

Global Challenges Research Fund: Building Resilience

Frequently Asked Questions



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



For further information please read the Announcement of Opportunity available [here](#).

If you have further queries not addressed below, please contact GCRFResilience@nerc.ac.uk

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GCRF and ODA

What is the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)?

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a new 5-year £1.5 billion resource funding stream, announced as part of the [2015 Spending Review](#), to ensure that UK research takes a leading role in addressing the problems faced by developing countries. The GCRF will deploy the UK's world-class research capability to address the challenges faced by the developing world. The funding is protected science spend and the Research Councils are primary delivery partners. The GCRF is also part of the UK Government's pledge to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance, promoting the welfare and economic development of developing countries. With the GCRF focus on global challenges, research investments are expected to span disciplines including the biological sciences, environmental sciences, medicine, engineering and physical sciences, the social sciences and the arts and humanities.

For more information, please see the [RCUK GCRF webpage](#)

What is Official Development Assistance (ODA)?

ODA stands for Official Development Assistance. It is an international definition owned by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is not only a RCUK or UK Government term:

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) defines Official Development Assistance (ODA) as "flows to countries and territories" which are on the DAC's list of ODA recipients, provided by official agencies to promote the economic development and welfare of countries on the list. It is expected that funding streams eligible for allocation from the UK's ODA budget should demonstrate how they aim to contribute to aims to reduce poverty and increase sustainable development is required. ODA is highly relevant to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which 17 goals have been described as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including zero hunger and good health and well-being.

More information and guidance on ODA in the context of the GCRF can be found on the [RCUK web pages](#).

What are LMICs, what is the DAC list?

The DAC List of ODA Recipients shows all countries and territories eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA). These consist of all Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) based on gross national income (GNI) per capita as published by the World Bank, with the exception of G8 members, EU members, and countries with a firm date for entry into the EU. The list also includes all of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as defined by the United Nations. The DAC List presents countries and territories in groups, but all countries listed are eligible to receive ODA and therefore relevant to GCRF funding.

The 2014-2016 DAC List is available [here](#).

Countries on the DAC list are divided among income groups according to their gross national income per capita. The groups are 'Least Developed Countries', 'Other Low Income Countries', 'Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories' and 'Upper Middle Income Countries and Territories'.

You do not have to work with specific partners from the DAC list however you do need to demonstrate how your research proposal will deliver primary benefits to LMICs in the long-term, and how you will deliver this pathway to impact.

How does my proposal meet the ODA requirements?

Any GCRF proposal must make it clear that its primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries. Applicants should:

- Seek to investigate a specific problem or seek a specific outcome which will have an impact on a developing country or countries on the DAC list;
- Provide evidence as to why this is a problem for the developing country or countries;
- Address the issue identified effectively and efficiently;
- Use the strengths of the UK to address the issue, working in collaboration with others as appropriate;
- Demonstrate that the research is of an internationally excellent standard;
- Identify appropriate pathways to impact to ensure that the developing country benefits from the research.

Any benefit to the UK or other developed countries has to be the secondary consideration and should not lead to a project being funded if it doesn't primarily deliver the development objective. Applications that do not address the ODA criteria will not be accepted.

More information and guidance on ODA in the context of the GCRF can be found on the RCUK web [pages](#).

Can my research also benefit the UK?

Yes, it may be that the research will also benefit the UK, in terms of the wider impacts such as new research knowledge, publications and training etc., however, LMICs should be the primary beneficiaries; and you need to demonstrate this in your application.

Does my research have to take place in a DAC list country?

No. Where research is conducted, or where research participants are from, are not sufficient indications of whether or not research meets ODA requirements. The key to ODA compliance is what the primary purpose of the research is, and where the benefits of the research are expected to be experienced.

The primary purpose of any GCRF research must be to promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list. Any benefit to the UK or any other non-DAC list country can only be a secondary consideration: the primary benefit must be to a country or countries on the DAC list. Not all research conducted in DAC list countries will meet these criteria, but some research involving non-DAC list countries may. Applicants will therefore need to carefully consider how they demonstrate ODA compliance regardless of where their proposed research takes place.

