



GCRF New Models of Sustainable Development

Call specification

Summary

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is investing £7 million for new research grants that qualify for funding from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). This new call, '*New Models of Sustainable Development*' aims to fund new interdisciplinary and innovative research which helps us to understand how new models of economic development (broadly defined) can help address the development challenges reflected in the UN's Agenda 2030. Proposals may be submitted under two broad themes: ***Transitions towards sustainable and inclusive societies*** or ***Decent work for all*** (see below for details).

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (www.esrc.ac.uk/gcrf) is a £1.5 billion funding stream to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries. GCRF forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, and funding under this call will be awarded in a manner consistent with official ODA guidelines: (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm)

We are looking for ambitious projects, investigating new avenues for research that directly engages with the new development agenda. Partnerships, whether with academics, policy-makers or stakeholders, are encouraged.

Proposals are invited for research grants of between £500,000 and £800,000 at 100% full Economic Cost (fEC) and of durations between 18 to 30 months. Proposals must be led by a researcher at an eligible UK research organisation and should be submitted through the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). All grants must commence by **1 September 2018**.

The deadline for proposals is 16:00 (GMT) on 11 January 2018.

Background and scope

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) aims to harness the UK's scientific expertise to tackle some of the world's most pressing development challenges. It operates across a number of partners, including the Research Councils, National Academies, UK Space Agency and HEFCE. The RCUK GCRF represents the largest portion of the Fund and is a strategic fund spanning all seven Research Councils. The Research Councils have each received

directly allocated portions of the GCRF, and the ESRC is drawing on its allocation to support this call.

Every discipline within the social sciences has the potential to make a strong contribution to the GCRF agenda, and the ESRC anticipates playing an integral role in developing and delivering the funding programme, working alongside other research councils and partners. Further information about our approach to GCRF and details of other current GCRF calls is available on our website (www.esrc.ac.uk/gcrf).

Call details

A sustainable, inclusive and equitable global economy, capable of generating ‘decent work for all’ is at the heart of Agenda 2030 and will be core to the mission of ‘leaving no one behind’. However, delivering on this will require innovative and creative solutions to the many challenges involved, not least in ensuring that economic growth and development is both inclusive and sustainable.

The aim of this call is to develop interdisciplinary and innovative research which helps us to understand how new models of economic development, broadly understood, can help address the development challenges reflected in the UN’s Agenda 2030. In particular, what new institutional frameworks, policy approaches or business models are emerging that we can learn from, and whether there is potential to transfer and apply successful initiatives or reforms to different contexts or environments, potentially scaling them up where appropriate.

Thematic focus

Research proposals should fall within **one** of the following broad themes. **Applicants should identify under which theme their proposal is directed** (please refer to the Je-S guidance:

www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/funding-opportunities/gcrf-sustainable-development-je-s-guidance/)

Transitions towards sustainable and inclusive societies

All developing countries face the need to manage advances in economic growth and development alongside the challenges of environmental sustainability and social cohesion. Are there models or approaches to economic development that offer new insights into how to support sustainable, equitable growth? What potential do alternative models of production and distribution offer, and how can innovation be best encouraged and supported through institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks? Possible research themes may include:

- New business models: What new innovative models of production or business organisation and ownership have emerged in lower income countries which have the potential to be successfully scaled up to meet the challenges of sustainable and inclusive development or which might to some extent be replicated in other contexts and environments? What can be done

to encourage the sustained growth of innovative micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises and business-society partnerships?

- Digital transitions: How can existing and emerging new digital technologies radically change models of production and distribution in low income countries: how does evidence suggest they can be best utilised to support sustainable economic growth and improved wellbeing? What potential does the application of new technologies in finance ('fintech') offer in this context, for example by-passing traditional banking systems or offering new analytical approaches to improve access to credit where traditional banking records are not available?
- Institutions and governance: How do national, regional, sectoral and city-level governance institutions understand development challenges and how are they adapting and responding to them? Are there innovative examples of emerging forms of governance or institutional reforms which successfully meet the development challenges ahead?
- Encouraging new investment and innovation: what institutional and legal frameworks and approaches to regulation can best encourage new private sector investment and innovation which is supportive of sustainable development?
- The threats and opportunities of changing trade relations: how should trade policy and trading relationships adjust to reflect and support the new development agenda and encourage sustainable patterns of production?

