‘Global Challenges Research Fund: Networks in Vector Borne Disease Research’

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What is the Global Challenges Research Fund?

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.

What is Official Development Assistance?

Official development assistance (ODA) 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 ODA as “flows to countries and territories” which are on the DAC 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 demonstrate how they aim to contribute to reduction in poverty and increased sustainable development. 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.


Please note that the following countries are potentially set to graduate from the DAC list in January 2017: Antigua & Barbuda, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Venezuela. For proposals which engage partners from these countries, or are specifically focused on challenges in these countries, to ensure ODA compliance you must ensure their involvement will contribute to the wider economic development and welfare of other developing countries (not just the graduating country partner/focus country).

How do I meet the ODA criteria for the call?
You will need to demonstrate that the primary purpose of the proposed Network is the economic development and welfare of the OECD DAC list countries.

To achieve this, you should consider the following aspects when preparing your application:

- Your proposed Network should investigate a specific problem, or seek a specific outcome, which will impact on the economic development and welfare of countries on the OECD DAC list in the immediate or longer-term
- You should articulate a clear and specific case for the benefit and relevance of the proposed research to countries on the OECD DAC list
- Consider the pathway to realising the developmental impact (even if outside the timeframe of the project)
- Details of ODA recipients on the OECD DAC list are available at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC List of ODA Recipients 2014 final.pdf

Further information about how to meet ODA criteria is available in the RCUK ODA guidance document http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/international/gcrfodaguidance-pdf/

**Can the outputs of the Network also benefit the UK?**

Yes, we would expect that the Network will also benefit the UK, in terms of the wider impacts such as new research knowledge, capability building, building of interdisciplinary partnerships, publications and training etc., however, developing countries should be the primary beneficiaries; and you need to demonstrate this in your application.

**Can I work with international partners?**

The Network Director (Principal Investigator [PI]) and Co-Director (Co-Investigator [CoI]), if applicable, must be eligible to receive funding from BBSRC, see BBSRC grants guide. However, the funders expect that Networks will seek to engage researchers and stakeholders in developing countries. Researchers from developing countries will be eligible to apply for pump-priming funding by subcontracting, see BBSRC grants guide.

Networks can also have members from developed countries (other than the UK) where their expertise adds specific value to the Network. However, it is not expected that researchers from other developed countries will make up the bulk of the Network’s membership.

**Does my application need to address the remit of both funders?**

No, Network applications can fall into the remit of either funder, although Network applications that address a challenge that cuts across the remits of both funders are particularly welcome.

**Can I be a PI/CoI on multiple Network applications?**

No, an eligible researcher can only submit one application as either a PI or CoI.
**Can I be a member of multiple Network Management Boards?**

Yes, the funders anticipate that it may be appropriate for individuals to sit on the Management Board of a number of Networks. However, individuals are strongly urged to consider the time implications before agreeing to take on multiple positions.

**Can I be a member of multiple Networks?**

Yes, the funders anticipate that individuals may wish to be a member of multiple Networks. The Networks are expected to remain 'open' to new membership throughout their duration.

**Can an organisation submit more than one Network proposal?**

Yes, a Research Organisation eligible to receive funding from BBSRC can submit more than one Network application. However, the funders expect that Research Organisations will manage their submissions process so as to avoid the submission of multiple Expressions of Interests with substantial overlap/duplication.

**Should a Network include more than one Research Organisation?**

It is not a requirement that the Network Director (PI) and Co-Director (CoI) be from different Research Organisations. However, as the purpose of the Networks is to stimulate new partnerships, promote interdisciplinary working and build capability there may be benefit to be gained from the PI and CoI being from different Research Organisations. It is anticipated that the membership of the Network will be comprised of relevant researchers and stakeholders from a range of different organisations including those from developing countries.

**Do the members of the Network Management Board need to be identified in the Expression of Interest?**

No, it is not essential to have identified the members of the Network Management Board in the Expression of Interest. However applicants should identify the type of expertise that will be required on the Management Board. In the full proposal, applicants must identify and provide letters of support from the members of the Network Management Board.

**Do Network members need to be identified in the Expression of Interest?**

No, it is not essential to have identified potential Network members in the Expression of Interest. However, applicants must identify and provide letters of support from the first 10 Network members in the full proposal these can include members of the Network Management Board.
Can a Network (Co)Director apply for pump-priming funding from the Network that they lead?

Networks are expected to put in place appropriate governance structures and processes that will ensure robust, rigorous, transparent and fair peer review of all applications to the pump-priming fund, in particular they will need to consider how they will deal with conflicts of interest. Therefore, Network Directors, Co-Directors and members of the Network Management Board will all be eligible to apply for funding from the Network’s pump-priming fund.

Can the Network request funds to support PhD training?

No, the duration of the Network is too short to support PhD training. However, Networks could make a case for costs to support, summer schools, workshops, researcher exchanges and the development of on-line training tools etc.

How much can I apply for?

Applications should request no more than £2 million (100% Full Economic Costing [FEC]) for a maximum of 3 years. All applications should be justified appropriately and have appropriate structures in place.

Can some of the Network costs be requested as 100% FEC exceptions?

Yes, as a community support role the salary of the Network Manager can be requested at 100% FEC. The Network events/activities can also be requested at 100% FEC. For full details of eligible costs please see the ‘Call Guidance’ document.

Can an established Network apply to expand existing activities?

Yes, however the Network would need to make a clear case for how the additional funds add value to the existing Network activities.

Can I request equipment as part of a the Network proposal?

GCRF-relevant proposals can only contain equipment below £10K. Equipment above this threshold should not be requested.

What contributions are each Research Council making to this call?

The funders are investing up to a total of £9 million: BBSRC £6 million; MRC £3 million.
Contact

Enquiries should be submitted to:

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