

# *Announcement of Opportunity*

## *Unlocking the Potential for Groundwater for the Poor (UPGro) – Sub-Saharan Africa*

*A social and natural science approach to enabling sustainable use of groundwater for the benefit of the poor*

### *2014 Consortium Grants – Outline Proposals*

*Critical Deadlines:*

*Outline Proposals to be submitted by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (GMT /UTC)*

Information about your application, including the personal information provided on the forms, will be processed and stored electronically by the UPGro Secretariat and representatives of UPGro's Funders (NERC, ESRC 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 UPGro programme for management purposes but will not be shared with other organisations outside the UPGro 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 UPGro Programme you have indicated your acceptance of these data protection terms and conditions.



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## Summary

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The Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for the Poor (UPGro) research programme is funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). UPGro is an international programme funding interdisciplinary social and natural science research generating evidence and innovative tools to enable developing countries and their partners in sub-Saharan Africa to use groundwater in a sustainable way for the benefit of the poor.

This call for UPGro 2014 Consortium Grants provides an opportunity for the world's best researchers to undertake large-scale, complex and interdisciplinary social and natural science research addressing the programme's aim of enabling sustainable use of groundwater for the benefit of the poor. It is also an opportunity to further develop interdisciplinary teams that bring together developing and developed country scientists.

There is no requirement for applicants to have applied for or received funding from the previous UPGro Catalyst Grant round in order to participate in this or any future calls within this programme.

Applications are invited for funding of up to £1.9M Full Economic Cost (FEC) per consortium. This call has a total available budget of up to £7.6M. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of four years with an expected start date prior to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

Applicants are expected to submit proposals which address at least two of the three UPGro research themes: Understanding the Resource; Governance, Institutions and Access; and Impacts of Future Trends, and include a strong focus on both physical science and social aspects.

Projects will be selected through a two stage process. [This document describes the first stage of the process: submissions of Outline Proposals.](#)

**Outline Proposals must be submitted via email to [upgro@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:upgro@nerc.ac.uk)  
by 16:00 GMT /UTC on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014**

## Abbreviations

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AO	Announcement of Opportunity
Co-I	Co-Investigator
CV	Curriculum Vitae/Resume
DFID	Department for International Development
EOI	Expression of Interest
ESPA	Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
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
LWEC	Living With Environmental Change
MIC	Middle-Income Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDRA	Post-Doctoral Research Assistant
PEB	Programme Executive Board
PI	Principal Investigator
RC	Research Council
RCT	Randomised Control Trials
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RO	Research Organisation
ROD/S	Research Outputs Database/System
TRAC	Transparent Approach to Costing
UPGro	Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for the Poor
UN	United Nations
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time

## Important Terminology (Related to the Call)

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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. UPGro 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 UPGro project.	
Low Income Country (LIC)	As classified by the World Bank. <a href="http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications">http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications</a> LIC countries have an average annual <i>per capita</i> income of less than US\$1,035 calculated using the <a href="#">World Bank Atlas Method</a> .	<a href="#">World Bank Lending Groups</a>
Middle Income Country (MIC)	As classified by the World Bank. <a href="http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications">http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications</a> . 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 calculated using the <a href="#">World Bank Atlas Method</a> .	<a href="#">World Bank Lending Groups</a>
Poverty	Poverty can be generally understood as the lack of, or inability to achieve, a socially acceptable standard of living, or the possession of insufficient resources to meet basic needs. Poverty is a contested concept and is experienced and conceived differently according to context. Researchers will be expected to adopt a multidimensional approach to poverty.	

