

MRC Global Challenges Research Fund - Foundation Awards

Frequently Asked Questions

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 Review¹, to ensure that UK research plays a key role in addressing global challenges and issues faced by developing countries. The GCRF demonstrates the UK government's pledge to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to ODA. The remit of GCRF spans across multiple disciplines including social, biological, the environment and health. Therefore, the GCRF investment is of high relevance to all seven Research Councils, who are the primary partners to deliver the Fund.

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

Which countries are eligible for partnering with for the Foundation Awards?

The OECD Development Assistance Committee's list of Official Development Assistance recipients (available at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist) defines the sets of countries whose health needs (individual or collective) are relevant to the Foundation Awards. **All of the countries on the DAC list are eligible to be partnered with for the Foundation Awards.**

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 Lower and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) countries in the long-term, and how you will deliver this pathway to impact.

What is the DAC list?

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

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List, is the list of ODA recipients categorised by population income. More information can be found at www.oecd.org

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-documents/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015

Countries on the DAC list are divided among income groups according to their gross national income per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method. Among the groups include 'Least Developed' 'Low income', 'Lower middle income' and 'Upper middle income'.

Are middle income countries eligible to be partnered with? What if my partner country is taken off the DAC list?

Yes, middle income countries are eligible for partnering - if the country is named on the DAC list your application will be accepted. If a country is taken off the list before the end of your project, the project will continue through to completion but will be ineligible for any future awards.

What is Official Development Assistance (ODA)?

ODA is an international definition owned by the 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 aims 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.

How do I meet the ODA criteria for the Call?

Generic guidance cannot be provided; you will need to demonstrate that the primary purpose of your project is the economic development and welfare of the LMIC(s). To achieve this, you should consider the following aspects when preparing your application:

- Your proposed research should investigate a specific problem or seek a specific outcome which will impact on the economic development and welfare of LMIC(s) in the immediate or longer-term
- You should articulate a clear and specific case for the benefit and relevance of the proposed research to the LMIC(s)
- Consider the pathway to realising the development impact (even if outside the timeframe of the project)

- Details of LMICs on the DAC list of ODA recipients are available at [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC List of ODA Recipients 2014 final.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC%20List%20of%20ODA%20Recipients%202014%20final.pdf)
- Further cross Council information will be made available as soon as possible.

Any applications (outline and full) that do not address the ODA criteria will not be accepted.

Can my research also benefit the UK?

Yes, we expect that the research will also benefit the UK, in terms of the wider impacts such as new scientific knowledge, publications and training etc, however, LMICs should be the primary beneficiaries.

Can I work with international partners?

Yes, you can work with international partners, but it is not an essential call criteria. Partnerships may be aspirational and developed during the course of the project.

For this call international researchers cannot be Principal Investigators. Standard MRC eligibility rules apply, as set out in Section 1.3 of the MRC Guidance for Applicants.

For information about how to work in collaboration with partners, you should also refer to the [MRC Guidance for Applicants](#) (section 1.3.3).

Can I include a co-investigator from a non-LMIC country?

The standard MRC eligibility criteria applies. We will therefore allow co-investigators from overseas research organisations if they provide expertise not available in the UK. Please see the MRC guidance on overseas costs which can be found in section 3.1.3 and 3.1.5 of the MRC [Guidance for Applicants](#).

Should I include CVs and other supporting information?

CVs are not required at the outline stage. Annexes are not allowed and will not be included as part of the assessment process. There is no requirement to include references or diagrams at the outline stage.

You should only submit the completed GCRF Foundation outline form; we do not require any other documentation.

Under the 'estimated resources required' section of the outline form should the UK costs be entered as 100% FEC or 80% FEC?

The UK costs should be entered at 80% FEC ie the cost to the MRC.

If equipment over £10K is purchased in one of the LMICs will the MRC fund 50% or 100%?

Requests for modest capital equipment funding will be considered and if this equipment is to be used in LMICs we will fund this at 100%.

What is the difference between a co-investigator and a planned partner?

Co-investigators are researchers that you know will be involved and planned partnerships are people/organisations that you think may be involved.

Future involvement of planned partners could be as additional co-investigators, as project partners at the time of the full application, or partnerships that would be developed during the course of the project.

If you know that a researcher will definitely be involved as a co-investigator you should name them in this role on the outline form. If you are unsure at the outline stage then you should add them as a planned partner.

I am not sure whether my proposal fits better with the NCDs, Infections or Agri-food call for proposals?

MRC, AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC and NERC are funding the three Foundation Awards calls. Applicants are advised to email the relevant Research Council Office(s) prior to submission to clarify any issues over fit to the scope of the call. The Research Councils will work together to advise you.

In general, applications with a primary focus on understanding animal or human disease/infections (eg pathogen biology, transmission dynamics, mechanisms of host immunity) should be submitted to the Global Infections call whether they are animal or human only or one health.

Applications focused around research of crop infections, diseases which affect livestock where the emphasis is on improving welfare and/or production (eg effect of Mastitis on milk production) and food safety should be submitted to the Global Agriculture and Food Systems Research call.

Applications at the interface between these two calls will be considered on a case by case basis. Further advice on which call may be more suitable can be sought via gcrf.foundation@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk (Global Infections) or gcrf@bbsrc.ac.uk (Global Agriculture and Food Systems).

Please note that we may transfer outline applications between the food and health foundation calls to ensure the applications get the most appropriate peer review. Successful applicants will be advised which call they should submit their full application to.

I think my proposal will fit in multiple priority areas for this call, do I have to apply for only one?

You only need to submit one application and it can have relevance to multiple priority areas. On the MRC outline form you should select the primary area of interest ie NCDs or Infections.

Do I have to have research from all the funders remits?

No, applications can be led from any discipline which falls under the funders remits; however we would like encourage multidisciplinary approaches.

If I win a Foundation award am I still eligible for an MRC New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG)?

A Foundation Award is not designed to help you make the transition to independence in the same way as a NIRG is. So in most cases we would expect that you could hold a NIRG project alongside a Foundation Award or vice versa. There may be exceptions to this however, for example, your Foundation Award may be substantive and over 24 months in duration, making you ineligible against NIRG criteria.

If you have any doubt as to your eligibility, please contact the MRC Policy team at RFPD@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk.

I have previously submitted an application to an MRC Board or Panel. Can I resubmit this application as a Foundation Award?

The MRC's normal resubmission rules apply therefore applications cannot be resubmitted within 12 months.