Guidance for invited applicants

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 – Full Proposals

Critical Deadlines:
Full Proposals to be submitted by 23rd October 2014 16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (BST / GMT +1 / UTC +1)

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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 (5 to 40 years) adaptation, 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). This call has a total available budget of up to £12M. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of 4 years with a required start date of April 2015.

Projects will be selected through a two stage process. This document describes the second stage of the process: submissions of Full Proposals. Only invited applicants may submit proposals to this call.

Full Proposals must be submitted via the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system by 16:00 BST/GMT+1/UTC+1 on 23rd October 2014

Abbreviations

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
DMP	Data Management Plan
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FCFA	Future Climate for Africa
FEC	Full Economic Cost
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GBP	Great British Pound
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
TBC	To Be Confirmed
TRAC	Transparent Approach to Costing
UMIC	Upper Middle-Income Country
UTC	Co-ordinated Universal Time

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Regional Consortium Grants Call

1.1.1 Applicants should be aware that this document only describes the process of the submission and review of the Full Proposals to the FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants Call. All information on the FCFA programme, the FCFA components, important terminology, the programme objectives, programme vision, research pillars and the scope of the call remain the same as in the Announcement of Opportunity for the Outline Proposals and therefore this document should be read in conjunction with that[1]. Any duplication between the two documents is to emphasise important requirements.

1.2 Programme Objectives

1.2.1 The Future Climate for Africa programme aims to build towards the delivery of robust and relevant climate services for Africa to information 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 Research Pillars

1.3.1 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.

1.3.2 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

[1] http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/fcfa/news/ao-regional/

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

1.3.3 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 Project[2].
- 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

1.3.4 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.

[2] 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 change[3].
- 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.

1.3.5 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 decision[4]. 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,

[3] This may include attribution science where this is justified in terms of supporting adaptation decisions
[4] 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.

1.3.6 **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.

1.4 Required Approach

1.4.1 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.

1.4.2 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) 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.

1.4.3 Achieving the aims of FCFA will require interdisciplinary teams of researchers working with users. 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.

1.4.4 FCFA strongly promotes African leadership[5] 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).

1.4.5 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.

1.4.6 FCFA expects 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.

1.4.7 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.

1.4.8 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.

1.5 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.

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

2 Focus and Geographic Scope of this Call

2.1 Focus of the Research and its Location

2.1.1 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.

2.1.2 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 the proposed research will have pathways to impact that can improve the lives of poor people in low and lower middle-income countries, even if the research covers one or more upper middle-income countries (see Annex 1 for definitions).

2.1.3 The programme specifically targets medium-term (5 to 40 year) adaptation decisions, such as infrastructure investments, national planning and poverty reduction strategies. Research priorities must be justified on this basis.

2.2 Where can Research be Conducted?

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 It is not essential for any project teams to include researchers or research institutions based in the United Kingdom or any other developed countries.

2.2.3 There are no 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 6 and 7).

2.2.4 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.

3 Demonstrating the Pathway to Impact

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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.

3.2 Outcomes of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants

3.2.1 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.

3.3 Impacts of FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants

3.3.1 Proposals submitted to FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia Grants Call aim 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.

3.4 Defining a Pathways to Impact Strategy

3.4.1 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 maximising 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).

3.4.2 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; and
- detail the planning and management of associated activities including timing, personnel, budget, deliverables and feasibility.

3.4.3 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/

3.4.4 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

3.4.5 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.

3.4.6 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 centres[6].

Development Impact

3.4.7 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).

3.4.8 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.

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

[6] NERC Data Policy and Guidance Notes for NERC Data Policy

3.4.10 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 the individual Pathway to Impact of each consortium.

Capacity Development Impact

3.4.11 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.

3.4.12 Applicants will be expected to detail their plans for achieving impact in the Pathways to Impact statement as part of a Full Proposal.

4 Summary of the Full Proposal Application Process

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants will provide funding of up to £4M FEC for a maximum duration of four years. It is expected that projects will start in April 2015 (see full timetable in Section 12). 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).

4.1.2 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 Outline Proposals, now concluded, constituted the first stage of the process. The second stage of the process is the submission of Full Proposals, which is detailed below; only applicants successful at the outline stage are eligible to submit Full Proposals.

4.2 FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants Full Proposals (Closing Date 23rd October 2014, 16:00 UK local time (BST/GMT+1/UTC+1))

4.2.1 Full Proposals will need to be submitted through the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk) by 23rd October 2014 16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (BST/GMT+1/UTC+1). Full guidance on submitting applications through Je-S can be found in Annex 4.

4.2.2 This call has been allocated a total available budget of £12M, which may be revised subject to the discretion of the Programme Executive Committee (PEC).

4.2.3 Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of 4 years, with an expected start date of April 2015. **Projects will not be eligible to delay their start from this date.** In administration of the grants, standard NERC terms and conditions, with call specific exceptions, will apply.