# 1 The UPGro Programme

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## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This programme, Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for the Poor (UPGro), is a seven-year programme which is jointly funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It focuses on improving the evidence base around groundwater availability and management in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to enable developing countries and partners in SSA to use groundwater in a sustainable way for the ultimate benefit of the poor. This will be addressed using an interdisciplinary social and natural science approach.
- 1.1.2 Through the first UPGro funding round, a number of Catalyst Grants were funded, details of which can be found on NERC's [Grants on the Web](#). The programme has also funded the development of a Groundwater Atlas for Africa, which aims to provide detailed information on African groundwater resources through a web based atlas, utilising existing data and input from in country hydrogeologists, together with a companion hard copy atlas. A social and economic literature review of governance arrangements and demographic trends relating to groundwater abstraction will also be commissioned in due course once the focus of winning consortia is clear. The UPGro programme is now looking to fund larger research Consortium Grants.
- 1.1.3 The UPGro funders were disappointed with the low number of social science-led proposals or proposals with a large social science components, submitted and subsequently awarded under the Catalyst Grant funding round. UPGro is an interdisciplinary social and natural science programme, and the funders would like to emphasise that they consider cutting-edge social science, integrated with cutting-edge natural science, to be essential to deliver the objectives of this research Consortium Grants call, and the programme as a whole.
- 1.1.4 This Announcement of Opportunity outlines the Consortium Grant call, which is for large (up to £1.9M) interdisciplinary Consortium Grants that will run for up to 4 years. A total of £7.6M is available for this call. There is no requirement for researchers to have applied for or received funding from the Catalyst Grant round in order to participate in this or subsequent calls within this programme. Applicants are expected to submit proposals which address at least two of the three UPGro research themes: Understanding the Resource; Governance, Institutions and Access; and Impacts of Future Trends. Projects will be selected through a two stage process and this document describes the first stage of the process: submissions of Outline Proposals. Only applicants successful at this Outline Proposal stage will be eligible to submit Full Consortium Grant Proposals.

## 1.2 Social and Environmental Context

- 1.2.1 Water resources are a basic human need and are essential to and fundamentally intertwined with processes of economic growth and social development. Groundwater provides most of the domestic water supply in parts of rural Africa and supports poverty reduction through access to clean drinking water and irrigation<sup>1</sup>. At present only 19 of the 50 countries in SSA are on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal target for drinking water provision. Groundwater has the potential to provide an improved source of drinking water for those in SSA who currently are unable to access it. Groundwater is seen as a relatively safe source of water for drinking and agriculture/livestock as it is naturally protected from contamination so is generally of excellent natural quality and requires no prior treatment. However, water is not only an important resource for the poor living in rural SSA, but is also central to most small and large-scale industries and is a vital commodity

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<sup>1</sup> Hunter et al. 2010. Water Supply and Health *PLoS Med*7 (11): e1000361

for tourism. A lack of water supply could therefore constrain opportunities for development, improved services and poor people's livelihoods. Groundwater sources are often resistant to drought as they act as a natural buffer from rainfall variability. However, groundwater is already intensively used in certain parts of Africa and the rate of abstraction can exceed replenishment. As the population grows, water security in SSA will become increasingly important and demands on groundwater resources are likely to surge. To ensure sustainability, a greater understanding of the groundwater resource and effective management of its use will be required.

- 1.2.2 A recent study on groundwater in Africa has shown that there is possibly 20 times more water available as groundwater compared with that available in lakes and rivers<sup>2</sup>. Droughts are currently a major cause of humanitarian disaster in SSA, often leading to mass population movements and considerable health, social and economic stress in many developing nations. These humanitarian disasters are likely to grow in scale as populations grow and climate and land use change accelerate. With these increasing pressures on water resources, the potential pressure on groundwater as the solution to the water security challenge in SSA is high.
- 1.2.3 Without addressing some of the core evidence and data gaps, it will be hard to identify and manage the full implications of increased groundwater use. Abstraction of groundwater could accelerate in an uncontrolled manner and bring with it some of the negative impacts experienced in other regions. The sinking of bore holes is likely to remain ad-hoc and costly without data to help guide their placement and management regimes for abstraction amounts, so there remains the likelihood that boreholes and hand-pumps may fail after limited use.
- 1.2.4 Any change in the availability of groundwater resources, either increased supply or depletion, is likely to have substantial, complex impacts on economic, social and political dynamics at national, international, regional and local levels. Both formal government policies and informal, community level practices may become contested. Trade-offs between urban and rural environments, and between industrial, agricultural and domestic usage will have to be negotiated with implications for economic development, environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation and social justice. Improved water resources may actually exacerbate structural inequalities, including gender inequalities, if these resources are not equitably distributed. For improved understanding of the availability and sustainability of groundwater to translate into tangible and equitable benefits to the poor, these complex social dimensions must be better understood.
- 1.2.5 In order to maximise the sustainable use of groundwater for the benefit of the poor and reduce the risk of negative impacts on the environment, a number of questions need to be asked, such as:
  - Where is the groundwater, how and at what rate is it recharged, and how can it be more effectively and efficiently abstracted to meet local needs?
  - What is the state of the resource – quality and quantity – and how will it respond to abstraction, impact of growing population, climate change etc.?
  - How will changes to the accessibility of groundwater impact on the social, political and economic dynamics of local populations? What are the management and institutional arrangements needed to support this access in an inclusive and sustainable way, and how can these be implemented, in particular to reach those poorest and most marginalised groups?
- 1.2.6 These are the sort of broad questions this programme aims to address through funding high quality natural and social science research which can help to generate the evidence.

