing robust and user-relevant tools for interpreting and applying climate projections in decision making while adequately recognising different sources of uncertainty.
 - There is a particular gap in research to support longer-lived adaptation decisions in Africa, such as infrastructure investments, urban development and land-use planning. Therefore other disciplines, for example civil engineering, may have an important role to play in research.
 - The High level Taskforce to the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) concluded that while our understanding of climate is advancing this is not being effectively translated into services that can inform decision making. This suggests an important role for social and behavioural sciences, in understanding the barriers and how climate information and tools can be better designed and communicated to enhance uptake.

1.3 Programme Objectives

- 1.3.1 The Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) programme aims to build towards the delivery of robust and relevant climate services for Africa to inform adaptation on medium-term timescales (5 to 40 years). Specifically, it has three main objectives:
1. To produce world-leading science to advance knowledge of African climate variability and change and enhance prediction of future African climate.
 2. To drive improved interdisciplinary knowledge, methods and tools on how climate information and services can be better designed for, delivered and integrated into medium-term decisions today.
 3. To support international collaboration and the development of scientific capacity in Africa.

1.3.2 FCFA will achieve these objectives through supporting several programme elements:

Regional Consortium Grants

1.3.3 FCFA will support around 3 world-leading, interdisciplinary, regionally-focussed research programme consortia (RPC).

1.3.4 To achieve the objectives of the programme, the consortia will work both to strengthen scientific understanding and provide improved knowledge and tools to use this science in practice, including, for example, themes of decision making under uncertainty and risk communication. The consortia will draw on multiple disciplines to do this, such as economics, decision science, social science, civil engineering and behavioural science. Importantly, they will also place equal emphasis on extracting more value from the existing body of climate information in addition to generating new information.

1.3.5 To achieve impact, stakeholder engagement will be central to FCFA. The successful consortia will take a co-production approach, generating information and services that are designed and tested with practitioners.

1.3.6 The scope of the regional consortium grants are described in more detail in Section 2 and are the subject of this call. Consortium Grants are expected to deliver the bulk of the research for the FCFA Programme. There will be a £12M investment in this element of the programme, supporting around 3 regional programme consortia targeting specific climatic regions of Sub-Saharan Africa that will run for 4 years. FCFA anticipates funding one project per region of sub-Saharan Africa.

Global Climate Model Development for Africa Project

1.3.7 In parallel to the regional projects described in this AO, FCFA will fund a single project that will aim to deliver a step-change in the performance of General Circulation Models (GCMs) for Africa and to make a long-term contribution to model development with an African lens.

1.3.8 A separate Announcement of Opportunity (AO) has been released to call for proposals to deliver improved process-based understanding of climate variability and change at the pan-African scale, and consequent development of GCMs with an African lens. This research will target processes in GCMs that are important for climate prediction over Africa in the coming decades³.

Scoping Activities

1.3.9 A scoping phase for FCFA began in July 2013 and included desk-based research, two workshops and four pilot studies to better understand the needs and opportunities for climate information to support adaptation. A report detailing the results from the desk-based research and workshops is available at http://cdkn.org/resource/fcfa_background/. The four pilot projects were initiated in March 2014 (in Zambia, Ghana, Rwanda and Malawi) and will produce resources that applicants can draw on during the full proposal preparation stage. This will include, for example, user needs analyses and lessons learnt from co-production activities. Initial results from the pilot studies will be available in September 2014 and Full Proposals will be expected to draw on their results.

Supporting Projects

1.3.10 A further call will be announced in Year 2 of the FCFA Programme. This will identify supporting projects in response to the first call, allowing complementary activities to be supported.

CCKE

1.3.11 A Coordination, Capacity Development and Knowledge Exchange (CCKE) Unit will complement the activities of the RPC through targeted pan-African cross-programme

³ For this reason, Regional Projects should not propose work to develop GCMs, aside from model evaluation to better understand the drivers of model-based uncertainty for their specific region. However, Regional Climate Model evaluation and development is within scope for the Regional Projects.

research, capacity development and knowledge exchange activities. The CCKE has a clear mandate to ensure FCFA maximises its impact.

- 1.3.12 The CCKE team is based in Africa and has expertise and experience in capacity development and in using science in practice to inform adaptation across Africa. The CCKE Unit will provide support to individual consortia in stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer using their experience and networks. In addition, they are responsible for co-ordinating cross-programme activities including, for example, annual reporting, managing a summer school for early career researchers, producing cross-programme outputs, user training workshops and exploiting synergies with other DFID and wider programmes. The consortia will be expected to contribute responsible time to support these cross-programme activities.
- 1.3.13 The CCKE Unit will act as a knowledge manager for FCFA, identifying lessons and shared narratives across the RPCs, developing them and sharing them with a wider audience. The CCKE Unit will help to maximise, but will not replace, the knowledge exchange activities of individual consortia. Applicants will have an opportunity to meet the CCKE Unit during the Full Proposal preparation stage.
- 1.3.14 FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia will be expected to work together and with other project components, for example through the Programme Management Unit (PMU). Please refer to the background paper for details of the governance structure of FCFA, which will be available on the FCFA programme webpages in mid-May 2014.

1.4 FCFA: The Programme Vision

1.4.1 Our vision combines research excellence with development impact⁴. The whole programme is guided by the following principles:

- **Research Excellence:** Internationally recognised and competitive natural and social science as evidenced by publications in high impact journals which represent world-leading standards in terms of quality, independence, significance and scientific impact.
- **Development Impact:** All research should be able to demonstrate its potential to contribute to development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa and its contribution to delivering the overall impact of this programme; delivering robust climate information and services to support medium-term (5 to 40 year) adaptation decisions.
- **African-led research and the creation of meaningful international partnerships with/between African researchers/research institutions:** Research projects will be expected to include active engagement of African institutional partners, especially those based in low and lower middle-income countries, and we particularly encourage research proposals that demonstrate African leadership⁵. Consortia will be expected to demonstrate capacity development of all partner institutions. Senior researchers within the consortia will also be expected to contribute reasonable time to cross-programme shared capacity development activities (for example a summer school).
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Research projects are expected to take an interdisciplinary approach to address the three objectives of FCFA. It is necessary to clearly demonstrate in proposals how interdisciplinarity has been considered (including, for example, approaches from natural science, economics, social science, behavioural science, engineering and decision making) and integrated into the proposed research and how it will be developed, supported and managed to deliver an integrated end-to-end research project that achieves the aims of the FCFA Programme.
- **Co-production Approach:** Stakeholder engagement will be central to FCFA to ensure its outputs are relevant and useful to decision makers in Africa. The FCFA programme

⁴ See also the Research Councils UK document '[RCUK Excellence with Impact](#)'.

