



## **GCRF: RCUK Collective Fund**

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

**Applications by invitation only**

**Deadline for full proposals: 24 May 2018, 4pm (BST)**

#### **Summary**

Following a highly competitive call for outline proposals, Research Councils UK invites 52 outlines representing a broad range of development challenges to develop full proposals. Between £8M - £20M (100% full economic cost) will be available for each Hub, provided over a five year period starting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018. Depending on the quality of the applications received we anticipate awarding 12-15 Hubs.

Each Hub is required to demonstrate:

- **Challenge and impact focus**
- **Interdisciplinary research excellence**
- **Global partnerships**
- **Organisation and leadership**

Applications which do not adequately demonstrate genuine interdisciplinarity, equitable international partnerships and breadth across and between a number of Sustainable Development Goals, will not be considered fundable.

Assessment of the full proposals will be through a two-stage competitive process. The first stage will comprise of external expert review and assessment by an international, interdisciplinary Panel. Following this, the most competitive full proposals will be invited to interview.

#### **1. Aims and scope of the call**

##### **Intractable Development Challenges**

This call focuses on transformative approaches to address currently intractable development 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.<sup>1,2</sup> Typically such challenges cut across a number of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, because they are multidimensional in nature, they require:

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<sup>1</sup> [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1758GSDR\\_2015\\_Advance\\_Unedited\\_Version.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1758GSDR_2015_Advance_Unedited_Version.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2328Global\\_Sustainable\\_development\\_report\\_2016\\_\(final\).pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2328Global_Sustainable_development_report_2016_(final).pdf)

- the capacity to think across and between as well as within the thematic areas of the various SDGs;
- a clear understanding of the ways in which different disciplines can contribute to a step change in delivery against these challenges; and
- an awareness of the underlying factors and contexts (including social, political, economic, cultural, technological and historical), interdependencies, synergies, tensions and trade-offs that promote, obstruct or even reverse delivery against the SDGs, both individually and collectively.

### **Hub characteristics**

Each multi-institutional Hub should propose a coherent and ambitious vision, and bring together an international core strategic partnership, led by a Hub Director (the Principal Investigator) and strategically supported by co-director(s) who may be in the Global South or the UK, to conduct a world-leading and well-integrated programme of research. They should aim to stimulate transformative approaches and radical new thinking to address multi-dimensional and complex development challenges. This may include generation of impact through collaboration with relevant industrial sectors, civil society groups and NGOs, as well as government and other policy agencies.

Hubs must demonstrate how they will help to deliver the UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)<sup>3</sup> and a step-change in research for development through:

### **Challenge and impact focus**

- Challenge-led and impact-focussed, generating excellent and novel research and translating this into measurable real-world outcomes.
- A clear vision and integrated plan for the translation of the proposed research into measurable international development impact.
- The potential to deliver a broad range of impacts and scalable solutions at the local, national and/or international level.
- Developing a sustainable programme that has a legacy beyond the initial investment, with potential to leverage further support from development agencies, as well as financial or in-kind contributions including from universities and the private sector.

### **Interdisciplinary research excellence**

- Excellent research capacity to conduct meaningful, well integrated and robust interdisciplinary research, including an appropriate range of research skills required to address the challenge(s).
- A demonstrable capacity to think across and between as well as within the thematic areas covered by the various SDGs, and a clear understanding of the way different disciplines working together contribute to the overall objectives of the Hub.
- Taking an interdisciplinary approach that assembles new knowledge and insight from across different research communities - transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries by integrating ground-breaking research with a better understanding of the social, political, economic, historical and cultural contexts.
- Commitment to build strategically on previous ODA and non-ODA investments (RCUK, DfID and other delivery partners) to add value to international efforts and improve co-ordination and ensure the whole is more than the sum of the parts.

### **Global partnerships**

- An indispensable feature will be co-development with international partners and substantial, genuine and meaningful collaboration between UK and developing-

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<sup>3</sup> UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF):  
[www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf-strategy-pdf/](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf-strategy-pdf/)

country researchers, as well as relevant development agencies, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), industry and other private sector organisations, policy makers, and other relevant local and international partners.