Are there any priority countries on the DAC list for GCRF?

There are no priority countries within GCRF. All countries on the DAC list are eligible.

Are proposals relevant across more than one country eligible?

Unless otherwise stated in scheme-specific guidance, proposals may be relevant to one or multiple countries on the DAC list.

Funding & eligibility

What contributions are each Research Council making to this call?

Funders are investing up to £3.3 million as follows: NERC: £1.4 million, AHRC: £1.1 million and ESRC: £800k.

Do all three Research Council's remits have to be represented in proposals?

Yes. The 'Building Resilience' GCRF call for Foundation Awards is looking for solutions that are informed by, and developed in, the social and cultural contexts in which they will operate. This call therefore requires interdisciplinary approaches from across the remits of all three participating councils to be embedded as an integral part of the research design.

All proposals should integrate expertise from across the three funders' representative communities. The proposals are expected to be based on a programme of work that lies pre-dominantly within the remits of the Councils funding the call (NERC, ESRC, AHRC) but including other disciplines (e.g. engineering, medical), where appropriate, to achieve a holistic approach. Applications must include a named investigator from each of the three funder communities, but the balance and mix of expertise from within different funder communities will be dependent on the needs of the project. It is vital that the proposal demonstrates how these disciplines will be integrated to ensure a holistic approach.

Does the lead research organisation have to be based in the UK?

Yes. Research proposals must be led by a UK principal investigator based at a Research Organisation that is eligible for research council funding. Guidance on eligibility for Research Council funding can be found on the [RCUK website](#). Proposals can be submitted by researchers who are not established members of the proposed host institution. By submitting the proposal, the research organisation is confirming that, in the event of an award, they guarantee to provide facilities for the PI (as if they were an established member of staff) for the duration of the award.

Do international partners need to attain matched funding from equivalent funding organisations in their country?

No. There is no requirement in GCRF for matched funding from the country or countries involved.

Can I apply for more than one GCRF call?

Yes, unless scheme-specific guidance stipulates otherwise. You must have the capacity to undertake all projects applied for, should they be successful. For any one investigator, the maximum amount of time that Research Councils will fund across all the projects they support is 1650 hours a year (equivalent to 37.5 hours a week, 44 weeks a year).

What level of institutional support is required for a GCRF proposal?

The level of UK research organisation support for GCRF calls is the same as standard Research Council proposals, ie the Research Council provides 80 per cent of the Full Economic Costs and the research organisation provides the remaining 20 per cent. International Co-Investigators will receive 100% fEC funding at a maximum of 30% of the grant cost.

Should a bid cover the different funder interests - does it have to cover all three funders, if so what balance of each?

All proposals should integrate expertise from across the three funders' representative communities. The proposals are expected to be based on a programme of work that lies pre-dominantly within the remits of the Councils funding the call (NERC, ESRC, AHRC) but including other disciplines (e.g. engineering, medical), where appropriate, to achieve a holistic approach. Applications must include a named investigator from each of the three funder communities. , but the balance and mix of expertise from within different funder communities will be dependent on the needs of the project. It is vital that the proposal demonstrates how these disciplines will be integrated to ensure a holistic approach.

Can any discipline be the lead on an application?

The PI can be from the NERC, AHRC or ESRC communities.

What interdisciplinary approaches are expected?

The call aims on supporting research addressing complex key research problems, challenges or questions which cannot be addressed by single disciplines. Thus, successful applications will have an inter-disciplinary team with the required expertise according to the needs of the research problems, challenges or questions addressed by the project.

Are studentships permitted on this call?

No.

Can non-UK researchers be funded as part of this call?

Yes. Academic researchers (at PhD or equivalent status) from established overseas Research Organisations from countries on the OECD [DAC List of ODA Recipients](#) are eligible for funding through this call. As are international research organisations which have appropriate expertise and significant presence in the LMICs in which the project is based. There must be a named Co-Investigator at any non-UK organisation wishing to receive funding. Projects with non-UK Co-

investigators and researchers will receive funding through the lead UK research organisation. The costs associated with the non-UK component of the project must not exceed 30 per cent of the overall cost of the grant (at 100% fEC).