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<sup>2</sup>MacDonald et al. 2012. Quantitative maps of groundwater resources in Africa. *Environ. Res. Lett.* 7. 024009

## 1.3 UPGro: The Programme Vision

- 1.3.1 UPGro is an international research programme seeking to deliver the evidence and innovative tools to enable developing countries in SSA, and their partners, to use groundwater resources in a sustainable way that can benefit the poor. Research projects will be interdisciplinary, linking the social sciences<sup>3</sup> and natural sciences to address these challenges. They will be delivered through collaborative partnerships of the world's best researchers. The success of UPGro will be measured by the way that its research generates new knowledge which is used to benefit the poor in a sustainable manner.
- 1.3.2 This SSA based research programme represents an opportunity to undertake the fundamental science needed to maximise the potential of groundwater in a way which does not undermine the future security of the resource or the people who depend on it. It will generate research findings which can contribute to other international programmes, including those focused on the governance and mapping of groundwater across the globe.
- 1.3.3 Our vision combines research excellence with development relevance<sup>4</sup>. The whole programme is guided by the following principles:
- **Research Excellence:** Internationally recognised and competitive natural and social science 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 SSA and its contribution to delivering the overall impact of this programme: sustainably and equitably managed groundwater resources supporting increased water security for poor people in SSA.
  - **Creation of meaningful partnerships with African researchers/research institutions:** Research projects will be expected to include active engagement of African institutional partners and we particularly encourage research proposals led by African institutions (where these institutions can meet RCUK due diligence baselines)<sup>5</sup>. Consortia will be expected to demonstrate capacity building of partner institutions and success will be measured on an increasing proportion of research publications or communications coming from institutions and researchers in Africa over the course of the programme.
  - **Gender, equality and related issues** will be expected to be integral to research design and proposals must include aspects such as equity of access and voice in relation to groundwater. Data should be gender disaggregated as far as possible with specific metrics developed to track progress and improve understanding of water security through this lens.
  - **Impact and demonstrating 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 bidders will be expected to work with DFID in demonstrating impacts and outcomes (rather than just outputs).

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<sup>3</sup> The term "Social Science" is considered by UPGro to include a wide range of disciplines, including economics, the social and political sciences. See ESRC disciplinary classification <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/what-is-social-science/>

<sup>4</sup> See also the Research Councils UK document '[Excellence with Impact: Framework for the Future](#)'.

<sup>5</sup> 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 UPGro funders.



## 1.4 The Research Themes

1.4.1 The UPGro programme seeks to address three main themes and applicants are required to submit proposals that cut across at least two of the themes and include both natural and social or economic sciences research.

### **Theme 1. Understanding the Resource:**

1.4.2 Research should respond to the demand for improved understanding of groundwater availability in SSA. Key knowledge gaps which could be addressed include:

- *Improved understanding of recharge processes, including flow and storage mechanisms at local and catchment scale.* Critical advances are needed in the understanding of the fundamental recharge processes across these different African environments and how these will be affected by changes in climate change and land use. The importance of episodic, highly intense, potentially localised rainfall needs to be better understood.
- *Improved knowledge of groundwater/surface water interactions.* Research is required to better characterise groundwater to surface water and inter-aquifer interactions in terms of quality and quantity, together with increased understanding of recharge mechanisms, to inform decisions on water storage via methods such as managed aquifer recharge or surface storage. Better integration of groundwater into land surface models, such as JULES<sup>6</sup>, is also needed.
- *Improved knowledge of groundwater quality.* Research is needed to understand the risks to the quality of the groundwater resource to avoid resource degradation and risks to human and ecosystem health. The processes by which naturally occurring contaminants are mobilised and/or pathogenic organisms come to contaminate groundwater and the pathways that lead to the uptake by humans are of particular focus.