⁵ Leading institutions must meet RCUK due diligence baselines, i.e. the organisation must be a legal entity, the organisation must be able to demonstrate an independent in-house capacity to undertake and lead research in the field or discipline in which they wish to be funded, and the organisation must meet the accountability and audit requirements of the FCFA funders (Section 4 and 5).

will support a co-production approach, where users are involved at each stage of the research process to design and test outputs.

- **Impact and Value for Money:** Proposals must include clear evaluation components in all research. A strategy for developing an innovative value for money approach that enables costs and benefits to be tracked and evidence of research impact to be captured is also expected. To ensure value for money, the cost of projects and the benefit of potential outcomes will be assessed with on-going assurance of appropriate expenditure required throughout. Successful applicants will be expected to work with FCFA in demonstrating impacts and outcomes (rather than just outputs).

2 Scope of the Call for FCFA 2014 Consortium Grants

2.1 Objective

2.1.1 The goal of the **FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants** Call is to fund large-scale (up to £4M FEC), interdisciplinary research projects to improve scientific understanding and prediction of sub-Saharan African climate on timescales to inform adaptation (5 to 40 years) and enhance knowledge, tools and methods to bring this science into use in informing decision making in around three consortia based in different climatic regions of Africa.

2.2 Overview

2.2.1 To facilitate the development of the most promising projects, and to streamline the selection process, there will be a two-stage process involving a Consortium Grant Outline Proposal stage and a Consortium Grant Full Proposal stage.

2.2.2 In this call, applications are invited for funding of up to £4M Full Economic Cost (FEC⁶). A total budget of up to £12M is available. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of 4 years, with a required start date of April 2015. In administration of the grant, standard [NERC terms and conditions](#), with call specific exceptions, will apply.

2.2.3 Funds of up to £20,000 per project will be available to successful outline bid teams to facilitate the development of full proposals (see Section 8).

2.3 Detailed scope of the call for FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants

2.3.1 The proposed research consortia will be expected to combine world-leading scientific research on African climate variability and change with targeted high-quality interdisciplinary work to bring this into use in longer-lived decisions.

2.3.2 FCFA will seek to achieve the aims of the programme through structuring research around three pillars, which will be complemented by activities focussed on improving the uptake of science, building user-demand, knowledge and skills, and strengthening scientific capacity in Africa.

- i. World leading scientific research to advance understanding and prediction of African climate variability and change over medium-term timescales (roughly 5 to 40 years): Advancing knowledge of African climate variability and change in areas critical to inform longer-lived decisions; develop and evaluate models with an 'African lens'; assess uncertainties and extract useful information.
- ii. Interdisciplinary research to support better integration of science into medium-term decision making, such as infrastructure investments, urban development and national policy and planning: This pillar will invest in research to better exploit knowledge and bring this into use, including through the development of new tools and methods. This pillar will place at least equal emphasis on better utilising existing knowledge - there is a vast knowledge and data on African variability and change that is not fully utilised. Consortia will draw on interdisciplinary teams to explore ways to better leverage this existing knowledge, extracting useful information and bringing this into use in informing real decisions.
- iii. Targeted pilot studies to demonstrate how science can be better used in real decisions. Working with users, conduct pilot studies to better understand user needs and to test and demonstrate the application of information and tools in a real decision making context, informing and drawing on research from pillars 1 and 2.

2.3.3 Proposals for FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants are expected to address all three pillars of FCFA. Around half of the effort of each proposal should be directed towards research under the first pillar with the remainder addressing pillars two and three. Importantly, proposals will also place equal emphasis on extracting more value from the

⁶ Full Economic Costing (FEC) [RCUK Full Economic Costs FAQs](#)

existing body of climate information as well as generating new information. Examples of potential work under each of the pillars are found below.

2.3.4 Pillar 1: World leading scientific research

- Better understanding of key processes that drive regional climate variability and change over medium-term (multi-annual to multi-decadal or approximately 5 to 40 year) timescales. Fundamental science is still required to better understand the processes driving local to regional scale climate variability and change in Africa, particularly those related to 'high-impact' weather, such as extremes of rainfall, droughts and flooding. This includes, for example, better understanding of the processes that have driven the recent changes in East African and Sahelian rainfall.
- Model evaluation, including better understanding of the ability of models (global and regional) to simulate variability and trends and the causes for divergence between model projections across multi-model ensembles and with observations in some areas. Proposals should take a multi-model approach, including multi-model comparison to identify the processes driving the greatest uncertainties of relevance to informing adaptation at the regional scale.
- Improved modelling of key regional and sub-regional processes (for example, land-atmosphere coupling) most relevant to informing longer-term (5 to 40 year) adaptation decisions, including through engagement with the Global Project⁷.
- Harnessing untapped data sources, particularly where it provides a significant opportunity to enhance science. This could include new analyses of satellite data and drawing on data from past observational campaigns to improve understanding and modelling. There is also an untapped resource of historical multi-decadal climate records in Africa that may be recovered, digitised and analysed. Such work should clearly support the objectives of FCFA and produce outputs that are used within the Project.
- The focus of this programme is on making best use of existing climate data and major new observational campaigns are out of scope.
- New short-term observations are within scope, where these are justified by (i) the objectives of the programme, (ii) where the data will be used and fully integrated within projects, and (iii) where the research informs the needs for long-term climate monitoring in those areas. This could include, for example:
 - In geographical regions where data is extremely sparse and where new short-term observations could provide critical insights into processes suspected to drive variability
 - Working in partnership with African meteorological agencies, where enhancements to monitoring capability will increase capacity to generate and communicate climate data

2.3.5 Pillar 2: Interdisciplinary research to support better integration of science into medium-term decision making

- Interdisciplinary research, including for example natural science, social science, economics, engineering, decision science and behavioural science, to generate knowledge, methods and tools that support the development and delivery of robust climate information and services to inform medium-term adaptation. This may include, but is not limited to the following areas.