4.2.4 In order to be named on a proposal, all applicants must register for an account on Je-S.

4.2.5 Applicants may submit their proposals as a single Je-S application, or a joint application; submissions of joint applications should be 'linked' on Je-S by using the unique reference number given to you (contact fcfa@nerc.ac.uk or the Je-S helpdesk for further advice).

4.2.6 FCFA will award funds to the lead institution named on each application, which will then be responsible for disbursing funds to other institutions/organisations named on that application.

4.2.7 UK based organisations cannot be named on an application that is led by a non-UK organisation and, in this case, it will be necessary to submit a joint application.

4.3 Summary of Required Documents

4.3.1 The application has several elements, some of these must be completed online (for example the pro-forma), while others can be completed offline before being uploaded as attachments to the Je-S form. See Annex 4 for further information.

4.3.2 The pro-forma is an online form comprising a number of structured boxes for key information. It is common to all applications, and for joint applications this will need to be completed by **all** of the components.

4.3.3 All applications must be completed in English and must be in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 (Arial or equivalent), with margins of at least 2cm. References should also be at least 11 point font.

4.3.4 The elements described below should be completed off-line and uploaded as attachments to the Je-S form. They are described in more detail in Sections 4.6 to 4.11 and are summarised below. **Page limits are absolute and any applications which exceed limits will be rejected.**

- The Case for Support is comprised of two parts:

  i. Previous Track Record of organisations – up to 3 sides A4 for each component application submitted. This section includes brief information and assurances of the organisational and fiduciary competencies, if applicable (see Section 4.6). *(Submitted by each individual application)*.

  ii. Description of proposed research - up to 16 sides A4. *(Common to all proposals in a joint application – submitted by lead only).*

- Data Management Plan – up to 1 page A4. This section includes information about how the project will manage data produced and submit this to the relevant centres. (*Common to all proposals in a joint application - submitted by the lead only)*.
- Justification of Resources requested – up to 2 sides of A4 for each component application. This section includes details of how projects will deal with fluctuating currency markets (See Section 4.8). (*Submitted by each individual application).*
- Pathways to Impact attachment – up to 2 sides A4 (see Section 4.9). *(Common to all proposals in a joint application - submitted by lead only)*.
- CVs for all named research staff: PIs, Co-Is, Researcher Co-Is, named Researchers and Visiting Researchers (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV, and should include current and previous positions, key publications and research funding obtained). It is recommended that CVs use a consistent template within projects.
- Letters of support from any named Project Partners – up to 2 sides A4 each (see Section 4.11). *(Common to all proposals in a joint application -submitted by lead only)*.
- Application forms for any NERC Facility/Ship-time requested (only applicable for organisations normally eligible for Research Council funding).
- A business case for any single items of equipment costing more than the OJEU threshold - up to 2 sides A4. This should be accompanied by three equipment quotations. The current OJEU thresholds can be found at http://www.ojeu.eu/Thresholds.aspx.

4.3.5 Please note that on submission ALL non PDF documents are converted to PDF and 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 (for example scientific notation or diagrams), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

All applications must be submitted in English and costed in pounds sterling (£/GBP).

All additional documents should be submitted using single-spaced typescript, minimum font size 11 point (Arial font), with margins of at least 2cm. References should also be at least 11 point font.

Page limit restrictions apply and should be adhered to.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in rejection of your application.

4.4 Je-S pro forma

4.4.1 In order to prepare a Je-S proposal submission, the person preparing the proposal has to log onto Je-S and create a new proposal. Note that this person must have previously created an individual Je-S account for themselves**. This can be done at any time, and should be done well in advance of the application deadline as there may be some delay in the approval of an individual's Je-S account.**

4.4.2 Full step-by-step guidance on how to complete a Je-S application form can be found on the Je-S website or in Annex 4.

4.4.3 On logging into Je-S, there are two procedures you can follow:

(A) Click on 'Documents', then create a 'New Document'

- Click on 'Call Search' and enter 'FCFA'.
- This will bring up the link to the current FCFA call.

(B) Select the Research Council – NERC.

- Select Document type 'Standard Proposal'
- Select Scheme - 'Directed - International'.
- Select call 'FCFA Regional Oct14'

4.4.4 Please note that applications submitted to the wrong call cannot be considered. Please ensure that you have selected the current FCFA call, entitled 'FCFA Regional Oct14'.

4.4.5 The following information should be common to all application pro-formas in a joint project proposal:

- Title of proposal
- Objectives
- Summary
- Academic Beneficiaries

4.4.6 Some information is common to the whole project but if you submit a joint proposal, the following should **only** be included in the lead Research Organisation application pro forma and submitted as attachments to the **lead Research Organisation application only.** These are:

1. Nominated referees
2. Project Partners
3. Letters of support from Project Partners
4. Description of Proposed Research (Part 2 of the Case for Support, up to 16 sides A4).
5. Data Management Plan
6. Pathways to Impact (up to 2 sides A4).