- An appropriate strategy for deep engagement with users, intermediaries and beneficiaries of research throughout the duration of the Hub.
- Full consideration of the relevant developing country context (e.g. languages, cultures, faiths, public engagement, legal frameworks, political and regulatory systems), ethical issues in the planning and conduct of research, and implementation of an ethical innovation and 'do no harm' approach.

### **Organisation and leadership**

- Shared values and goals within the Hub and its partnerships.
- Ensuring strong research and operational leadership, including robust financial and risk management, assurance and governance.
- Implementing appropriate and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- The ability to learn and adapt, including demonstrating the agility to respond to opportunities arising over the lifetime of the award.

Further details on the criteria used for the assessment of full applications are included in the [‘Assessment procedure’](#) section (Section 3).

Hubs are expected to be innovative, building on identified needs and proposing a flexible programme of activities co-developed with international partners. The paramount objective is excellence and relevance of the research. To support this, each Hub will be required to propose and justify a portfolio of cross-cutting research, knowledge exchange and innovation activities, with due recognition to the following:

- Development of novel methodologies for interdisciplinary working, knowledge exchange and innovation, including where appropriate, disciplines that haven't traditionally been oriented towards international development challenges
- Flexible funding to support emerging research opportunities (in the UK and relevant developing countries) arising over the lifetime of the Hub, including supporting sub-projects and engaging researchers and other stakeholders outside the original core partnership
- Activities to encourage idea generation, research syntheses, commercialisation, research translation and follow-on investment
- Partnership building, networking and stakeholder engagement to align the research with the local context and knowledge systems, contribution to policy/practice and/or commercialisation
- Capacity building activities which may include bespoke training; development of professional and transferable skills; development of tools, methodologies and guidelines; and/or staff exchange
- Pathway to impact activities to maximise the short, medium and long term impacts.
- Operational funding to build professional capability to support engagement and relationship management, research coordination, facilitation of new ideas and dissemination of outputs

For the flexible fund within your proposed Hub you should outline how the fund will be managed and administered, including the process(es) which will be used to ensure ODA compliance. An estimate of the proportion of funds that you anticipate will be spent in developing countries, the UK and non-UK developed countries should also be provided. You will be required to report annually on how these funds have been spent.

The same funding rules apply as those outlined in the [Funding Available for research partner organisations](#) (Section 2), e.g., for non-UK developed countries 50% of the funds must be found from other sources. All expenditure should follow the rules outlined in this call document and appropriate due diligence carried out.

Hubs must demonstrate full commitment from all organisations involved. This should be referenced in the Letters of Support and Justification of Resources. We expect a substantial and dedicated contribution from all organisations involved in the proposed Hub. This should primarily focus on contributions which complement those requested from RCUK and support the delivery of the Hub. This may include, but is not limited to, contribution towards capital, infrastructure and studentships. Contributions should reflect ability to resource i.e. expectations are reduced for organisations based in lower income countries.

### **Research ethics**

By definition this programme is concerned with international co-operation to address issues of global importance. Underpinning the programme and all funded projects must be a strong research ethic based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices. Solutions to the proposed development challenge(s) must be rooted in, and acceptable to, the institutions, communities and societies where they will operate.

Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass areas where regulation and approval processes exist as well as areas where they do not. Applicants must ensure that the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard and must clearly state how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the research commences and all risks are minimised.

The provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must be observed. All RCUK awards are made on the absolute condition that no work which is controlled by the Act will begin until the necessary licences have been obtained. All work supported by RCUK award must comply with the principles described in “Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research: expectations of the major research council and charitable funding bodies”<sup>4</sup> (included in the guidance documents section of the call webpage). When collaborating with other laboratories, or where animal facilities are provided by third parties, researchers and the local ethics committee in the UK should satisfy themselves that welfare standards are consistent with the principles of UK legislation. Research involving the use of genetic resources must be carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the Nagoya Protocol or equivalent national protocol.

Any research undertaken outside the UK must have both UK and respective country ethical approvals.

