

# Global Challenges Research Fund

**Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to  
Address Intractable Challenges Faced by  
Developing Countries**



## To cover

- Introducing The Global Challenges Research Fund: Scale, Strategy, Ambition
- GCRF: Working in Partnership
- Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Challenges Faced by Developing Countries

Research Councils UK

Excellence  
with impact

# Introducing The Global Challenges Research Fund



# Background to GCRF



*Cutting edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries*

2015 Government Spending Review Outcomes

- Address global challenges through disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- Strengthening capability for research and innovation, within developing countries and the UK
- Agile response to emergencies and opportunities
- £1.5billion funding, 2016-21

# GCRF Delivery Partners

- Research Councils UK
- British Academy
- Academy of Medical Sciences
- Royal Academy of Engineering
- Royal Society
- HEFCE
- UK Space Agency

GCRF Strategy:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623825/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623825/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf-strategy.pdf)

# Global Context: UN Sustainable Development Goals



# GCRF: Breadth of Ambition

## ***Equitable access to sustainable development***

to create new knowledge and drive innovation that helps to ensure that everyone across the globe can prosper through access to health, food, water, education, energy etc.

## ***Sustainable economies and societies***

to identify new responses to the challenges arising from changes in population, technology, consumption and pressure on the environment

## ***Human rights, good governance and social justice***

to understand how to strengthen the institutions that underpin peaceful societies, good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

# GCRF: Key Criteria

- ✓ **Research Excellence**  
new approaches not constrained by traditional methodologies or disciplinary silos
- ✓ **Official Development Assistance (ODA) compliance**  
OECD guidelines
- ✓ **Equitable Partnerships and Building Capacity**  
strong and enduring partnerships between UK and developing-country researchers to enhance the research and innovation capacity of both
- ✓ **Impact: Problem and Solution Focused**  
substantial impact on improved social welfare, economic development, and environmental sustainability



# GCRF: Funding, Duration, Focus

- £1.5billion funding
- 2016-2021
- First phase of calls by DPs (Academies, RCs, UKSA, HEFCE)
- Heat map at:  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/gcrfawardedprojects/>
- These calls are ongoing – see websites
- First RCUK collective call: Growing Research Capability to Meet the Challenges Faced by Developing Countries
- 37 projects, £225m, 69 countries
- Booklet at:  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/growcallbooklet37finaljuly2017-pdf/>

Research Councils UK

Excellence  
with impact

## GCRF: Working in Partnership



# GCRF: Equitable Partnerships

Equitable partnerships with developing-country researchers to:

- identify actual research gaps and needs
- co-create research questions and research outcomes
- test solutions to actual problems
- build research capacity in the UK and developing countries to do research for development
- Global Engagement Meetings: Colombia, India, SA, Kenya, and others to follow

# GCRF: Impact through partnership with non-Research Organisations

Working with NGOs, CSOs, governmental agencies, multinational bodies, and others to:

- identify development needs
- test potential – and potential limitations – of research outcomes on real-world problems
- co-design real-world implementation of solutions
- input into policy

# GCRF: Portfolios of Research to Address SDGs

Portfolios of GCRF projects responding to SDGs to:

- disseminate, combine, and scale up research and impact; have real impact on SDGs, at scale; set benchmarks for best practice; make sure that GCRF is more than the 'sum of its parts'

Global Health

Food Systems & Security

Protracted Conflict, Refugee Crises and Forced Displacement

Education

Resilience to Environmental Shocks and Change

Cities and Sustainable Infrastructure

Research Councils UK

Excellence  
with impact

# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Challenges Faced by Developing Countries



# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

- 12-15 Hubs, likely multi-institutional
- £8-20m per Hub
- December 2018 for five years
- Intention to submit: 29<sup>th</sup> September
- Outline proposals 9<sup>th</sup> November
- End of February, invited to submit full proposal
- May: full proposals submitted
- October: interviews

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>

# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

*Interdisciplinary ...*

‘A well-integrated interdisciplinary approach which demonstrates both underpinning research excellence and the ability to think across, between and within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that adds significant value to existing global research efforts’

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>



# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

## *Research Hubs ...*

- Research excellence
- Hubs: collaboration, coordination, capability and capacity building
- Impact-oriented
- Partnership and mix of expertise: NGOs, CSOs, multilateral organisations, industry, etc.

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>

# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

*To address Intractable Challenges ...*

‘Intractable development challenges are multidimensional and complex challenges that have proven to be resistant to change, prone to fragmented responses and which cannot be solved by a single organisation or from one sectoral or disciplinary perspective’

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>

# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

*Faced by developing countries ...*

- Faced by? (in partnership with...? Also: SDGs are *global*)
- Equal partnerships
- Clear global south input into framing proposal
- Clear GS research excellence, and leadership
- Capability and capacity building in GN and GS
- NGO, CSO, etc, partners
- Pathways to impact and impact horizons...

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>

# Interdisciplinary Research Hubs...

*To address Intractable Challenges ...*

‘Intractable development challenges are multidimensional and complex challenges that have proven to be resistant to change, prone to fragmented responses and which cannot be solved by a single organisation or from one sectoral or disciplinary perspective’

e.g. development of resilient infrastructure, smart services and energy production in the context of climate change, protracted conflict and social and political instability

Full info: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/gcrfhubsoutlinecalltext-pdf/>

# Further information

## **RCUK**

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/>

## **Hubs**

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/interdisciplinary-research-hubs-to-address-intractable-challenges/>