⁷ The Global Project will lead on pan-African and 'underpinning' processes such as improving the representation of convection in models as well as better understanding the influence of remote (for example teleconnections) climate processes on medium-term projections.

- Interdisciplinary approaches to multi-model evaluation from an ‘application perspective’ to aid the interpretation of existing projections for decision making. This may include, for example, defining criteria to evaluate model-based projections for the purpose of informing specific multi-sector adaptation strategies in the region, and drawing conclusions on potential methods to combine projections to create meaningful multi-model ensembles (including, for example, weighting methods or exclusion criteria), leading to guidance on methods to interpret multi-model projections.
- Methods to better quantify and understand the range of possible future scenarios given uncertainty, drawing on models, observations and physical science. Work should evaluate where models are ‘fit for purpose’ and attempt to identify robust signals of long-term change⁸.
- Better understand the barriers to uptake (particularly those related to communication and application of evidence) and how research programmes can contribute to overcoming these. This may include, for example, researching how stakeholders interpret and use climate information and tools for decisions, their perception of risk and uncertainty, and how science can be better communicated to facilitate action. This may also include trialling innovative methods such as games and scenario planning.
- Developing and evaluating methods for co-production of science and tools with users including, for example, using participatory decision making approaches. There is much discussion on co-production as a method to achieve impact through research but there is a need for a robust evaluation of different methods.
- The development and evaluation of practical tools for dealing with uncertainty in projections, drawing on economics and decision sciences. An array of tools are already available but in many cases these need to be evaluated and refined to operate in an environment of data scarcity and where there are limits on the resources and capacity of users (including computational, technical, time and financial constraints). This may include evaluating the suitability and robustness of more simple heuristic tools to decision making.

2.3.6 Pillar 3: Targeted pilot studies to demonstrate how science can be better used in real decisions

- The third pillar is expected to be the most applied pillar and will be centred on at least two major pilot studies per consortia (as well as smaller pilots and more illustrative case studies as required). This is where the research in pillars 1 and 2 come together. The pilot studies are expected to be developed through a co-production/co-exploration process with users. They should be targeted at informing specific medium-term decisions, for example concerning a local adaptation strategy, an urban development plan, or a water infrastructure design. The cases selected should be justified in terms of the relevance of medium-term climate to the decision⁹. A combination of different types of sectors is preferred, but most importantly they should be tractable, have adequate stakeholder engagement and have the potential to achieve development impact.
- The pilot studies have multiple objectives. First, the pilots should inform the research in pillars 1 and 2 through deepening the understanding of user needs (pillars 1 and 2 are expected to be flexible enough to respond as this understanding deepens during the project). Second, they provide a forum to trial the methods, tools and data products being developed in the other pillars. Third, the case studies are expected to be one of the key outreach pathways of the Project and where the Project demonstrates its impact on real decisions. Fourth,

⁸ This may include attribution science where this is justified in terms of supporting adaptation decisions

⁹ For example, infrastructure and planning decisions will usually have a high relevance, whereas for shorter-lived decisions, for example the selection of crop planting times by individual farmers, medium-term climate will have lower relevance to decisions made today.

the pilots are expected to contribute to the capacity development of both researchers and users through knowledge sharing and through the co-production/co-exploration process.

- An outcome of the pilot studies will be to demonstrate where medium-term climate trends are important in decision making today, and provide the tools and methods to incorporate them. Together they will provide a set of worked examples to allow decision-makers to identify where climate change is important in their activities today and to build the case for investment in adapting to climate risks. An output of the pilot studies will be a well-tested toolkit for integrating medium-term climate information into key decisions today.
- To be successful the pilot cases may need to incorporate a much broader set of inputs than those directly researched in pillars 1 and 2. For example, information on vulnerability and resilience, locally relevant trends (for example water demand or economic growth projections), understanding the institutional context, climate impact modelling and economic assessment of risk and adaptation options. Consortia will be expected to incorporate this expertise or build on other initiatives as relevant to supply this broader context needed for successful pilot studies.

2.3.7 Supporting Capacity Development

- Proposals are expected to support capacity development of all partners and particularly those from low and lower middle-income countries across sub-Saharan Africa.
- Consortia are expected to contribute to capacity development of all partners in two main ways. First, within the project, consortia are expected to (i) develop meaningful research partnerships with/between researchers in low and lower-middle income countries across sub-Saharan Africa and demonstrate strong leadership of Africa-based institutions in the development of the project, and (ii) deliver specific knowledge sharing activities (to be proposed by the consortia) such as secondments, workshops, 'cross-discipline hops' and/or scientist exchanges. Second, senior researchers will be expected to contribute reasonable time to cross-programme capacity development activities, such as a summer school targeting early-career researchers.

2.4 Outputs of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants

2.4.1 Proposals submitted to the FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants Call will identify approaches to achieve the following outputs for different climatic regions of Africa.

- Scientific advancement of the understanding and prediction of African climate variability and change and new interdisciplinary knowledge, methods and tools, disseminated through reports, working papers, workshops and articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- Suite of practical 'proof of concept' case studies demonstrating the application and value of scientific knowledge, methods and tools for medium-term decision making, communicated through academic papers, briefing papers and guidance materials. For example, case studies demonstrating the application of climate information to the design of a hydropower facility and evaluating methods and tools.
- Tailored climate information and service products and tools communicated openly through appropriate platforms, including robust climate scenarios, decision making tools and guidance materials.
- New evaluations and guidance on co-production processes to increase the knowledge and skills of users, deliver user-relevant research and increase research uptake.

- Contribution to cross-programme activities and outputs, such as capacity development activities (for example training workshops, summer school, mentoring, secondments and an international network of climate scientists) international knowledge sharing activities (for example workshops and the FCFA conference) and products (for example publications, data products and training materials).