## **2. How to apply**

### **Funding Available**

Awards must be in the range of £8 - 20 million at 100% full economic cost (fEC), with the final figure dependent on the scope of the Hub and the scale of the challenge(s). The total budget

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<sup>4</sup> [www.nc3rs.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Guidelines/Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research- expectations of the major research councils and charitable funding bodies April 2017.pdf](http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Guidelines/Responsibility%20in%20the%20use%20of%20animals%20in%20bioscience%20research-expected%20of%20the%20major%20research%20councils%20and%20charitable%20funding%20bodies%20April%202017.pdf)

(100% fEC) for each full proposal must be within 10% of the total budget (100% fEC) for the outline proposal.

Dependent on the quality of applications received we anticipate awarding 12-15 Hubs. It is expected that the largest Hubs will address the broadest and/or most complex challenges and involve the greatest breadth of partnerships. It is vital that each proposal demonstrates that the level of investment requested is commensurate to the scale and/or complexity of the proposed development challenge(s).

Awards will be over a five year duration, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 with the potential for future extension dependent on their progress and the availability of funding. All successful awards will be subject to a stage gate review in year 3.

All awards will be expected to adhere to RCUK Terms and Conditions.

## **Eligibility**

**Lead research organisation** – The lead organisation cannot be changed between the outline and full stages without prior permission from RCUK.

**Principal Investigator (PI)/Hub Director** – This individual should act as the figurehead for the Hub, providing intellectual leadership and oversight of the research and project management. The Hub Director must be employed by the lead organisation and the term of employment must extend beyond the duration of the proposed Hub.

The proposed roles and responsibilities for this individual will need to be clearly explained and justified in the proposal. The Hub Director should be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Articulate and deliver a clear vision for the proposed Hub
- Provide leadership and convene a range of UK and international researchers and organisations
- Drive advances in the relevant fields of study
- Lead innovative and creative programmes of research
- Manage large research programmes
- Broker and develop partnerships which add value to activities/programmes
- Deliver excellent impact from research

The Principal Investigator cannot be changed between the outline and full stages without prior permission from RCUK.

**Co-Investigators** – Co-Investigators on Hubs are expected to have significant intellectual input and form part of the leadership team. They must be based at either the lead organisation or a research partner organisation. Employees of project partners are not permitted to be co-investigators on proposals submitted to this call.

**Research partner organisations** – Both UK and international research organisations (for example higher education organisations, public laboratories, or other non-profit research intensive organisations) can be research partners and receive funds from the Hub award. Any UK-based research intensive organisation that is currently not eligible for Research Council funding will need to apply for Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status if it is to be a 'research partner' on a Hubs application. For more information on how to apply for IRO status please see <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/> or contact Jan Tucker ([Jan.Tucker@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:Jan.Tucker@rcuk.ac.uk)).

In order to be eligible to receive funding as a research partner organisation, **non-UK** research organisations will need to register with the Research Councils. To do this, please include a **letter of support from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for research (or equivalent authority) from each non-UK research partner organisation** in your proposal. This letter should summarise the organisation's support for the project, confirm that they are able to meet the eligibility and assurance requirements identified in the table below, and agree to provide information to the Research Councils when requested. In the letter they should also provide a contact email address for any due diligence enquiries.

<p><b>Ability to deliver</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide evidence of a strong track record of maximising the wider impact and value of its research to the benefit of local economies and society;</li> <li>• have a cohort of researchers (normally a minimum of 10) with sufficient capacity to deliver research and a demonstrated track record. This should include a significant number of publications in journals and/or monographs with key academic publishers, and/or other outputs that have been subject to peer review. Journal quality should take into account benchmark measures appropriate to the regional context and research disciplines;</li> <li>• have a track record of staff, while employed at the organisation, leading or co-leading innovative research projects in the previous five years including, if applicable, directing postdoctoral researchers and/or research students; and</li> <li>• have sufficient financial support for research at the organisational level to ensure the availability of essential infrastructure and the long-term sustainability of research activity, as evidenced by research project income across all projects totalling at least £100k pa over the previous three years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance and control</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a higher education organisation, public laboratory, or non-profit research intensive organisation;</li> <li>• have a governing board with independent representation appointed to jointly oversee the management of the whole organisation;</li> <li>• have satisfactory processes for preventing, detecting, reporting and responding to allegations of fraud, bribery and corruption;</li> <li>• have satisfactory processes for the effective collection, management, analysis and dissemination of data;</li> <li>• have satisfactory processes in place that meet Research Integrity and Ethics requirements, including processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct;</li> <li>• be subject to an independent annual audit; and</li> <li>• have measures in place to prevent and mitigate conflict of interest which could affect employees or governing board members participation in decision-making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial stability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be permitted by their country's government to receive funding from foreign sources;</li> <li>• have a bank account that is in its legal name; and that can be reconciled to the finance management system;</li> <li>• have a basic finance management system that can be used to reconcile the bank account, to record all cash and payments ensuring that all transactions can be individually identified and provides suitable storage for supporting documentation; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have satisfactory procedures in place for making payments for per diem, travel advances or review of receipts and subsequent reimbursement of expenses for approved official travel.</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-contract Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure there is a policy in place to sufficiently manage sub-contractors including provisions for ensuring their compliance with Research Council terms and conditions.</li> </ul>