Decent work for all

It is estimated that around 470 million jobs will be needed globally for new entrants to the labour market by 2030. How can we ensure not only that sufficient employment is created, but also that work is productive, fairly remunerated and meets minimum standards in terms of security and prospects for personal development? Creating the conditions to achieve this raises fundamental challenges in terms of raising investment, productivity and competitiveness in lower income countries. This in turn relates to issues such as training and education, labour market regulation, and the capacity of the state to encourage and support enterprise, investment and innovation on the one hand whilst ensuring appropriate employment standards and social security support on the other. Possible research themes may include;

- Governance and regulation: What kind of institutional and legal frameworks are needed in encouraging innovation and enterprise whilst ensuring appropriate standards of employment protection and social security? Are there innovative examples or new forms of governance emerging for meeting these challenges in particular countries, regions or sectors that offer lessons that can be applied in other contexts? What can we learn from existing evidence regarding the appropriate design of labour market regulation and social support systems in lower income countries?
- Education, training and productivity: What lessons have been learned regarding the role of education and training in raising labour skills and productivity, and how can these be best implemented in the context of

particular sectors or countries? (Please note that the interest in education in this call is specifically related to decent work and associated labour market issues; research on other aspects of education should be directed to the parallel/forthcoming Education call: please see below).

- Trade and labour markets: What light does research shed on the relationship between labour market conditions and patterns of global or regional trade; what implications does this have for trade policy?
- Migration: What has been the impact of international migration on local labour markets in lower income countries and how can migration flows be best managed in the interest of both migrants and local workers?
- Gender: What further reforms are required to best address the remaining socio-economic and cultural obstacles that hold women and girls back in the workplace? What lessons does existing evidence offer in terms of implementation?
- Digital economy: What is the impact of the emerging digital economy on economic activity and patterns of employment and labour market dynamics in lower income countries; how should policy and regulation respond to ensure continued innovation is compatible with appropriate employment practices?
- Access to work: How can the challenges associated with youth employment and access to employment by people with disabilities be best addressed?
- Eradicating labour market abuses: How can research inform policy in determining what further steps need to be taken at both national and international level to eliminate forced employment and the worst aspects of child labour?

Potential applicants may wish to note that the ESRC is planning another GCRF call focused on Education and Skills in January 2018. Proposals focusing primarily or solely on this area, rather than its links with productivity and labour markets, may be better suited to this call.

Funding of international co-investigators

GCRF calls follow standard ESRC policies in that the ESRC will fund 100% of the justified costs for international co-investigators. However, the costs associated with international co-investigators' contribution to a project must not exceed the 30% of the overall cost of the grant (100% fEC). The 30% limit is the combined costs of all international co-investigators and UK business, third sector or government body co-investigators.

Applicants should note the ESRC's policy on the inclusion of international co-investigators on proposals; (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/).

The overhead rate for DAC list country co-investigators is up to 20% of salaries and other staff-related costs (such as, statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions).

Indirect costs may not be charged on non-staff related direct costs, for example, equipment, consultancies and conferences as well as travel and subsistence. Also please note that indirect costs do count towards the 30% International costs cap.

Please note that any indirect costs claimed must be within the 30% International co-investigator cap. Further guidance is provided in the Je-S Guidance for applicants.

Eligibility

For this call, standard ESRC eligibility rules apply. This means that principal investigators on proposals to this call must be based at an UK research organisation eligible for Research Council funding (www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/). Co-investigators can be based anywhere in the world, but additionally for GCRF calls, the co-investigator's research organisation must submit a 'letter of support' that uses the template provided within the Je-S guidance. This is to ensure that the organisation in question is of comparable standing to an ESRC-recognised UK research organisation and to ensure the international research organisation's commitment to the project. Further information on eligibility is provided within the ESRC Research Funding Guide (www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/): guidance on the inclusion of international co-investigators is also available (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/).

Standard ESRC eligibility rules apply. Proposals which duplicate work previously supported by the ESRC will not be funded. The ESRC will not fund contract research or consultancy work where the results and physical outputs are to some extent already pre-defined and known. Proposals which are not deemed to be within the scope of this call will be rejected.

Stakeholder engagement

The primary purpose of research funded under this call is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries. We expect researchers funded under this call to have identified the potential impact of their research on relevant policy and practice, and to actively consider how this can be maximised and developed in ways which are realistic and appropriate to the particular context.

We recommend that a minimum of 10% of the overall budget should be dedicated to deliver the activities outlined in the impact summary. Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the kinds of user engagement, knowledge exchange, communications and research uptake activities they plan to undertake. Please note that outreach and engagement activities in themselves do not constitute impact. The development of a clear impact strategy will be important to ensure research impact is achieved. When completing the impact summary section of the form, applicants may find it helpful to refer to ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/developing-an-impact-strategy/).

It is recommended that each proposal includes plans to hold a seminar or workshop with key stakeholders in the country or countries where the majority of the research is taking place, to set out the aims of the projects and fully ground it in the local context. This should take place at the earliest opportunity to facilitate the potential co-production of knowledge and allow researchers to 'reality-check' their plans.

Partnerships and collaboration

For this call we strongly encourage proposals which involve partnerships and collaborative relationships, particularly with developing country partners. Partnerships may build on

existing relationships or represent new collaborative relationships. The configuration of partnerships and collaborations should be driven by the research and impact objectives underpinning the proposal. The principal requirement is for substantive, targeted and high-quality collaborations or partnerships, demonstrated through clear leadership roles, and balance and proportionality in partners' roles and responsibilities. All partnerships, including international ones, should be based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices.