2.5 Required approach

- 2.5.1 Projects are expected to cover all three research pillars of FCFA for a defined region of sub-Saharan Africa. Around half of the effort of each proposal should be directed towards research under the first pillar with the remainder addressing pillars two and three. Sub-Saharan Africa has several climatic regions each with different drivers of variability and proposals are required to make the case for the geographic region to be addressed in terms of the opportunity to deliver world-leading science and the potential to make clear improvements in the quality and availability of climate information, adding value to existing science and initiatives. It is anticipated that FCFA will fund one project per region in order to ensure broad coverage and efficiency of effort. A region in this context is a group of countries in sub-Saharan Africa with shared climatic drivers, such as monsoon systems or teleconnections.
- 2.5.2 Consortia are expected to provide a strong argument that their proposed research is policy-relevant, and evidence to justify the demand for it. To enhance the development impact of the research, projects are expected to target a small number of key sectors or decision types (especially within pillar 3, Section 2.3) where they can add value in informing medium-term adaptation decisions and where there is tractability in engaging decision-makers, for example, working with a water infrastructure company to integrate climate change into new investments, supporting regional networks of adaptation planners or working with a municipality to consider how climate change will affect urban development plans.
- 2.5.3 The aims of FCFA will require interdisciplinary teams of researchers working with users to deliver. Proposals should set out the roles that team members will play and identify their disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary experience and how they will contribute to delivering the research. Proposals should lay out their framework for ensuring interdisciplinary working. They should also show evidence of the end-to-end nature of their research and state how this approach will be integrated into the project.
- 2.5.4 FCFA strongly promotes African leadership¹⁰ and meaningful international partnerships between/with sub-Saharan African researchers in the proposals, particularly those from low and lower-middle income countries (see Annex 1).
- 2.5.5 FCFA expects to see user engagement and a co-production/co-exploration approach to the research – users should have a role in defining the research questions and make a commitment to working as part of the consortia to ensure the research pulls through into use through the utilisation of co-production processes, in particular within pillar 3.
- 2.5.6 FCFA expect to see activities related to capacity development and international knowledge sharing within the regional consortium, such as scientific exchange visits, secondments or ‘discipline hop’ visits. Senior researchers in the consortia will be expected to contribute reasonable time to cross-consortia training activities, such as a summer school.
- 2.5.7 At the outline stage, it is acceptable for proposals to have identified gaps in teams with strategies for how the partnerships will be formed. FCFA will make funds of up to £20,000 per successful outline bid team available to facilitate formation of interdisciplinary research-user partnerships with African leadership. Proposals must make clear how the funds will be used to support the partnership strategies.

¹⁰ The FCFA programme does not require that consortia are led by an African-based PI.

2.5.8 Proposals for regional consortia are expected to use a multi-model approach. Model choice should be justified and clear pathways articulated for how the science will inform longer-term model improvements that will feed into operational projections. There is an expectation that regional projects will work with the global model project in this regard during the project, for example through identifying the greatest process uncertainties at the regional scale that cause a lack of confidence in projections.

2.5.9 FCFA will be a strongly integrated programme and expectation is that PIs of funded projects will work together, with the Global Project and with NERC, DFID and the CCKE Unit as required. This includes participating in cross-programme activities and producing a co-ordinated annual programme report (Annex 3 provides a template of the annual report, although FCFA requirements may differ). Sufficient resource should be budgeted to facilitate this.

2.6 Summary

FCFA 2014 Consortium Grant applications must:

- include clear hypotheses and objectives that determine the design of the project, including demonstrating the policy need for the research in Africa and the relevance to real decisions;
- work across the three research pillars of the FCFA;
- include clear rationale for the methods proposed;
- bring together developing and developed country scientists and clearly outline how these partnerships will be formed;
- fully justify model choice and be clear about how model developments will feed through to improved climate information for users;
- take an interdisciplinary approach, bringing in, where relevant, experts in the natural and social sciences (and beyond);
- take a co-production/co-exploration approach to engaging users of climate information for medium-term adaptation planning in the research.

3 Focus and Geographic Scope of this Call

3.1 Focus of the Research and its Location

- 3.1.1 FCFA's research should contribute knowledge and evidence to enhance the resilience of African people to climate variability and change and through this help to improve the lives of poor people in Africa.
- 3.1.2 Each regional project should focus on a specific climatic region of Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a requirement for funding that FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants demonstrate how the results of proposed research will have pathways to impact that can improve the lives of poor people in low and lower middle-income countries, even if research covers one or more upper middle-income countries (see Annex 1 for definitions).
- 3.1.3 The programme specifically targets medium-term (around 5 to 40 years) adaptation decisions, such as infrastructure investments, national planning and poverty reduction strategies. Research priorities must be justified on this basis.

3.2 Where can Research be Conducted?

- 3.2.1 FCFA projects are expected to have a clear and significant role for African researchers and/or institutions. This should represent meaningful engagement which supports capacity development for all partners.
- 3.2.2 It is not essential for any project teams to include researchers or research institutions based in the United Kingdom or any other developed countries.
- 3.2.3 There are no other restrictions on where researchers are located or their nationality. Similarly, there are no geographic restrictions on where research institutions are based, as long as they meet the administrative eligibility requirements for funding (for further information or to check your eligibility, please contact the FCFA Secretariat directly at fcfa@nerc.ac.uk or see Sections 4-5.)
- 3.2.4 FCFA actively encourages collaboration between academic and non-academic organisations and/or community groups and the active involvement of African stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects.

4 Organisation Eligibility

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Although not required at the Outline Proposal stage, it is a requirement for the Full Proposal stage that organisations receiving FCFA funds and named individuals on the proposals are registered as users of the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (details of the system are available at: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>) and have had their costing methodology validated. We advise that applicants contact NERC to discuss eligibility of all partner institutions prior to submitting an Outline Proposal if you are unsure.

4.1.2 FCFA will fund UK and non-UK organisations where these are found to be eligible. Participation of African-based researchers is strongly encouraged.

4.1.3 Most UK higher education institutions and some other independent UK research organisations are already eligible to apply for, and hold, UK Research Council grants. Details on which UK organisations are currently eligible for Research Council funding can be found at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>.

4.1.4 Non-UK organisations (and other UK organisations not currently eligible¹¹ to receive Research Council funding) that are interested in applying will only be eligible to directly receive FCFA funding (i.e. be named as PI) if they satisfy all of the following conditions:

(1) The organisation must be a legal entity.