For organisations that are registered in multiple countries the capacity of the whole organisation may be factored into meeting the eligibility criteria as long as the overall research environment meets that criteria and that the organisation works in a joined up way, i.e., not fragmented research centres in different countries.

As part of RCUK funding assurance, research partner organisations may be requested to complete an RCUK Overseas Due Diligence Questionnaire. Please be aware that research partner organisations may be contacted by RCUK at any point during the expert review process. This is in order to expedite our assurance process. If we do contact any non-UK research partner organisation named on your outline proposal, the Lead organisation will be informed.

This process is for our assurance purposes and does not replace the due diligence requirements of the lead organisation. However, when obtaining information from non-UK research organisations we will request permission to share the information they provide to us with the lead organisation. The lead organisation can then use this information for their own due diligence processes should they wish.

**Project partners** – Participating organisations not meeting the criteria to be research partners can be project partners on the awards based on the following requirements:

- *Third sector organisations* - NGOs, charities and other non-profit civil society organisations (not meeting the minimum requirements for research partner organisations) can be included on proposals as **project partners** and are eligible to receive a contribution towards costs from the Hub award (see [What can be Applied For?](#), Section 2).
- *Government departments and business* – Overseas and UK government departments and businesses should be engaged where appropriate but are not eligible to directly receive funds on the awards.

**Sub-contracts** – Sub-contracts are eligible costs on proposals submitted to this call but should only be used for the procurement of goods and services. Sub-contracts are not permitted for research partners providing intellectual input into the project, where a research partner or project partner relationship is more appropriate.

If you are unsure where an organisation fits within the above categories, please contact the Research Councils UK GCRF team for further guidance.

### **What can be applied for?**

All UK costs will be supported at 80% fEC in-line with standard Research Council rules. Please note that all funds will be administered through the lead research organisation.

Individual items of equipment above £10,000 are **not an eligible cost** for this call. Small equipment and consumables may be requested where appropriate as long as individual items are below £10,000.

Capital or infrastructure expenditure is **not an eligible cost** for this call.

Fees and/or stipends associated with Masters and PhD studentships **are not eligible** under this call. Project specific travel and subsistence and research costs associated with students may be included.

**Funding Available for research partners organisations**

GCRF Hubs are intended to support partnerships with research partner organisations within the UK and globally. The funding for research partners will depend upon the country in which they are primarily based/legally registered, with the level of financial support determined by the countries DAC list status as summarised in the following table. All staff costs must be based on basic salaries (i.e. not day rates).

Research Organisation Location	Partner	Direct Costs	Indirect (overheads and Institutional) costs
UK		Current fEC policy (80% direct & indirect)	
Developed Countries, Chile, Uruguay, , Seychelles		Up to 50% eligible costs	None
DAC list countries		Up to 100% eligible costs	Up to 30% of eligible direct costs

Applicants may apply for funds to cover the cost of overseas research staff to support research activities in partner countries. Overseas research staff may be locally recruited in the collaborating country, or recruited in the UK and based overseas. In cases where a researcher is recruited and employed by a UK-based institution but based overseas, costs will be paid at 80% fEC. Where a researcher is locally recruited and employed by an overseas institution to support the international co-investigator, these costs will be paid at 100%.