### **Theme 2. Governance, Institutions and Access:**

1.4.3 Research across this theme is expected to generate and enhance evidence and frameworks for understanding the social, economic and political dynamics surrounding groundwater use. It should focus on the impact of policies, institutions, regulations, customs and informal social arrangements associated with groundwater use and also propose approaches or models to inform the design of new policies. It is recognised that in addressing the social and political dimensions of water use, projects may need to consider the full range of available water resources. Areas of research might include:

- *Impacts of governance and political economy.* What is the impact of current local, regional, national and international governance/institutional and other political economy processes and incentive structures on groundwater resources, their exploitation, recharge and sustainable use? What are the implications of formal and informal mechanisms for groundwater governance on broader social, political and economic processes?
- *Ownership models.* What is the role of industry, and in particular foreign companies and investment and their interests in land-groundwater interfaces? What are the implications of the accumulation of ownership of water rights and access in the hands of a decreasing number of organisations and/or stakeholders?
- *Approaches to governance/institutions.* What governance/institutional approaches (at different levels including community and local/national government) help to improve access and management of groundwater – including issues of ownership, willingness to

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<sup>6</sup> JULES is the Joint UK Land Environment Simulator and is the land surface model used in Meteorological and Climate models.

pay, regulation, subsidies, enforcement – and how do they work for different groups in society, e.g. women, ethnic minorities and the poorest, particularly in the context of states with weak or unstable political regimes or those suffering from conflict?

- *Impacts of non-water related policies.* What are the impacts of non-water related policies, regulatory regimes etc. on groundwater access and use and conversely what impacts do water related policies and regulations have on broader aspects of governance and practice at a local level?
- *Behavioural change.* How do we understand the ways individuals and communities value groundwater and make decisions regarding its use? What factors influence this and how can policies and interventions bring about positive change to decisions about groundwater use? What behaviours might explain why some people currently do not have access, and how do such behaviours affect demand?
- *Tools for decision makers.* What are the tools, models, diagnostic frameworks, metrics and other approaches which need to be tested and developed to help decision makers at different levels take action to access, manage and protect groundwater as appropriate? How are these used and what other factors influence their use?

### **Theme 3. Impacts of Future Trends:**

- 1.4.4 Research across this theme will contribute to identifying the key drivers and stressors which might affect the availability of groundwater and how these drivers and stressors interact. Studies should focus on clear trends which will affect the sustainable use of groundwater in the next 10 to 20 years and, where appropriate, up to a maximum of 50 years in to the future. It should examine how future trends might differentially affect different groups (for example, women or marginalised groups) and their access to groundwater resources for their livelihoods. The research should aim to provide new knowledge at the time and space scales that will enable policy makers, communities and individuals to make informed decisions about how to use groundwater sustainably now, and in future decades. Research should also aim to integrate novel natural science and novel social science.
- 1.4.5 The interaction between these drivers and stressors may give rise to unforeseen consequences, and therefore they cannot be considered in isolation. Examples of such drivers and stressors include, but may not be limited to:
- implications of changes in land use and ownership;
  - population growth and changing demographics;
  - the finite nature and renewability of the resource;
  - changing rainfall patterns;
  - the balance of rural and urban development;
  - new technologies or water management approaches (for example, managed aquifer recharge);
  - rates of extraction and changing demands on and limits to groundwater abstraction (for example, through increased demand for irrigated agriculture);
  - the potential effects of increased industrialisation in both urban and rural contexts.

## 1.5 Components of the UPGro Programme

1.5.1 The UPGro Programme has several elements and these are outlined below for information.

### **Catalyst Grants**

1.5.2 Catalyst Grants were funded during the first year of the programme and information on each award can be found on NERC's [Grants on the Web](#).

1.5.3 The goal was to provide small amounts of short term funding to:

- develop and test new methodologies, metrics, tools;
- undertake pilot studies;
- provide an opportunity to bring together new interdisciplinary teams of developed and developing country scientists.

1.5.4 Outputs from the Catalyst Grants will start to become available in June 2014 and the Consortium Grants are encouraged to utilise these where appropriate.

1.5.5 The receipt of a Catalyst Grant is not a requirement for future participation in the programme.

### **Baseline studies**

1.5.6 A number of baseline studies will be commissioned separately during the programme. The primary purpose of the baseline studies is to provide a resource for the interdisciplinary consortia and the wider community in the later stages of the programme. In the first year of the programme a baseline study to address the development of an online groundwater atlas of Africa, bringing together existing data sets and input from in country hydrogeologists into a single accessible resource was commissioned.