4.4.7 The attachments named in 4.4.6 must <u>not</u> be attached to any component application. Where such an attachment is a mandatory requirement of the Je-S system, a dummy attachment must be submitted. This document should be annotated with "Refer to Lead Research Organisation Application".

4.4.8 For each other component application (if submitting a joint proposal), we require as separate attachments, or in the relevant pro forma, the following.

- A separate Justification of Resources. This should be attached to the relevant component Research Organisation application (up to 2 sides A4 for each individual component application) and should provide a justification for all funds requested on that component application.
- CVs for named research staff (including PIs, Co-Is and Researcher Co-Investigators) and Visiting Researchers named on that component application (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV).These should be attached to the relevant component Research Organisation application.
- A separate Previous Track Record for each component application (Part 1 of the Case for Support), and include details of the PI and Co-I organisations named on

that component. This should not exceed 3 sides A4 for each component application. This should be classified as an “Other Attachment” when submitting via Je-S.

- Business case and equipment quotations for items costing more than the OJEU threshold.

4.4.9 Applicants should include information of Project Partners listed individually within their pro forma, and any in kind and or leveraged support that has been secured for the proposal through the attachment of a letter from the Project Partner.

4.5 Project Finances

4.5.1 The financial cost of the proposed project should be identified through the following components:

- Je-S pro-forma
- justification of resources document

4.5.2 All applicants should enter the 100% full economic costs of the proposed research into the budget sections of the Je-S form. **All costs should be in pounds sterling (£).**

4.5.3 The budget limits on grant applications under this scheme refer to the total cost of the project – known as the **full economic cost (FEC)**. All of the UK Research Councils research grant applications are awarded on a full economic cost (FEC) basis. This will apply to FCFA.

4.5.4 For Projects which choose to submit a joint application (i.e. more than one component application into Je-S), the Full Economic Cost of all submitted applications comprising the project **combined** must not exceed the maximum budget of £4M. *Note, for example, that if each of four component applications claims £1M in costs on their application, this would show on our system as the project bidding for £4M.*

4.5.5 Research grant funds are provided to meet the costs incurred by the specific research project. Funds may not be used to meet costs on any other project or activity. All costs associated with the project must be itemised and fully justified (This should be done in the ‘Justification of Resources’ document (see Section 4.8).

4.5.6 Requested funds will be scrutinised during the assessment process and, if recommended for funding, NERC, on behalf of the FCFA Programme Executive Committee (PEC), will request adequate evidence of the costing basis for all direct and indirect costs. Note that budgets may be reduced if considered excessive.

4.5.7 Successful projects, along with proposing excellent science research that fits the objectives and scope of this call, are expected to also provide excellent value for money. This includes fully justified and reasonable financial requests, appropriate time commitments of all research participants, and clear plans which aim to provide the maximum output of science excellence and impact from the monies requested.

4.5.8 FCFA funding is available for eligible UK and non-UK organisations, if they are to receive funding directly.

4.5.9 The UK Research Councils, which includes NERC, are able to provide funding for UK organisations that are recognised as eligible to receive UK Research Council funding, including UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and other recognised UK Research Organisations (ROs). For a list of organisations that are eligible to receive Research Council funding see http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/.

4.5.10 Organisations that are currently ineligible to receive funding directly from UK Research Councils may still be eligible to apply for and receive funding from FCFA, if they meet the organisation eligibility criteria in Section 6. This funding will be covered by DFID’s contribution to FCFA.

4.5.11 CGIAR Research Centres[7] 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 No5[8], 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.

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

4.5.13 Further Guidance on fund headings are provided in Annex 2.

4.5.14 **UK Organisation Budgets**

- UK organisations will receive **80% of the full economic cost (FEC)** of the project, as per standard Research Council funding rules.
- UK universities are required to calculate the FEC using the "TRAC" (Transparent Approach to Costing) methodology. Other recognised UK research organisations (ROs) use an equivalent methodology, which has been validated by the Research Councils. For more information, please go to the RCs' Dual Support Reform web page, which includes guidance notes and FAQs (RCUK FEC FAQs). Other organisations will be required to explain their methodology for calculating any estates and indirect costs, if they are successful.
- Overseas travel and expenses costs incurred by members of UK institutions will be paid at 80% and must be included as costs related to that UK institution (not included as costs relating to an overseas organisation).
- All applicants should enter the full economic costs of the proposed research into the budget sections of the Je-S form, as per normal Research Council applications. **All costs should be in pounds sterling (£).**

4.5.15 **Non-UK Organisation Budgets**

- Non-UK organisations are expected to be able to comply with full and transparent costing for budget elements.
- Non-UK organisations will be supported at **100% FEC for the direct costs** of the research.
- In addition, indirect costs (including estates costs) may be charged on staff salary and other staff-related costs (i.e. statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions).
- Overheads may not be charged on non-staff related direct costs, for example, equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences, etc.
- The following rates for indirect costs should be applied:
  - for applicants from **low and middle-income** countries, the rate is **50%** (Annex 1);
  - for applicants from **high-income** countries, the rate is **20%**.
- For further guidance on what overhead budgets can be used for please see Annex 2.