Organisations based in developed countries (i.e. countries not on the OECD DAC list) as well as Chile, Uruguay and Seychelles can be research partners, but are expected to cover the majority of their own research costs. The Hub award may contribute a maximum of 50% of their eligible direct research costs, with the remainder of the costs provided by the partner organisation or from other funding sources. These costs and contributions must be fully auditable. In the Standard proposal document on Je-S these costs should be entered as 'exceptions' and **50% of the total cost entered on the form.**

Funding for research partner organisations in OECD DAC list countries ([http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC\\_List\\_ODA\\_Recipients2014to2017\\_flo ws\\_En.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2014to2017_flo ws_En.pdf)) will include indirect costs as a contribution to institutional overheads, capacity strengthening and the research environment. Detailed guidance on which costs are eligible as direct and indirect costs can be found below.

The costs a multinational organisation can claim as a research partner pertain to the country the organisation's headquarters are located in. For example, multilateral intergovernmental organisations such as the WHO are eligible to take part as research partners but are only eligible to claim up to 50% of the direct research costs as their headquarters are based in France and Switzerland respectively.

**Funding available for project partners**

Organisations that do not meet the minimum criteria to be research partners but offer valuable partnerships may be eligible to receive funds from the awards based on the following requirements:

- *Third sector organisations (e.g., NGOs, charities and other non-profit civil society organisations)* – These organisations are eligible to receive a modest contribution to their

costs on the project funded by the research councils at 100% of direct costs. These costs must not exceed 1 year FTE across the whole award (e.g., 20% of one post for five years or 25% of one post for 4 years) in staff costs per organisation. Any non-staff costs must be reasonable; indirect costs and overheads are not allowed. The total costs associated with all third-sector **project partners** must not exceed 10% of the total Hub award (100% fEC). All staff costs must be based on basic salaries (i.e. not day rates).

- *Government departments and business* – International and UK government departments and businesses where staff have significant intellectual input and contribute to the leadership of the proposal are not eligible to directly receive funds from the Hub award.

### ***Sub-contracts***

Costs for procurement of goods and services can be requested, including for businesses and government departments. Clarification from Research Councils UK should be sought at the application stage.

The costs for subcontractors are tied to the country managing the sub-contract. E.g., if a DAC list research partner organisation is managing a subcontract it will be awarded at 100%. If a UK partner is managing a subcontract it will be awarded at 80%. The most appropriate country should be chosen to manage the sub-contract based on the overall governance arrangements.

### ***Direct/Indirect costs for international research partners***

The rates of indirect costs that can be funded on the application by DAC-list country based research partners are up to 30% of the total direct costs incurred. These should cover those costs which would be considered as part of the cost of running an effective office or research institution. The following costs may not be included as direct costs for this call and therefore must be included in the requested indirect costs:

- Charges for office or laboratory space.
- Electricity, heating, lighting.
- Telephone and basic communication costs (unless there is need for significant project-based activities such as phone interviews).
- Routine photocopying and printing (Large print runs such as publications or workshop papers may be charged to the grant).
- Standard Office computing, including desktop and laptop computers and associated software. Individual items of computing equipment may not be charged to a grant (High performance computing facilities which are linked to a specific research task may in some circumstances be charged to the grant – for further clarification please check with RCUK).
- Office support staff (e.g. finance staff, basic secretarial support, computing support staff). Project managers can be claimed as a direct cost on the grant.
- Continuing Professional Development for staff.

Indirect costs should be fully justified in the justification of resources document (see [Justification of Resources](#) for more information).

### ***Collaboration agreements***

Applicants are not required to have collaboration agreements in place at the point of submission. Collaborations agreements must however be in place for all partners within 6

months of the start date, and prior to any cash-flow to the partner.

Collaboration agreements should include details on:

- Transparent budgets and payment schedules to each partner
- Roles and responsibilities of each partner, communication and leadership structure
- Description of the contribution of each partner to the project
- Authorship and use of findings including intellectual property
- Data management plan for accessing and sharing data by partners
- How the project will resolve any problems
- Adherence to the grant Terms and Conditions

### **Naming convention for GCRF Hubs**

Each proposed Hub should be named the “GCRF X Hub”, where “X” describes the challenge area of focus in up to five words. This name should be comprehensible to the intelligent lay person and not contain acronyms, jargon or technical terms. Hub names should not include names of people or organisations.