(2) The organisation must be able to demonstrate an independent in-house capability to undertake and lead research and training in the field or discipline in which it wishes to be funded. This would normally involve employment of at least three permanent or long term staff, each of whom have 4-6 years post-doctoral research experience or equivalent¹² and recognised research publications at national and at international level; they must also be capable of leading innovative research projects, directing post-doctoral researchers, and providing the necessary supervision at this level. Note that it is not essential to have post-doctoral experience, equivalent research experience, such as demonstrated long term professional and specialist experience will also be recognised.

(3) The organisation must meet the accountability and audit requirements of the FCFA funders. This requires your organisation to provide, on request, full documentation to give assurance of the:

- Institutional governance and accountability structures;
- Audit and accountability procedures;
- Sources of core funding and other funding.
- CGIAR Research Centres are eligible to apply, but must follow the funding conditions set out in Section 4.1.7.

4.1.5 **Organisations that do not meet these requirements may not act as the lead organisation** (i.e. as a PI) and will not directly receive funds from the awarding body. However, they may be named as a Co-I, Project Partner or sub-contractor organisation (and receive funds through the lead organisation) — that is, they can serve as one of the FCFA Grant institutions, but not be the lead institution on an application. All organisations that are to receive funds through FCFA (i.e. FCFA Grant Institutions) must meet minimum financial and management due diligence criteria. Further information will be provided in due course.

¹¹ Research Organisations normally ineligible to receive funding from the UK Research Councils (RC) may be eligible under this call for proposals. Note that funding for these organisations will come from DFID and not the Research Councils. These organisations will not be eligible for any other RC funding, unless specifically stated by an individual Council.

¹² Equivalent experience which may take a number of forms, such as good track record of long term in depth professional experience in a relevant field of work.

- 4.1.6 If the proposal is successful and offered FCFA funding, the lead organisation (i.e. the organisation of the PI) on any grant application, will be required to undergo eligibility checks before any funding will be confirmed. This process will not apply to organisations that are already recognised to receive UK Research Council funding (principally UK HEIs and eligible ROs). See <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>.
- 4.1.7 CGIAR Research Centres¹³ are eligible to apply for funding and be involved in projects. However, under DFID funding rules they should not apply as developing country partners since they have competitive international terms and conditions and are able to recruit internationally. Full cost recovery should be based on the CGIAR system wide guidance on cost (set out in Financial Guidance No5¹⁴, and it is expected that the 2% system wide cost levy is to be absorbed within all their projects). It is also expected that a clear position with regards to alignment of all research projects with the 15 CGIAR Research Programmes (the CRPs) is provided, since the Fund Council expect all CGIAR research to fall within the CRPs in due course regardless of funding modality.

¹³ <http://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-consortium/research-centers/>

¹⁴ http://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/5548/finguide5_2009.pdf?sequence=1

5 Research Roles and Eligibility

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 All research applicants must ensure that they accurately define their roles within the grant so that there is no later confusion.
- 5.1.2 With the exception of project partners and ‘staff’ such as researchers and technicians, individuals may be named on a **maximum of two** FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants submitted, and may be named as a **lead Principal Investigator (PI) on only one** (applicants may, in addition, also be named on a maximum of 2 Global Project proposals). The total time commitment across the applications with which they are involved should not exceed 100%. If individuals are named on more than two submitted proposals then they will be asked to retract their involvement from the additional proposals, which may be to the detriment of both the individual and projects concerned.

5.2 Role Descriptions and Eligibility

Principal Investigators (PI)

- 5.2.1 Each application submitted as part of the FCFA proposal will have one named PI. If you are submitting a joint proposal, then the PI named on the lead application will act as the lead Principal Investigator for the project as a whole. The PI on the lead application will direct the research and the management of the project; for example, the lead PI is responsible for overall project reporting requirements.
- 5.2.2 PIs and their respective organisations will be responsible for ensuring that the terms and conditions for their grant are met.
- 5.2.3 Principal Investigators may be from any type of organisation that meets the eligibility criteria. UK Principal Investigators from Research Council eligible organisations are required to meet the standard NERC eligibility criteria stated in the [NERC Grants Handbook](#).
- 5.2.4 Non-UK Principal Investigators and PIs from organisations not normally eligible for UK Research Council Funding, should meet the following criteria:
- have at least three years of relevant post-doctoral experience, or an appropriate equivalent level of research experience¹⁵;
 - be employed—at the time of application—by the Research Organisation submitting the proposal, or if not employed (i) have an existing formal arrangement with the organisation that enables him or her to carry out research there and receive all necessary management and infrastructure support from the organisation or (ii) be scheduled to move to the submitting organisation before the proposed start date of the grant in such a way that would ensure that the criterion stated above is met by the time the grant starts;
 - have an assurance from the submitting organisation—at the time of application—that should the proposal be successful, the contract of employment, or formal commitment to provide support if not employed, will extend at least three months beyond the end date of the grant.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)

- 5.2.5 A Co-PI will be the lead investigator on a component application.
- 5.2.6 The budget applied for on each component will be paid directly to the organisation of the PI or Co-PI.
- 5.2.7 The eligibility requirements for a Co-PI are the same as those for a PI.

¹⁵ Equivalent experience which may take a number of forms, such as good track record of long term in depth professional experience in a relevant field of work.

5.2.8 Co-PIs on component parts of joint applications will work with the PI on the lead application to deliver the research, management and leadership of the project.

Co-Investigator (Co-I)

5.2.9 A Co-Investigator assists the PI in the research, management and/or leadership of the project. They may be expected to take over the leadership of their part of the project if the PI is unable to continue in their role, except where their organisation is ineligible to directly receive funds from the awarding body (i.e. it does not meet the organisation eligibility criteria in Section 4).

5.2.10 Co-Investigators from an organisation that is not the same as the PI's organisation will receive any requested funds through the PI's organisation and not directly from the awarding body (NERC on behalf of FCFA funding partners).

5.2.11 Co-Investigators may be from any organisation, including those that do not meet the eligibility criteria to directly receive funds from the awarding body because their organisation will not be receiving money directly. However, such organisations will still be expected to meet minimum financial and management due diligence criteria¹⁶.

5.2.9 UK based Co-Investigators from Research Council eligible organisations are required to meet the standard NERC eligibility criteria stated in the NERC Grants Handbook [NERC Grants Handbook](#).