[7] http://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-consortium/research-centers/

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

- Non-UK organisations should **not** enter any costs in the 'Estates' section of Je-S. All overheads should be entered as an 'Other Directly Incurred cost' on Je-S.
- In order to mark costs as payable at 100%, applicants should tick the '**Exceptions'** box under the relevant category in Je-S.
- **If an application involves costs from both UK and non-UK organisations**, they should be entered as separate items. For example T&S costs for field work should be entered as two separate lines, i.e. that related to UK organisations payable at 80%, and that related to non-UK organisations, which will be payable at 100% by ticking the 'exceptions' box within the Je-S form.
- All applicants are advised to consult their institutional finance officers when completing the financial parts of the application.

4.6 Case for Support

4.6.1 The Case for Support should include the following **two** components: Track Record and Description of Proposed Research. These components should be uploaded as a single attachment on Je-S by the lead applicant. Any joint components should upload their individual Track record separately onto their respective Je-S form, as an 'Other Attachment).

4.6.2 **Track record**

- The Track record should be a maximum of **3 sides of A4** for **each** component application submitted.
- This section should include a brief outline of the organisations involved in the consortium, as named on the component applications, and address the following aspects.
- It should include details on the nature of the organisations named (i.e. university, research institute, NGO, etc).
- Importantly, the track record should concentrate on the key named individuals/researchers, their role in the project and details of relevant experience and how they are best suited to conduct the research proposed. You may also wish to include details of any external funding held for key individuals and their organisations, and details of any relevant past collaborative work with other beneficiaries should also be given.
- For non-UK organisations or UK organisations not normally eligible for Research Council funding (see http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/ for guidance), the track record should also include brief information and assurances of the **organisational and fiduciary competencies** of the organisation.
- Indicate where your previous work has contributed to progressing the field of research, and/or providing impact, evidenced by including the top 3 – 5 relevant publications per PI, Co-PI and Co-I.
- Outline the specific expertise available for the research at the host organisation and that of any associated organisations and beneficiaries.

4.6.3 **The Description of Proposed Research**

- The Description of Proposed Research should be a maximum of **16 sides of A4.**
- The Description of Proposed Research included in the Case for Support contains the substance of the research application. It is essential that a coherent exposition of the proposed project is presented, addressing the intellectual and academic case and potential for impact on the FCFA research agenda.

- As well as meeting the core criteria of the call (Sections 2 and 3), the Description of Proposed Research should address the following points:
- Underlying rationale, scientific, technological, social and developmental issues to be addressed. This should cover the research question and objectives and highlight the overarching policy questions/evidence challenges that will be addressed.
- Specific objectives, hypotheses and research questions of the project, including their potential relevance to international research work in the field, relevance to the FCFA aims, and anticipated achievements and outputs, including datasets.
- Methodology and approach; this should include methods and location of data collection (as appropriate), and details on the use and manipulation of data.
- Programme and/or plan of research.
- Management of both project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project and the management structure within the project team.
- Any associated collaborations, partnerships or co-funding (either proposed or secured) that may be used in the project.
- For proposals requiring access to data from elsewhere applicants are asked to provide evidence in their proposal of agreed access.
- Identification of datasets that the research will produce and which will be of potential long-term value and which the NERC data centres will need to manage and make available to enable re-use after the end of the research.
- Applicants are advised that they should pay attention to the environmental implications of their research. The FCFA Programme Executive Committee (PEC) will consider funding the cost of low-carbon approaches to collaboration (including, where appropriate, the costs of technology or of less economic, but more environmentally friendly means of transport). Note that FCFA will apply the Research Council policy on carbon offsetting which currently states that projects may not claim the cost of offsetting carbon emissions arising from travel associated with research grants. Institutions may choose to use their own resources to cover such costs if required by their environmental policy. Where the project has control documents, reports and paper outputs, these should be printed on paper made from sustainably managed forests and/or recycled paper.

4.7 Data Management Plan

- The Data Management Plan should not exceed **1 side A4** and should be submitted by the lead applicant only.
- The Data Management Plan should include a detailed description of the proposed data management structures, plans and responsibilities.
- Four issues should be addressed in the Outline Data Management Plan:

1. Data management procedures to be followed during the lifetime of the grant. Consider potential issues, such as:

- metadata - will you document discovery (what, where, when, why, who) and descriptive (how collected, how processed, how stored, how linked) metadata?
- data storage – have you access to enough storage and backup? Will you need specialist help with database design?
- data quality - will there be an earmarked data manager within the team, what data quality checks will be used, will student data be integrated in the data plan?

- ethical and access issues – are there special data security or licencing issues and how will you address these?

2. Existing datasets to be used by the project (comment on any restrictions on reuse)

3. Datasets likely to be created by the project which will be made available to the Funder's Data Centre(s) at the end of the grant; Projects will need to speak to the FCFA Programme Management Unit once funded as they will help projects with their data management processes.