Where appropriate the title for each Hub may change between the outline and full stages. RCUK will approve the names of each funded Hub and any associated branding.

### **Submitting a full proposal**

Full proposals must be submitted via Je-S by **16:00 British Summer Time (BST) on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Late submissions will not be accepted.**

All applicants who are to be named as the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on the proposal need to have a fully registered (verified) Je-S account (Co-Investigator’s organisations do not need to be registered). These accounts must be set-up by the individual. **You should set up any additional Je-S accounts as soon as possible.**

<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/TermsConditions.aspx?mode=accountsetup>

To submit a proposal, applicants should:

1. **Log in** to the Joint Electronic System (Je-S)  
<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>
2. Select the relevant **Council** (as indicated via the outline outcome email)
3. Select **Document Type**: Standard Proposal
4. Select **Scheme**: RCUK
5. Select **Call/Type/Mode**: Interdisciplinary Research Hubs Full Call (invitation only)
6. Click **Create Document**

**Applications submitted to the wrong call will not be accepted.**

In summary, each application must consist of the following documents:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Maximum page length</b>	<b>Je-S attachment type</b>
Single Standard proposal document	N/A	N/A
Case for Support	12 pages	Case for Support
Justification of Resources	4 pages	Justification of Resources
Pathways to Impact	3 pages	Pathways to Impact
ODA compliance statement	1 page	Non-UK Component
Data management plan	2 pages	Data management

		plan
Workplan	1 page	Workplan
CVs for Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators	2 pages per CV, including publications	CV
Letter of Support	2 pages per letter	Letter of support
Project Partner Letters of Support	2 pages per letter	Project Partner Letter of Support
Animal research statement (if applicable)	2 pages	Letter of Support
“Additional questions on the use of rodents overseas” form (if applicable)	2 pages	Letter of Support
Proposal cover letter (optional)	N/A	Proposal cover letter
Technical assessment form (if applicable, see Annex 1)	2 pages per form	Other attachment

**No additional attachments are permitted.**

As a minimum, font size 11 in Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial font size 11 must be used for the entire Case for Support and CVs.

Please note that on submission **all** non PDF documents are converted to PDF. The use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document. Additionally where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

Applications not complying with the call requirements may be rejected.

**Standard proposal document**

In particular, please note the following:

**Entering applicants**

- All principal and co-investigators must have a fully registered Je-S account. Applicants that do not currently have a Je-S account type ‘Research Proposals’ should visit Je-S Home Page to create and submit an account request. These accounts must be set-up by the individual. Please ensure that you **submit any account requests as soon as possible**.  
<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/TermsConditions.aspx?mode=accountsetup>
- Please note that UK investigators (PI and Co-Is) require third party verification from their host research organisation, before the Standard proposal document can be submitted. Overseas Co-Is require ‘Research Proposal’ type Je-S accounts which may require verification by their organisation.

**Exceptions – UK costs**

- The following UK costs should be entered as ‘Other Directly Incurred costs’ and flagged as exceptions (to be paid at 100%):
  - Costs for externally contracted social surveys
  - Costs associated with NERC data centres

**Entering overseas costs**

- All overseas costs must be entered into the standard proposal document as Other

Directly Incurred costs and flagged as exceptions. As only one rate can be selected for exceptions, for overseas costs associated with non-UK developed countries please enter 50% of the required cost and flag as an exception.

- Non-UK Co-Is must enter their time allocation under 'Directly Allocated' but should enter the salary rate as zero. All costs associated with non-UK investigators - whether salary, fieldwork, equipment, indirect costs or travel and subsistence - will need to be entered under 'Other Directly Incurred Costs' in the Resources section of the form and the 'Exceptions' box will need to be ticked for each item.
- All overseas costs must be entered into the Other Directly Incurred costs using the following format: In the description box you should enter - 'Organisation: Country: Cost Category: Cost Description. The cost categories for this call are as follows:
  - Staff
  - Other Directly Incurred Costs
  - Indirect Costs
  - Travel and Subsistence

E.g.