1.5.7 Once the successful Consortium Grants are in place, a second baseline study will be commissioned to produce:

- a detailed literature review of the main social and economic conditions and types of formal and informal institutional and governance arrangements that enable access to sustainable groundwater resources;
- a synthesis and assessment of the key online data resources/information on social, economic and demographic trends that will shape future ground water abstraction and use in SSA.

### **Consortium Grants**

1.5.8 These are described in more detail in section 2 and are the subject of this call. They are expected to deliver the bulk of the research for the UPGro programme. There will be up to a £7.6M investment in this element of the programme, supporting 3 to 5 Consortium Grants that will run for 4 years. There is no requirement for applicants to this call to have applied for or received funding from the Catalyst Grants round.

1.5.9 Funds have been set aside to enable coordination and integration activities between successful applicants to take place. Once successful Consortium Grants are in place, a strategy for integration will be developed in conjunction with the UPGro programme's Knowledge Broker (see section 1.5.10). At the Full Proposal stage applicants will be expected to provide suggestions within their proposal on how they could approach programme integration and coordination and raise the profile of the programme as a whole.

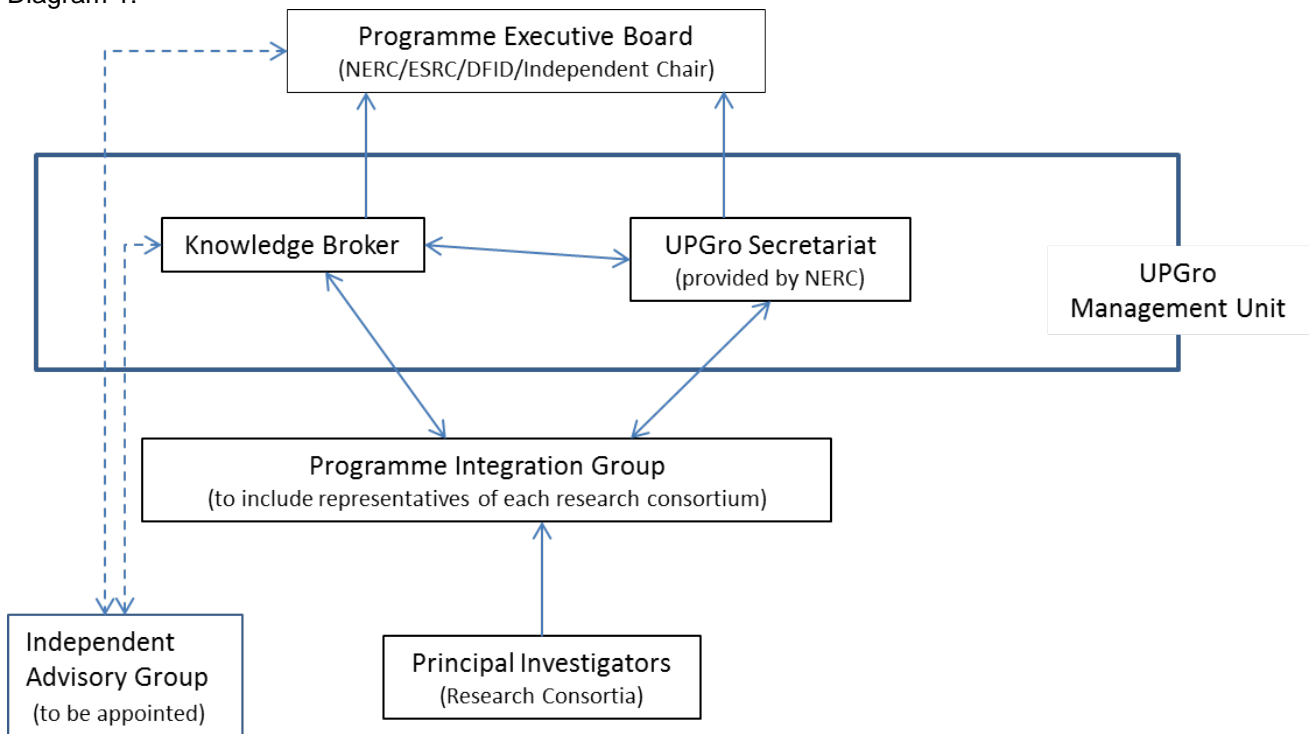
## Knowledge Broker

- 1.5.10 The UPGro programme aims to deliver the knowledge and information required to better access and manage Africa's groundwater resources to enhance water security for poor people in SSA, and maximise the potential role groundwater can play in Africa's economic development. To ensure that the information arising from this programme is disseminated to the appropriate stakeholders and policy makers, the programme has employed a Knowledge Broker.
- 1.5.11 The Knowledge Broker will work toward ensuring that the programme maximises its impact through connecting and communicating with relevant users. The Knowledge Broker will also work with those funded as part of the UPGro programme to ensure effective coordination and integration across projects and dissemination of outputs. All those funded under the UPGro programme will be required to work with the Knowledge Broker to help facilitate this role and as such each funded consortia will nominate a representative to sit on the Programme Integration Group (see Diagram 1).

## 1.6 The UPGro Programme Governance Structure

The governance structure of the UPGro programme is shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1:



## 2 Scope of the Call for UPGro 2014 Consortium Grants

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### 2.1 Objective

- 2.1.1 The goal of the UPGro 2014 Consortium Grants is to fund large-scale (up to £1.9M FEC), interdisciplinary social and natural science research projects to develop new knowledge and build capacity to enable developing countries in SSA to benefit from the use of groundwater in a sustainable way. This will also provide the opportunity to develop interdisciplinary teams bringing together developed and developing country scientists.
- 2.1.2 The successful research projects will take an interdisciplinary approach, combining social and natural sciences, to address the themes of the UPGro programme.