5.2.12 Non-UK based Co-Investigators and Co-Is from organisations not normally eligible for UK Research Council Funding should meet the following criteria:

- have at least three years of relevant post-doctoral experience, or an appropriate equivalent level of research experience¹⁷;
- be employed—at the time of application—by the Research Organisation submitting the proposal, or if not employed (i) have an existing formal arrangement with the organisation that enables him or her to carry out research there and receive all necessary management and infrastructure support from the organisation or (ii) be scheduled to move to the submitting organisation before the proposed start date of the grant in such a way that would ensure that the criterion stated above is met by the time the grant starts;
- have an assurance from the submitting organisation—at the time of application—that, if the proposal is successful, the contract of employment, or formal commitment to provide support if not employed, will extend at least three months beyond the end date of the grant.

Researcher Co-I

5.2.13 A Researcher Co-I is a specifically named post-doctoral research assistant (PDRA), or other suitably experienced staff member, who has at least two years of relevant post-doctoral experience, or an appropriate equivalent level of research experience, but who is not eligible to be a PI or Co-I.

5.2.14 They will have made substantial contribution to the formulation and development of the project and will be closely involved in the project (if funded).

5.2.15 Researcher Co-Is from an organisation that is not the same as the lead organisation will receive any requested funds through the lead organisation and not directly from the awarding body (NERC on behalf of FCFA funding partners).

5.2.16 Researcher Co-Is may be from any organisation, including those that do not meet the eligibility criteria to directly receive funds from the awarding body (see Section 4).

¹⁶ Further details will be provided in due course.

¹⁷ Equivalent experience which may take a number of forms, such as a good track record of long term in depth professional experience in a relevant field of work.

5.2.17 A Researcher Co-I will be employed for the duration of their contract by the same Research Organisation as either the PI or one of the Co-Is (but not necessarily at the time of application). This contract may be shorter than the length of the grant award, depending on the requirements of the post, and they do not have to be employed by that Research Organisation at the time of application.

5.2.18 Researcher Co-Is may not take over from the Principal Investigator, should the PI leave the project.

Researchers

5.2.19 A researcher is an individual who will work as a research assistant on the project, but who is not eligible to be a PI, Co-I or Researcher Co-I.

5.2.20 The researcher must be from the same organisation as the PI, or one of the Co-Is.

5.2.21 The researcher should have a suitable level of experience in order to fulfil the requirements of the project. This may include having a PhD, or having several years' relevant research or policy experience, as appropriate to the role.

5.2.22 There is no limit to the number of applications a researcher can be named on, but if successful on more than one grant awarded, an alternative researcher would need to be found if time committed exceeded 100% FTE.

5.2.23 A researcher may be a specifically named individual (in which case they would need to register with Je-S) or be included using a post identifier¹⁸, where the candidate will be recruited later.

Project partners

5.2.24 Project Partners may be experts who provide invaluable inputs and advice to the project, and will have an integral role in the proposed research.

5.2.25 An organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing **specific unpaid contributions**, either direct or indirect, to the project (for example time, equipment, etc).

5.2.26 Minor costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration, but these should be substantially less than the contribution of the Project Partner organisation to the project. These costs will not come directly from the awarding body (NERC on behalf of FCFA funding partners) but will be distributed by the lead organisation on the proposal.

5.2.27 There is no limit to the number of Project Partners you can have on the application, but Project Partners must be from separate Research Organisations to those submitting the proposal.

Sub-contractors

5.2.28 Sub-contractors contribute a specific service to the project, but may not necessarily be involved in the development and design of the project.

5.2.29 There is no need to go into much detail on sub-contractors at the outline stage, with the exception of a mention in the project partners section if they are critical to the project.

Visiting researchers

5.2.30 Visiting Researchers may be funded to visit the investigator's institution for up to 12 months, in order to give full time advice and assistance on the research.

¹⁸ For example 'Researcher1'.

6 Including Project Studentships on a Proposal

6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 Project studentships (either Masters or PhD studentships) **cannot** be added to FCFA grants.

7 Demonstrating the Pathway to Impact

7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 FCFA's projects are expected to deliver *both* academic impact (for example research papers, significant new data and understanding) and a pathway to significant and sustainable development impact in order to address a central goal of NERC and DFID; excellence with impact.
- 7.1.2 Development impact from FCFA projects will be measured by the way the research is directly relevant to, and able to demonstrate likely contributions to, the following specific outcomes and impact, with the ultimate goal of increasing resilience of African people and economies to medium-term climate change.

7.2 Outcomes of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants

- 7.2.1 Proposals submitted to the FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants Call will identify approaches to achieve the following outcomes for different climatic regions of Africa.
- Increased availability and use of high-quality, robust climate information across Africa, and greater expertise on how to apply this in practice.
 - Improved medium-term decision making and investments by African stakeholders, DFID and their partners in climate-sensitive areas.
 - Sustained improvements in climate services (for example, climate scenarios or expertise) across Africa resulting from rising scientific capacity for climate research in Africa and increasing user demand for services.

7.3 Impacts of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants

- 7.3.1 Proposals submitted to FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants Call aims to contribute to the following impacts through strengthening the availability and use of climate information across sub-Saharan Africa:
- Increase the resilience of African people and economies to climate variability and change.
 - Safeguard investments and development gains against climate risks over the medium-term.
 - Increase effectiveness and value for money of investments in development, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.

7.4 Defining a Pathways to Impact Strategy

- 7.4.1 An acceptable Pathway to Impact is required before a grant may start. A clearly articulated demand for the proposed research is expected. The Pathways to Impact strategy is expected to identify target beneficiaries from the proposed research over different timescales, how they will benefit and what actions will be taken within the project to increase the likelihood of the research reaching the identified beneficiaries and maximise the likelihood of the identified benefits being achieved. This should include reference to the specific objectives and outputs of FCFA, particularly the pilot studies (for which results will be available in September 2014, prior to the Full Proposal stage).
- 7.4.2 An acceptable Pathways to Impact will:
- be project-specific and problem-specific and not generalised;
 - be outcome-driven;
 - identify and actively engage the key relevant research end-users and stakeholders at appropriate stages;
 - demonstrate a clear understanding of the project-relevant needs of end-users and consider ways for the proposed research to meet these needs;

- contain evidence of existing engagement with relevant end users, for example via letters of support or supporting statements;
- detail the planning and management of associated activities including timing, personnel, budget, deliverables and feasibility.