4. Planned release dates of the data (data should normally be deposited within a data centre within 2 years of creation), and identification of the possible user types who may want to use the data you produce.

- **Please note,** the entire 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 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.
- Applicants should refer to the NERC data policy (http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/policy/data-policy.pdf) for information on open access to data.

4.8 Justification of Resources

4.8.1 The Justification of Resources should not exceed **2 sides A4.** This document is submitted by **each** component application on Je-S.

4.8.2 The Justification of Resources must be uploaded on Je-S as part of the application.

4.8.3 This should state the full cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed, including identifying why the proposal presents value for money. It should include justification for all Directly Incurred Costs, Investigator effort, use of pool staff resources and any access to shared facilities and equipment being sought.

4.8.4 No justification of Directly Allocated Estates and Indirect Costs is required.

4.8.5 It is not sufficient merely to list what is being requested. Where you do not provide sufficient justification for any item, it may be cut from any award made. In short, **you must demonstrate why you are requesting the funds** you are, and how they will be used to deliver the cutting edge research with impact that you are proposing.

4.8.6 Please note that if successful, the amount awarded to a project is limited to the amount requested at the time of application, and the final award amount agreed by the funders. This will not be increased at any time. Therefore applicants should set out how they will deal with any changing currency fluctuations that may occur during the duration of their project and the possible impact this may have on the plan of work.

4.8.7 An example of a well-written Justification of Resources can be found on the NERC website at http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/justification_eg.pdf. Guidance on what should be included is also available in the Je-S helptext at http://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/index.htm.

4.8.8 For all items of equipment costing between £10,000 (including VAT) and the OJEU threshold, but excluding that to be used for instrument development, the Research Organisation will need to provide evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. The Justification of Resources should be used to:

- Confirm that the piece of equipment is not readily available for use within the host institution, or any other accessible location (for instance by making reference to any asset registers consulted);
- Provide evidence that all other reasonable options have been considered;
- Explain, if the equipment requested will replace existing equipment, what will happen to the existing equipment;
- Set out what contribution the Research Organisation will be making towards the cost of the equipment. **Contributions of the order of 50% from the Research Organisation will be expected.**

4.8.9 Whilst it is not expected that FCFA projects should require large items of equipment, for requests for all single items of equipment costing more than the OJEU threshold (excluding that to be used for instrument development) Research Organisations must complete a business case outlining why NERC should invest in this item of equipment. Further guidance on the detail required in the business case and the rules pertaining to application for items of equipment can be found on the RCUK website at: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/publications/Equipment_Guidance.pdf. The business case will be subject to peer review and separate consideration for funding. The business case should be no more than 2 sides A4 and is additional to the Justification of Resources and the Case for Support. There may be duplication between the Case for Support and the business case but it is important that the business case is a standalone document and contains sufficient information to allow separate peer review assessment. A separate justification must be provided for every capital item of equipment over the OJEU threshold. These should be submitted by the lead Research Organisation in any joint applications. All applicants intending to include a business case for equipment in a research grant application must contact the FCFA Secretariat (fcfa@nerc.ac.uk) to discuss the request well in advance of any proposal submission.

4.8.10 RCUK and DFID have recently adopted new policies on open access publication. It is now required that all publications be open access. FCFA expects that all academic journal publications be open access (gold or green), and where possible this should include book and book chapters. Further information is available from the RCUK Open Access Policy and the DFID Research Open and Enhanced Access Policy.

4.8.11 Costs associated with open access should be considered a legitimate research expense and included in the overall research budget as long as:

- The costs are proportionate, reasonable and represent value for money. The funders would expect that most costs are likely to be Article Processing Charges ('APCs', 'author fees' or 'publication fees'). The price of an APC varies widely, but the Government Finch Report[9] suggested a current average APC price of £1450+VAT.

- Existing arrangements and resources at the host institution are used first when available and appropriate. UK institutions covered by the block grant from RCUK for open access costs cannot claim the costs, but other UK organisations can. Where open access is sought for publications from multiple organisations, some of which receive the RCUK block grant and some which do not, it is the responsibility of the organisation of the lead author to lead on any costs.

4.9 Demonstrating the Pathways to Impact

4.9.1 The Pathways to Impact attachment should not exceed 2 sides of A4.

4.9.2 All applicants are required to include a 'Pathways to Impact' attachment as part of their research proposal that describes how the proposed work will achieve impact and build capacity.

[9] http://www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch/

4.9.3 In addition, the Pathways to Impact section should address the following:

- **Who** are the intended beneficiaries of the research? This should include at least a description of the intended ultimate beneficiaries of poor people in Low and Lower-Middle Income Countries as well as the intermediate direct users of research.
- **Who** will use FCFA's research and new knowledge? Identifying and, wherever possible, involving these people at an early stage of the design and implementation of the research is essential for impact of the research. During later stages of projects it may be appropriate to also consider other groups who may act to help implement and put research into use.
- **How** will FCFA's new knowledge be used? Determining, early in the process, how the different stakeholders are likely to use the research is important. Working with direct users of research and other beneficiaries ensures that research results can be presented in ways and formats that are tailored to meet their needs.