### 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 £1.9M Full Economic Cost (FEC<sup>7</sup>). A total budget of up to £7.6M is available. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of 4 years, with a required start prior to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015. In administration of the grant, standard [NERC terms and conditions](#) will apply.

#### **UPGro 2014 Consortium Grant applications must:**

- be interdisciplinary in nature and include both **social** and **natural** science;
- include clear hypotheses and objectives that determine the design of the project, including specifying the need for the research and the relevance (whom it will benefit);
- work across the three main themes, incorporating at least two;
- include clear rationale for the methods proposed;
- bring together developing and developed country scientists or clearly outline how these partnerships will be formed;
- deliver impacts that will benefit the poor people living in sub-Saharan Africa.

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<sup>7</sup> Full Economic Costing (FEC) <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/documents/fecFAQ.pdf>

### 3 Poverty Focus and Geographic Scope of this Call

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#### 3.1 Poverty Focus of the Research and its Location

- 3.1.1 UPGro's research needs to contribute to knowledge and evidence which will help to reduce poverty and through this improve the lives of poor people, and must be applicable to those living in Low-Income Countries (LIC) in SSA (see Annex 1 for definitions).
- 3.1.2 UPGro considers that poverty is multidimensional, going beyond single measures of income or consumption and recognises that poverty is experienced differently according to context. UPGro therefore expects researchers to adopt a multidimensional understanding of poverty, and one that is relevant to the specific research context
- 3.1.3 UPGro's research needs to identify the groups of poor people most likely to be the ultimate beneficiaries and whose lives should be improved through the application of UPGro's research results. Proposals for UPGro funding should identify these groups **and** describe their current poverty status.

It is a requirement for funding that ***UPGro 2014 Consortium Grants demonstrate how the results of proposed research will have pathways to impact that can improve the lives of poor people in low-income countries***, even if some of the research is conducted in one or more middle-income countries.

#### 3.2 Where can Research be Conducted?

- 3.2.1 The results of the research should benefit the countries of SSA (see Annex 1 for definitions). The primary focus of the research is in Low Income Countries in SSA. However, research may be undertaken in Middle Income Countries (MIC) in SSA where there is a clear impact of the research on the poor and applicability to low-income countries. Where appropriate, research may usefully draw lessons from experiences of groundwater management in other regions and look at their applicability to priority areas in Africa.

Proposals will need to describe what their projects will do to ensure that poor people living in sub-Saharan Africa will benefit from their research as part of their Case for Support.

It is a requirement for the current call that linkages with SSA institutions are established.

For the purpose of this call, the term developing country has been defined to include all Low-income countries. The income status of countries can be checked on the World Bank's website which lists current [income classifications](#).