7.4.3 DFID and NERC have several resources available to support the development of Pathways to Impact:

- Scoping Study on user needs and opportunities for climate information to support adaptation in Africa: http://cdkn.org/resource/fcfa_background/
- DFID Research Uptake Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-uptake-guidance>
- NERC Pathways to Impact policy and guidance: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/pathwaystoimpact/pathwaystoimpact-policy.pdf>
- RCUK Pathways to Impact guidance: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/ke/impacts/>

7.4.4 The requirement to demonstrate the potential for impact will extend to all projects commissioned under the FCFA programme, including the Consortium Grants, against three key areas: academic impact, development impact and capacity development impact. Proposals should consider including a Research Uptake Manager with appropriate expertise and experience to oversee the development and implementation of the Pathways to Impact strategy during the course of the project.

Academic Impact

7.4.5 Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate how their team(s) of researchers intends to deliver academic impact from their research. All projects are required to demonstrate their potential to produce research that can be published in high-profile international peer-reviewed academic journals. Publications should be published in open access format.

7.4.6 In addition to peer-reviewed publications, it is expected that projects will also deliver academic impact through the generation of new high-quality datasets as well as new tools, approaches and methods (including models). All new data should be placed in the public domain, including where possible being deposited in one of the UK Research Council data centres¹⁹.

Development Impact

7.4.7 We expect the Regional Projects to deliver development impact both through their own activities (with targeted scope in terms of sectors, regions and decision makers) and through contributions to cross-programme activities (with broader scope) that will be co-ordinated by the CCKE Unit (including, for example, wider stakeholder workshops, user training and cross-programme publications and data products).

7.4.8 Effective engagement with potential users of FCFA outputs will be an important factor contributing to the subsequent development impact pathways of all FCFA projects. FCFA encourages a co-production/co-exploration approach, particularly as part of the pilot studies. This may require projects to work with a range of knowledge intermediaries, NGOs and government departments and agencies as well as communities and other stakeholders.

7.4.9 Consideration should also be given to how the findings of the research can be made available more broadly to interested parties.

7.4.10 The CCKE Unit will be available to provide advice and support to the Regional Projects in terms of sharing their expertise in research impact and stakeholder networks during the project. However, this is not a replacement for Consortia's own Pathway to Impact.

¹⁹ [NERC Data Policy](#) and [Guidance Notes for NERC Data Policy](#)

Capacity Development Impact

7.4.11 The Consortia are expected to contribute to capacity development of all partners. Proposals should lay out the strategy for capacity development and allocate appropriate time and resources, including the following types of activities:

- Specific professional development activities targeting early career researchers, particularly those from low and lower middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as secondments, mentoring, 'cross-discipline hops' and/or scientist exchanges.
- International knowledge sharing activities for all partners, such as workshops, secondments and/or scientist exchanges.
- Contributions to cross-programme capacity development activities organised by the CCKE Unit, such as a summer school targeting early career researchers and the FCFA conference.

7.4.12 Applicants will be expected to detail their plans for achieving impact in the Pathways to Impact statement as part of a Full Proposal. At this Outline Proposals stage applicants should include provide evidence that their proposal has the potential to deliver impact and to summarise how this could be achieved.

8 Summary of the Outline Proposal Application Process

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 The FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants will provide funding of up to £4M for a maximum duration of 4 years. It is a requirement of funding that projects start in April 2015. This budget limit refers to the total (100%) financial costs incurred to undertake the project (including overheads and any NERC facility costs). This is known as the Full Economic Cost (FEC) (see Section 8.3 for further details).

8.1.2 The application process for funding of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants will involve two distinct stages, which are designed to support potential applicants to develop excellent proposals relevant to the call. Submission of Consortium Grant Outline Proposals constitutes the first stage of the process and is detailed below. Detailed information about subsequent application requirements (Stage 2 – Consortium Grant Full Proposals) will be released at the relevant stage. Only applicants successful at the Outline Stage will be eligible to submit Full Proposals.

8.2 FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grant Outline Proposals (*Closing Date 15th July 2014, 16:00 UK local time (BST / GMT +1 / UTC +1)*)

8.2.1 The first stage of the application process involves production of Outline Proposals.

8.2.2 Applicants must complete the FCFA Consortium Grants 2014 Outline Proposal form, available from <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/fcfa/news/ao-regional/outline-proposal-form.doc> by the closing date in order to be eligible. Applicants are encouraged to submit their Outline Proposals in black and white and preferably as a Word document.

8.2.3 All Outline Proposals should be submitted in English.

8.2.4 Individual researchers may be named on a maximum of two different FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grant proposals, but on only one as the lead Principal Investigator.

8.2.5 All Outline Proposals received will undergo eligibility and remit checks and may be rejected at this stage if they do not meet eligibility criteria and the remit of the call (see Sections 2-5).

8.2.6 All Outline Proposals which pass the eligibility and remit checks will be assessed by a Sift Panel convened by the FCFA Secretariat. This panel will assess (on the basis of the material submitted) which proposals have the greatest potential to meet the objectives of this FCFA Consortium Grant call. This recommendation will go to the FCFA Programme Executive Committee (PEC) who will then invite the successful teams to submit Full Proposals.

8.2.7 Successful applicants who are invited to produce a Full Proposal will be informed shortly after the Sift Panel (c. early August 2014) and will be provided with information on how to submit a Consortium Grant Full Proposal at that time. The expectation is that approximately 12 Full Proposals will be invited and that around 3 projects will be funded, subject to peer-review.

8.2.8 FCFA will make funds of up to £20,000 per successful outline bid team available to facilitate formation of interdisciplinary, international and research-user partnerships. At the outline stage, it is acceptable for proposals to have identified gaps in teams with strategies for how the partnerships will be formed and how the funds will support these strategies.

8.2.9 Only one Outline Proposal is required per project.

8.2.10 **Outline Proposal forms must be completed in full.**

8.3 Outline Proposal Form

8.3.1 Applicants should complete the Outline Proposal form available at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/fcfa/news/ao-regional/outline-proposal-form.doc>. **The form should be completed in English.** Information requested includes:

Part 1:

Project title.

Proposed start date and length of research grant.

Part 2:

Names, institutions and contact details of key members of the research team.