Collaborative partnerships with non-academic stakeholders, including potential research users and intermediary organisations with a mandate to communicate research, are also encouraged where appropriate. The exploitation of new knowledge does not just occur at the end of a research project, but is rather embedded throughout the research process itself, so we expect such stakeholders to be included and involved in both the early design and on-going conduct of research projects.

Capacity building

An important aspect of GCRF is capacity development, and we strongly encourage all proposals to this call to identify research capacity-building activities as part of, and not separate to, the stated research agenda. Examples of building capacity include:

- Provision of new opportunities for those with relevant skills who have not previously worked on development relevant research projects to orient their research towards global issues
- Support and mentoring for more junior team members
- Co-design of research and implementation with developing country partner staff

Further information on capacity-building in relation to GCRF is available on the ESRC website (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf/capacity-development/).

Associated studentships will not be funded through this call.

ODA compliance statement

This call is funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund. GCRF forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (www.oecd.org/). ODA-funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm). Funding within this call will be awarded in a manner that fits with official ODA guidelines (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm).

To comply with ODA requirements, all proposals must make clear how their primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries on the DAC list. There are no priority countries. Proposals may relate to any country or countries on the DAC list except those which are flagged as likely to graduate from the list during the course of the proposed project. If a country is flagged as likely to graduate it should not be the primary focus of a proposal, although it can be included as an

additional case study or comparison. In such proposals the primary purpose of the research should be to promote the development and welfare of a developing country not due to graduate from the list.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate how they meet ODA requirements throughout their case for support and pathways to impact submission. In addition, **all proposals must include a mandatory attachment addressing the following three questions:**

1. Which country / countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal?
2. How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
3. How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list?

Important considerations:

- To be ODA compliant the principal motivation of the project must be to directly benefit a country or countries on the DAC list, and the key/principal beneficiaries of the research should be located in a DAC list country or countries.
- It is fine for research to take place outside of a DAC list country or for projects to include a comparative element as long as the principal motivation is to benefit a DAC list country or countries. (It is also fine for research projects to have secondary impacts outside of eligible countries).
- If a focus country within a proposal is flagged on the DAC list as likely to graduate from the list during the course of the project the research would not be ODA compliant unless the primary focus is on a country or countries not due to graduate.
- The impact-generating and knowledge exchange related activities must be focused on a DAC list country or countries, and if the applicants intend to generate impact via international organisations or INGOs they should explain why this is likely to lead to greater impacts than working directly with stakeholder's in-country.
- Compliant proposals must address development challenges in an eligible country or countries and be likely to contribute directly to their economic development and/or welfare. Impacts should be targeted at specific DAC list countries and should not depend on the trickle down of a global public good.

Further guidance on how to submit the ODA compliance statement as a 'non-UK component' attachment is provided in the call-specific Je-S Guidance for Applicants. General advice on ODA and links to other useful sources of information are provided on the ESRC website (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf/official-development-assistance-oda/). RCUK guidance on ODA in relation to GCRF is available at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/> .

Initial ODA compliance assessment will take place within the ESRC, though final decisions may include input from commissioning panels as well as external sources of ODA expertise.

How to apply

Proposals must be submitted to the Joint Electronic System (Je-S) by the **call deadline 16:00 (UK time) on 11 January 2018.**

(<https://jes.rcuk.ac.uk/jes2webloginsite/login.aspx>)

Where call-specific guidance provided in these call documents differs from generic Je-S help, the call-specific guidance should always be followed. Care and attention must be given to completing the proposal correctly and complying with all technical requirements. Proposals that are not completed correctly may be rejected by the ESRC office.

The final submission process is the responsibility of the host institution, and the ESRC cannot accept responsibility for any delays which may occur. It is recommended that applicants submit in good time before the call deadline at this stage. We strongly advise applicants to confirm with their relevant administrator that the proposal has been submitted successfully to the ESRC.

What we will do with your information

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal information that you provide within the Expression of Interest will specifically be used for the purpose of administering the call. The information will be viewed by ESRC staff and selection panel members but will not be used for any other purpose without your specific consent.

For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold on you, please contact the Joint Information Services Unit (jisu@epsrc.ac.uk).

Commissioning timetable

- Call announced - 8 November 2017
- Closing date for proposals - 11 January 2018
- Decisions announced - May 2018
- Grants start - 1 September 2018

Contacts

If you have any questions or would like further information about the scheme, contact:

- Claire Dyball
Telephone: 01793 413003
- Paul Sanderson
Telephone: 01793 413050

- Email: gcrfeconomics@esrc.ac.uk

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:

- Je-S helpdesk
Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk
Telephone: 01793 444164