4.9.4 Capacity development activities may also be considered in The Pathways to Impact.

4.9.5 It is important that applicants also consider tracking of their impacts and outcomes with the appropriate metrics as part of the Pathways to Impact plan. This will feed into the programme reporting and is not optional. Without contributions to this reporting there is a risk that the funding source to the programme will be cut. More information will be available at the FCFA programme launch workshop in early 2015. A template of the reporting format (subject to change) is available in Annex 5.

4.9.6 The FCFA 2014 Regional Consortia are expected to contribute to cross-programme activities co-ordinated by the CCKE Unit and this may be recognised within the Pathways to Impact plan. There are no additional funds for this work and all associated costs, including staff time, must be built into the overall cost for the programme of work. There will also be the expectation that projects contribute to the FCFA website. Applicants should be aware that they may need to remain flexible for this element of activity and they should build contingency in their funds.

4.9.7 In addition to the Pathways to Impact activities developed by individual projects, it should also be noted that FCFA may wish to sponsor additional outreach activities involving one or more projects in order to increase the impact of their research outcomes. All grant holders will be expected to cooperate with the Programme Executive Committee (PEC) in contributing to the wider FCFA programme of knowledge sharing, uptake and communication activities. They will also be expected to represent the scheme and their project through involvement, where appropriate, in third-party events.

4.10 CVs

4.10.1 CVs are required for all named research staff; PIs, Co-Is, Researcher Co-Is, named Researchers and Visiting Researchers.

4.10.2 Up to 2 sides A4 are allowed for each CV, and should include current and previous positions, key publications and research funding obtained.

4.10.3 It is recommended that CVs use a consistent template within each project.

4.11 Letters of Support

4.11.1 Each Project Partner must provide a detailed signed letter of support of up to 2 sides of A4.

4.11.2 The letter of support should confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project, identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the partner, the period of support, the full nature of the collaboration and how the partner will be involved in the project and provide added value.

4.11.3 Partner contributions, whether in cash or in kind, should be explained in detail in the case for support, including the equivalent value of any in-kind contributions.

4.11.4 The letter should be written when the proposal is being prepared and targeted specifically to the project.

5 Je-S Registration

5.1 Registering an organisation on Je-S

5.1.1 If your organisation is already registered on the Je-S system, you do not need to re-register. However, if this is your first application for funding, you should follow the steps in Annex 3 to ensure that your organisation is registered on Je-S.

5.2 Registering as an individual on Je-S

5.2.1 All individuals that will be named on an application (with the exception of Project Partners and sub-contractors) must create an individual Je-S account for themselves in order to be added to an application. See online Je-S helptext guidance (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/) on how to register on Je-S. It is necessary for an individual's organisation to have been registered before they can register themselves.

5.2.2 If you have registered as an individual with Je-S through a previous call, you will not need to do so again.

6 Organisation Eligibility

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 To apply for the FCFA 2014 Regional Consortium Grants, Research Organisations must be registered as users of the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (full details of the system are available at: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Jes2WebLoginSite/login.aspx) and have had their costing methodology validated.

6.1.2 FCFA will fund UK and non-UK organisations where these are found to be eligible.

6.1.3 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/.

6.1.4 Non-UK organisations (and other UK organisations not currently eligible[10] 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 postdoctoral research experience or equivalent[11] 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 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 4.5.11.

6.1.5 **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 receiving funding from FCFA (i.e. including where sub-contracted) will need to meet minimum management and financial due diligence standards; further details will be provided in due course.

6.1.6 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

[10] 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.

[11] 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.

already recognised to receive UK Research Council funding (principally UK HEIs and eligible ROs). See http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/.

7 Research Roles and Eligibility

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 Research applicants must ensure that they accurately define their roles within the grant so that there is no later confusion.

7.1.2 With the exception of project partners and 'staff' such as researchers and technicians, individuals may be named on a **maximum of two** FCFA Grants submitted for each call (i.e. two Global Project proposals and two Regional Project proposals in total), and may be named as a **lead Principal Investigator (PI) on only one**. 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.

7.2 Role Descriptions and Eligibility

Principal Investigators (PI)

7.2.1 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.

7.2.2 PIs and their respective organisations will be responsible for ensuring that the terms and conditions for their grant are met.

7.2.3 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.

7.2.4 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 experience[12];
- 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)

7.2.5 A Co-PI will be the lead investigator on a component application.

7.2.6 The budget applied for on each component will be paid directly to the organisation of the PI or Co-PI.

7.2.7 The eligibility requirements for a Co-PI are the same as those for a PI.

[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.

7.2.8 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)

7.2.9 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 7).

7.2.10 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).

7.2.11 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 be expected to meet minimum financial and management due diligence criteria[13].