Details of any Project Partners.

Part 3:

A brief summary of the proposed research which can be understood by a non-specialist audience (maximum 200 words).

Part 4:

A short case for support (maximum 2000 words) which should describe the proposed research and research location, and the way that the research is likely to deliver development impact. In particular, the Outline Proposal case for support should summarise how the project will address the criteria detailed in Section 1.3, 2, 3 and 7.

This section should also include the top 3 - 5 publications of each PI, Co-PI and Co-I, that demonstrate track record in both academic excellence and delivering impact (not included in the word limit above).

Part 5 and 6:

A justification of resources and indicative budget in GBP. Whilst you are not expected to produce a full budget at this stage, you will be required to complete the 'Indicative Budget' table as part of the Outline Proposal form, broken down by expenditure type. The core areas of expenditure we will ask you to report at this stage are:

- Staff
- Travel and Subsistence
- Equipment
- Consumables
- Overheads
- Other Costs

These costs should be reported as UK and non-UK expenditure. If funded:

- UK organisations will receive **80% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC)** of the project, as per standard Research Council funding rules.
- Non-UK organisations will be supported at **100% FEC for the direct costs** of the research. In addition, non-UK organisations can request indirect costs (including estates costs) on staff salary and other staff-related costs (i.e. statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions). The following rates for indirect costs should be applied:
 - for applicants from **low and middle-income** countries, the rate is **50%**
 - for applicants from **high income** countries, the rate is **20%**

Overheads may not be charged on non-staff related direct costs, for example equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences, etc.

Further information regarding the financial conditions applicable to these grants can be found in Annex 2.

Changes of up to 10% in the budget submitted at the Outline Proposal stage will be accepted at the final stage without discussion with the Secretariat, subject to the total cost not exceeding £4M. Should the budget for your final application be more than $\pm 10\%$ of that submitted with your Outline Proposal, please contact the Secretariat fcfa@nerc.ac.uk to discuss this prior to submitting your final application.

In addition to reporting the area of expenditure, applicants will be asked to describe the expected percentage distribution of resources between institutional partners.

The FCFA Programme is committed to providing value for money, and ensuring that all expenditure is appropriate and justified. Therefore, justification for your requested resources should be submitted (maximum 500 words). This should include a justification for resources requested under all areas of expenditure.

Additional to this, FCFA encourages projects to secure or leverage additional investment from external parties in addition to those funds being requested from the FCFA Programme itself. Leveraging of funds or in kind support (in terms of time or equipment) has the potential to add huge value to any FCFA Project. There is a section of the Outline Proposal form where you should declare any such additional support that you have secured or are seeking.

There is up to £20,000 available per project successful at the Full Proposal stage for travel & subsistence for meetings to help applicants prepare their bids. Applicants should indicate within their Outline Proposal how these funds might be used to support the development of interdisciplinary teams with sub-Saharan African participation and user engagement and identify specific outputs of these funds. The funds will be disbursed in arrears and applicants will be required to provide a short report (around 5 pages) and other evidence detailing how the funds have been spent and the outcomes in terms of information gained, partnerships developed and improvements to the full proposal.

8.4 Further Details

- 8.4.1 Any questions regarding Consortium Grant Outline Proposals should be sent to fcfa@nerc.ac.uk.

Outline Proposals must be submitted electronically by email to the FCFA Secretariat at fcfa@nerc.ac.uk by 16:00 (4pm) UK local time (BST / GMT +1 / UTC +1) on 15th July 2014

Late submissions WILL NOT be accepted.

9 Selection Criteria (Outline Proposals)

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 The Outline Proposals will be considered by a sift panel. The panel will take the following criteria into account:

Research Excellence – incorporates but is not confined to:

- assessment of the problem to be addressed and how novel/exciting/ambitious it is;
- approach for addressing the problem and the identification and mitigation of risk;
- use of innovative approaches;
- interdisciplinary approaches;
- suitable expertise to achieve the aims and objectives.

Fit to Call – incorporates:

- potential for significant and sustainable development impact;
- involvement of partners from low and lower middle-income countries;
- alignment of the proposed research with the programme's objectives (see Section 1.3);
- identification of pathways to development impact;
- stakeholder engagement and approach to the wider development agenda;
- breadth and depth of consortium partners and in country teams;
- value for money;
- strength of capacity development approach.

9.1.2 Outline Proposals will be awarded a grade for both of the criteria outlined in Section 9.1.1. Proposals will be ranked according to these scores, with Research Excellence and Fit to Call scores carrying equal weighting. This ranked list will be used to **inform** the decisions on successful applicants. The FCFA PEC will make a final decision about which Outline Proposals will be invited to submit a Full Proposal.

9.1.3 All applicants submitting an Outline Proposal will be informed whether they have been successful shortly after the FCFA PEC meet to make the final decision. This meeting will take place following the panel meeting.

9.1.4 Applicants will be given brief feedback from the panel summarising the reasons that they were un/successful. No further feedback will be available.

10 Full Proposal Call Timeline

10.1 Overview

10.1.1 Details of the requirements and application procedures for the second stage of the call will be released to successful applicants in due course. The table below summarises the proposed timeline, the application requirements, and assessment procedures that will be employed at each stage.

Date	Stage	Applicant responsibilities	Assessment
May 1 st 2014	Announcement of Opportunity for the 2014 Consortium Grant Call		
July 15 th 2014	Deadline for submission of Outline Proposals	Submission of Outline Proposal form via email to FCFA Secretariat (fcfa@nerc.ac.uk)	Sift panel
August 2014	Successful Outline Proposal applicants invited to submit Full Proposal	Applicants to prepare Full Proposals	
September 2014	Workshop for successful Outline Proposal applicants (virtual meeting)	Attendance of virtual workshop for successful Outline Proposal Applicants	
October 23 rd 2014	Deadline for submission of Full Proposals	Applicants to submit proposals via the Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) System	
January 2015	PI invited to respond to reviews	PI to respond to reviewers	
January 2015	Deadline for PI response	PI to respond to reviewers	
February 2015	Moderating panel and interviews	Project members to attend interview in person or through video-conference	Assessment panel
March 2015	Consortium Grants Awarded		
April 2015	Consortium Grants Started	Applicants must have returned starting certificates	

NB: Please note that these dates may be subject to change.