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

- 3.2.2 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. However UPGro projects are intended to have a clear and significant role for developing country researchers and/or institutions. This should represent meaningful engagement which supports capacity development for all partners. (For further information or to check your eligibility, please contact the UPGro Secretariat directly at [upgro@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:upgro@nerc.ac.uk))

UPGro actively encourages international collaboration with academic and non-academic organisations and/or community groups and the active involvement of developing country researchers and institutions in the design and implementation of projects.

## 4 Demonstrating the Pathway to Impact

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- 4.1.1 UPGro's projects are expected to deliver *both* academic impact (e.g. research papers, significant new data) and a pathway to significant and sustainable development impact. Development impact from UPGro projects will be measured by the way the research is directly relevant to, and thus is able to demonstrate, likely contributions to the sustainable alleviation of poverty, improved health and well-being and creation of new opportunities for people, particularly the poor, in low-income countries to benefit from sustainable growth in the global economy.
- 4.1.2 The requirement to demonstrate the potential for impact will extend to all projects commissioned under the UPGro programme, including the Consortium Grants. It is our expectation that these awards will contribute new knowledge and understanding. They will also provide an opportunity for the development of research partnerships between developed and developing country partners.
- 4.1.3 Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate how their team(s) of researchers intend 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. Where possible, publications should be published in open access format.
- 4.1.4 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<sup>8</sup>.
- 4.1.5 UPGro's research is expected to help decision- and policy-makers to implement better development strategies and processes that will lead to benefits for poor people and poverty reduction alongside sustainable management of groundwater resources. UPGro's research should also empower poor people and communities, especially those in low-income countries, to improve their own lives and assist them in coping with a changing world.
- 4.1.6 Effective engagement with potential users of UPGro research will be an important factor contributing to the subsequent development impact pathways of all UPGro projects. 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. Consideration should also be given to how the findings of the research can be made available to interested parties in the target communities of the research.
- 4.1.7 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, including suggestions for working with the UPGro Knowledge Broker and other Consortium Grants to maximise value for money across the programme (see Section 1.5.9).

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<sup>8</sup> [ESRC Data Policy](#)  
[NERC Data Policy](#)

## 5 Summary of the Outline Proposal Application Process

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### 5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The UPGro 2014 Consortium Grants will provide funding of up to £1.9M for a maximum duration of 4 years. It is a requirement of funding that projects start before 31<sup>st</sup> January 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 5.3 for further details).
- 5.1.2 The application process for funding of UPGro 2014 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.

### 5.2 UPGro 2014 Consortium Grant Outline Proposals (*Closing Date 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014, 16:00 UK local time (GMT/UTC)*)

- 5.2.1 The first stage of the application process involves production of Outline Proposals.
- 5.2.2 Applicants must complete the UPGro Consortium Grants 2014 Outline Proposal form, available from <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/upgro/news/ao2014/> by the closing date in order to be eligible. Applicants are encouraged to submit their Outline Proposals in black and white and as a PDF document.
- 5.2.3 All Outline Proposals should be submitted in English.
- 5.2.4 Individual researchers may be named on a maximum of two different proposals, but on only one as the lead Principal Investigator.
- 5.2.5 All Outline Proposals received will undergo eligibility checks and may be rejected at this stage if they do not meet eligibility criteria (see Section 6).
- 5.2.6 All Outline Proposals which pass the eligibility checks will be assessed by a Sift Panel consisting of natural science, social science and development experts and convened by the UPGro Secretariat. This panel will assess (on the basis of the material submitted) which proposals have the greatest potential to meet the objectives of this UPGro Consortium Grant call. This recommendation will go to the UPGro Programme Executive Board (PEB) who will then invite the successful teams to submit Full Proposals.
- 5.2.7 Successful applicants who are invited to produce a Full Proposal will be informed shortly after the Sift Panel (c. late March) 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 between 3 and 5 projects will be funded.
- 5.2.8 Only one Outline Proposal is required per project.
- 5.2.9 **Outline Proposal forms must be completed in full.**

### 5.3 Outline Proposal Form

- 5.3.1 Applicants should complete the Outline Proposal form available at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/upgro/news/ao2014/>. **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 and 1.4.