7.2.12 UK based Co-Investigators from Research Council eligible organisations are required to meet the standard NERC eligibility criteria stated in the NERC Grants Handbook.

7.2.13 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 experience[14]*;*
- 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

7.2.14 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.

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

7.2.16 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).

7.2.17 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 7).

7.2.18 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

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[13] Further details will be provided in due course.

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

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.

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

Researchers

7.2.20 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.

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

7.2.22 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.

7.2.23 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.

7.2.24 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 identifier[15], where the candidate will be recruited later.

Project partners

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

7.2.26 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).

7.2.27 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.

7.2.28 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

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

7.2.30 They are not named specifically on the application pro-forma on Je-S, but should be identified in the Case for Support, along with a description of their input to the project.

7.2.31 The costs for sub-contractors should be included in the application, under 'Directly Incurred Other' and will be distributed by the lead organisation on that application, i.e. NERC (on behalf of the FCFA funding partners) does not pay these costs directly to the sub-contractor.

7.2.32 The lead organisation will be responsible for drawing up any agreements regarding funding and work plans with any named sub-contractors.

Visiting researchers

7.2.33 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.

[15] For example 'Researcher1'.

8 Including Project Studentships on a Proposal

8.1 Overview

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

9 Submitting your proposal

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 Applications must be completed in full before final submission. The Je-S system has a validation procedure which will identify sections that have not been completed. An exception to this is for any ‘Other Attachments’, so **applicants must ensure for themselves** that any such documents have been included.

9.1.2 Changes to the Je-S registration process mean that for certain schemes, such as FCFA, any organisations that are not currently Je-S registered, may self-register their organisation (see Annex 3). For these self-registering organisations there is no need to establish a submitter pool. Therefore these applicants can submit the application directly to the Council (NERC).

9.1.3 However, please note that for organisations that are already Je-S registered, your application will be routed through your existing submitter route. Therefore when a researcher submits his or her application, a message will be sent to their host organisation’s designated ‘submitter’, who must then complete the submission process to Council.

9.1.4 Thus, there is a further layer of administration between the researcher submitting the application and it being received by NERC, via Je-S. This layer of administration is at the applicant’s host institution, and NERC cannot accept responsibility for any delays which may occur as a consequence. The process can be shown as:

Applicant → Submitter (within the applicant’s institution) → NERC.

9.1.5 Note: each component application comprising a joint proposal will need to go through the same submission process. The PI on the lead application should ensure that all joint application components have submitted their part of the joint proposal.

If all applications are not FULLY submitted by the deadline, i.e. all component parts from all PI/co-PIs, they will not be accepted.

The deadline for all Je-S research applications to this call is 16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (GMT+1/UCT+1), 23rd October 2014

9.1.6 Applications can only be accepted by electronic submission in the manner indicated on the form and accompanying guidance notes, and it must be clear and unambiguous that **full** submission took place prior to the deadline.

9.1.7 Electronic acknowledgements will be sent to the lead Principal Investigator and submitting organisation from the Je-S system.

9.1.8 Applicants must ensure they know whether their application will be routed through a submitter pool. We strongly advise that you check with Je-S whether or not you need your host institution to submit your completed application on your behalf. You can check this in Je-S by opening your Je-S application and selecting ‘Document Actions’ at the top and then ‘Show submission Path’.

9.1.9 We strongly advise applicants whose applications will be routed through a submitted pool to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the application has been submitted successfully to NERC.

9.1.10 The call documentation aims to provide comprehensive instructions to support FCFA proposal preparation and submission via Je-S. However, the FCFA Secretariat is available to support applicants through the process and will act as the first point of contact for queries, which may be referred on to other Research Council teams, for example, the Je-S Helpdesk. The FCFA mailbox is monitored by a team and is the preferred method of initial contact.

10 Summary of Requirements

10.1 Full Proposals

10.1.2 Summary of Requirements for Single Application

Document Type	Required	As necessary	Number limit
Title of proposal (pro forma)	✓		150 characters
Type of proposal (pro forma)	✓		n/a
Objectives (pro forma)	✓		4000 characters
Summary (pro forma)	✓		4000 characters
Academic Beneficiaries (pro forma)	✓		4000 characters
Impact Summary (pro forma)	✓		4000 characters
Nominated referees (pro forma)		✓	Max 4
Project Partners (pro forma)		✓	No limit
Facility (pro forma)		✓	n/a
Previous Track Record (Part 1 of the Case for Support).	✓		Max 3 sides A4
Description of Proposed Research (Part 2 of the Case for Support)	✓		Max 16 sides A4
Data Management Plan	✓		Max 1 sides A4
Justification of Resources	✓		Max 2 sides A4
Pathways to Impact	✓		Max 2 sides A4
Letters of support from Project Partners		✓	Max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for named research staff and Visiting Researchers from all component Research Organisations	✓		Max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for all Principal and Co-I Investigators from all component Research Organisations	✓		Max 2 sides A4 each
Equipment Quotations		✓	n/a
Facility forms (Ship-time/Marine Equipment, Aircraft ASF/FAAM)		✓	n/a