Can UK Co- Investigators be funded as part of this call?

Yes. The Co-Investigator must be employed by an eligible research organisation to receive funding.

Are non-academic organisations eligible to receive funding through this call?

The funders recognise the importance of and want to encourage the involvement of non-academic organisations, such as NGOs, local & national policy-makers, as well as organisations representing affected communities, in these **GCRF Building Resilience projects**.

There are a number of ways in which these collaborating organisations can be involved in and receive funding through the grant, depending on the role the organisation will play in the project. The funders recommend a clear and open discussion between the academic lead for the grant and the collaborating organisation to establish their role and therefore how they will be costed into a proposal. The collaborating organisation must be able to fully account for all costs that they wish to charge to the grant, should these be requested.

Non-academic organisations, such as NGOs, can collaborate in and receive funding through the grant if they act as either Project Partners or Sub- contractors. The paragraphs below explain these roles and how they would be eligible to receive funding in each of these cases.

Project Partner

If a collaborating organisation is integral to the design and delivery of the project and is contributing significantly to the project through financial or in-kind contributions to the grant (e.g. staff time, access to facilities, data, sites) then they should be listed as a project partner. In recognition of the importance of collaborating organisations to these projects, project partners can claim costs, such as staff time and T&S. The costs allocated to project partners must be proportional to their role within the project and the application must make clear what the organisation is contributing to the project and what is being costed to the grant, and the requested costs must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. NERC will pay costs at 80% fEC to the lead research organisation who should then pass on the relevant funding to the project partner. Where there are multiple individuals from the project partner involved in the grant, the organisation should only be added once as a project partner. A letter of support will be required detailing the involvement of all individuals. We see this as the most common way for many collaborating organisations, such as NGOs, to be involved.

Sub-contractor

Sub-contracts are appropriate where there is a particular piece of work to be undertaken as part of the grant and that expertise doesn't exist in NERC eligible organisations, e.g. providing a service to

the grant such as translation skills or data collection. A CV or letter of support is not required. NERC will pay costs at 80% fEC funding to the lead research organisation who should then pass on the relevant funding to the sub-contractor. The work as a sub-contractor needs to be justified in the Justification of Resources. A tender process is not required for the work. Sub-contractors would not normally have co-author status on any publications.

How much can I apply for international investigators and what for?

We will fund all eligible costs associated with international co-investigators at 100 per cent fEC. However, these costs must not exceed 30 per cent of the full 100 per cent fEC cost of the grant. Applicants should note NERC's policy on the inclusion of international coinvestigators on grants. In addition to our usual policy, for this call NERC will exceptionally allow justified indirect costs related to international co-investigators from countries on the OECD DAC list. Indirect costs for developing country coinvestigators may be charged on salaries and other staff-related costs (ie statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions) and non-staff related direct costs (eg. consumables, consultancies and conferences as well as travel and subsistence at a rate of 20 percent.. Requests for capital will not be funded as part of this call. Equipment under £10k is subject to normal grants terms and conditions.

Can bids include creative and/or performing arts approaches?

Yes. Creative and performing arts research is an important part of the AHRC remit and is eligible to be included in bids to this call. However where it is included it is important to ensure that this goes beyond the use of creative and performing arts practice solely for the purposes of science communication, public engagement and dissemination. Although such activities can be important and valuable elements of proposals, and are eligible for inclusion in proposals, where creative and performing arts approaches are intended as the qualifying element under the AHRC subject remit, **these would need to be embedded as an integral part of the research design.**

When is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for proposals is 16.00 on 6 September 2016.

When must proposal start and how long can they run for?

Successful proposals are required to start by 1 November 2016, and can run between three and nine months. If there is a requirement for the submission to last longer than 9 months you must make contact with NERC to discuss before the submission is made.

When will the outcomes be announced?

Successful applicants will be informed by 26th October 2016.

Contact

GCRFResilience@nerc.ac.uk