**Part 5 and 6:**

A justification of resources and indicative budget. 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 **developing** countries, the rate is **50%**
  - for applicants from **developed** countries, the rate is **20%**

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

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 £1.9M. Should the budget for your final application be more than

±10% of that submitted with your Outline Proposal, please contact the Secretariat [upgro@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:upgro@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 UPGro 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, UPGro encourages projects to secure or leverage additional investment from external parties in addition to those funds being requested from the UPGro Programme itself. Leveraging of funds or in kind support (in terms of time or equipment) has the potential to add huge value to any UPGro 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.

## 5.4 Further Details

- 5.4.1 Any questions regarding Consortium Grant Outline Proposals should be sent to [upgro@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:upgro@nerc.ac.uk).

Outline Proposals must be submitted electronically by email to the UPGro Secretariat at [upgro@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:upgro@nerc.ac.uk) by 16:00 (4pm) UK local time (GMT /UTC) on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

**Late submissions WILL NOT be accepted.**

## 6 Selection Criteria (Outline Proposals)

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6.1.1 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 problem and identification and mitigation of risk;
- use of innovative, multidisciplinary approaches;
- involvement of developing country partners;
- suitable expertise to achieve the aims and objectives;

*Fit to Call* – incorporates:

- potential for significant and sustainable development impact;
- alignment of the proposed research with the programme's research themes (see Section 1.4);
- 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.

6.1.2 Outline Proposals will be awarded a grade for both of the criteria outlined in section 6.1.1 using a 10-point scale. 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 UPGro PEB will make a final decision about which Outline Proposals will be invited to submit Full Proposal.

6.1.3 All applicants submitting an Outline Proposal will be informed whether they have been successful shortly after the UPGro PEB meet to make the final decision. This meeting will take place following the panel meeting in March.

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

## 7 Workshop for Successful Outline Proposal Applicants

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7.1.1 Applicants who are successful at the Outline Proposal stage, and thus invited to submit a Full Proposal, will be invited to a workshop to be held on **13<sup>th</sup> May 2014** in London.

The aim of the workshop is to provide further details on the requirements and expectations of the UPGro programme; to provide an opportunity for those proceeding to the Full Proposal stage to raise any questions with the funder; and to meet the programme's Knowledge Broker.

At least one representative from each successful Outline Proposal will be expected to attend. Travel costs will be reimbursed by the programme.

## 8 Full Proposal Call Timeline and Summary of Requirements

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Applicant responsibilities</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
15 Jan 2014	Announcement of Opportunity for the 2014 Consortium Grant Call		
3 Mar 2014	Submission of Outline Proposals	Submission of Outline Proposal form via email to UPGro Secretariat	Sift panel
Mar 2014	Successful Outline Proposal applicants invited to submit Full Proposal	Applicants to prepare Full Proposals	
13 May 2014	Workshop for successful Outline Proposal applicants	Attendance of workshop	
Jun 2014	Submission of Full Proposals	Applicants to submit proposals via the Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) System	Assessment panel
Oct/Nov 2014	Consortium Grants Awarded		
31 Jan 2015	Consortium Grants Started	Applicants must have returned starting certificates	

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

## 9 Timeline of the UPGro Programme

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- 9.1.1 The current call for UPGro's 2014 Consortium Grants is the second call for this programme. The programme is expected to close in 2019.

## Annex 1. Low-Income Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank Classification)

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UPGro's research needs to be able to contribute to reducing poverty and improving the lives of poor people living in low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Where research is conducted in a middle-income country, research proposals will need to show how the results have the potential to benefit the countries poor people, how they can be applied to low-income countries and describe what projects will do to ensure that this happens.

The UPGro programme uses the World Bank Group's classification to define low-income status. <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications>

Sub-Saharan Africa (economies are divided by 2012 GNI per capita)

### Low Income Countries (\$1,035 or less)

Benin	Gambia, The	Niger
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Rwanda
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone
Central African Republic	Kenya	Somalia
Chad	Liberia	South Sudan
Comoros	Madagascar	Tanzania
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Malawi	Togo
Eritrea	Mali	Uganda
Ethiopia	Mozambique	Zimbabwe

### Lower-middle-income economies (\$1,036 to \$4,085)

Angola	Ghana	Senegal
Cameroon	Lesotho	Sudan
Cape Verde	Mauritania	Swaziland
Congo, Rep	Nigeria	Zambia
Côte d'Ivoire	São Tomé and Príncipe	

### Upper-middle-income economies (\$4,086 to \$12,615)

Botswana	Mayotte	South Africa
Gabon	Namibia	
Mauritius	Seychelles	