10.1.3 Summary of Requirements for Joint Applications

Document Type	Common to all proposals	Submitted by Lead Only	Submitted by Individual components	Number limit
Title of proposal (pro forma)	✓		✓	150 characters
Type of proposal (pro forma)	✓		✓	n/a
Objectives (pro forma)	✓		✓	4000 characters
Summary (pro forma)	✓		✓	4000 characters
Academic Beneficiaries (pro forma)	✓		✓	4000 characters
Impact Summary (pro forma)	✓		✓	4000 characters
Nominated referees (pro forma)		✓		Max 4
Project Partners (pro forma)	✓	✓		No limit
Facility (pro forma)			✓	n/a
Previous Track Record for each component (Part 1 of the Case for Support).			✓	Max 3 sides A4
Description of Proposed Research (Part 2 of the Case for Support)	✓	✓		Max 16 sides A4
Data Management Plan	✓	✓		Max 1 sides A4
Justification of Resources			✓	Max 2 sides A4
Pathways to Impact	✓	✓		Max 2 sides A4
Letters of support from Project Partners	✓	✓		Max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for named research staff and Visiting Researchers from all component Research Organisations	✓		✓	Max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for all Principal and Co-I Investigators from all component Research Organisations			✓	Max 2 sides A4 each
Equipment Quotations			✓	n/a
Facility forms (Ship-time/Marine Equipment, Aircraft ASF/FAAM)			✓	n/a

11 Summary of Requirements and Assessment Criteria

11.1 Overview

11.1.2 The Full Proposals will be sent out for external peer review. The Secretariat will seek between 3 and 6 reviews for each application.

11.1.3 Applicants will have the opportunity to respond to the reviewer comments. **All reviews received by January 2015, week to be confirmed (TBC), will be sent to the lead PI for comment. This must be completed by January 2015 (week TBC).** If you do not expect to be available during January 2015, please contact the FCFA Secretariat (fcfa@nerc.ac.uk) to notify them of a suitable alternative contact. Reviews received after the initial date will be sent for comment as soon as they are received.

11.1.4 The Proposals, reviews and responses will be considered by an independent panel of experts. The panel will interview the applicants; applicants will be given the opportunity to present their projects to the panel and this will be followed by a short question and answer session. The interviews will take place in February 2015 (dates TBC) and each team can have a maximum of two representatives at the interview. 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 problem and identification and mitigation of risk;
- use of innovative approaches;
- interdisciplinary approaches; and
- suitable expertise to achieve the aims and objectives.

Fit to Call – incorporates:

- alignment of the proposed research with the programme's scientific objectives against all three research pillars;
- potential for significant and sustainable improvements in scientific understanding of African climate relevant to medium-term adaptation;
- understanding of sub-Saharan African climate and how to better integrate this science into decision making?
- recognised value added to other past and on-going initiatives;
- identification of pathways to development impact;
- breadth and depth of consortium partners, including inclusion of African institutions and involvement of partners from low and lower middle-income countries;
- involvement of stakeholders and approach to the wider development agenda;
- value for money; and
- strength of capacity development approach.

11.1.5 The moderating panel will take into account all of the review information and will award a final grade for both of the criteria outlined above using a 0-10 scale for Research Excellence and a 0-6 scale for Fit to Call. Proposals will be ranked according to these scores, with Research Excellence and Fit to Call scores carrying equal weighting.

11.1.6 Pathways to Impact are no longer scored by reviewers and are no longer used as a secondary criterion for ranking proposals. Reviewers will provide comments on Pathways to Impact and the panel will discuss these comments and deem them acceptable/unacceptable. **An acceptable Pathways to Impact plan is a condition of funding.** Grants will not be allowed to start unless unacceptable Pathways to Impact plans are enhanced to an acceptable level within 2 months of notification of the panel outcome. See the Pathways to Impact policy and guidance for more information.

11.1.7 The FCFA PEC will take the recommendations of the panel into account along with the FCFA portfolio and the available budget in making their final decision. The decision of the PEC will be final.

11.1.8 Applicants will be given full feedback from the panel outlining the reasons that they were successful/unsuccessful. No further feedback will be available.

12 Full Proposal Call Timeline

12.1.2 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
August 2014	Successful Outline Proposal applicants invited to submit Full Proposal	Applicants to prepare Full Proposals	
September 17th 2014	Virtual Workshop for Successful Outline Proposal applicants	Attendance of workshop	
October 23rd 2014	Deadline for submission of Full Proposals	Applicants to submit proposals via the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) System	
January 2015 (TBC)	PI invited to respond to reviews	PI to respond to reviewers	
January 2015 (TBC)	Deadline for PI response	PI to respond to reviewers	
February 2015 (TBC)	Moderating panel	Project members may be invited to interview at the moderating panel	
March 2015	Consortium Grant Awarded		
April 2015	Consortium Grants Started	Applicants must have returned starting certificates	

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