University of Nairobi: Kenya: Staff: 1 x PDRA

University of Nairobi: Kenya: Travel and Subsistence: 4 x flights

University of Nairobi: Kenya: Other Directly Incurred Costs: 5 x Workshops including catering and accommodation

### ***Entering facilities costs***

- If Research Council facilities (see Annex 1) are being used the requested costs should be included under 'Other Directly Incurred costs'. Any facilities should be named, and the costs fully justified in the Justification of Resources. A technical assessment form must also be provided (attached as an 'Other attachment' in Je-S).

### ***Research ethics***

- Applicants should use the Ethical Information section to demonstrate to reviewers that they have fully considered any ethical issues concerning the material they intend to use, the nature and choice, current public perceptions and attitudes towards the subject matter or research area. Describing potential issues gives confidence to reviewers that the applicants have thought carefully about the project. The research councils will not fund a project if they believe that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for. Each section of the ethical information must be completed. Applicants must ensure the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard and must clearly state how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and will be addressed ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

### ***Application summaries***

- The 'Summary' and 'Impact Summary' sections will be made available on the Gateway to Research database and research council websites, therefore applicants should ensure that these are written in plain English and any confidential information is not included in these sections.

**Please note that typing into a text box is not detectable by the system and is regarded as system inactivity. Please remember to save text regularly.**

Separate guidance on setting up Je-S accounts can be found on the call website, in addition full guidance on the Je-S system can be found via the Je-S help text. This is available in

every page of your Je-S form, simply click on the question mark against any section (or on the word 'Help' in the top right hand corner of each page).

For all Je-S system enquiries please contact the **Je-S helpdesk** ([ieshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:ieshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or 01793 444164)

### **Case for Support**

The Case for Support should contain the following sections:

#### ***Strategic rationale***

This section should clearly articulate the challenge(s) being addressed and how they will contribute to the realisation of the UN SDGs and/or the UK Aid Strategy. You should make a strategic case for why this scale of investment and activity is required, and clearly describe how the proposed Hub will compliment and add value to the global research landscape.

#### ***Research vision and programme***

Describe the overarching vision, key research programmes and main work packages for the proposed Hub. This should include an articulation of:

- What is novel, innovative and timely about the proposed research/approaches;
- How the proposed programme will facilitate and promote collaborative and interdisciplinary ways of working; and
- How the proposed programme will underpin delivery against challenges previously defined as intractable.

For any flexible funding within your proposed Hub you should outline how this will be managed and administered.

#### ***Capacity and capability of the team***

This section should outline the track record, knowledge and expertise of the team, including their proposed contribution to the programme; evidence they have the necessary diverse set of skills to deliver the vision and objectives; and demonstrate a clear capacity to conduct meaningful, well integrated and robust interdisciplinary research. You should also provide an overview of the relevant research environments.

#### ***Capacity building and international partnerships***

Clearly articulate the strategy to enhance and build transparent, meaningful and lasting equitable partnerships of mutual benefit with researchers and other partners (including business, third sector organisations, and governments) in developing countries including how they have been engaged to date in the identification and prioritisation of challenges, and the design and implementation of the proposed approach.

Describe the plans to strengthen capacity and grow capability to address development challenges/the SDGs. The primary focus should be around building capacity in the relevant developing country(ies), as a consequence this may have a secondary benefit of increasing capability to deliver development research in the UK. This should include skills development across all career stages.

#### ***Leadership and management***

Clearly articulate the proposed governance framework of the partnership. How will the governance framework ensure that the partnership is equitable, transparent and of mutual benefit to all parties? Areas to consider include the processes that the partnership will use to:

- Develop and agree research questions, research approaches and research methods
- Identify roles and responsibilities of partners
- Ensure transparency of budgets

- Ensure transparency of decision making processes.
- Share information including data and research outputs
- Determine how and when results and outputs are disseminated
- Determine authorship, conference attendance and interaction with stakeholders
- Manage ownership and control of products and specimens including data, results and intellectual property
- Manage and resolve conflict within the partnership
- Evaluate and monitor the health of the partnership

### **Organisation, governance and evaluation**

This section should comprise of 3 parts:

**Part 1** – A description of the plan for the research and operational management of the proposed Hub, including the approach to financial and risk management, assurance and governance. Further guidance on the minimum requirements for governance and project management organisation are included in the guidance documents section of the call webpage.

**Part 2** - A 1 page draft theory of change providing a high level summary of the initial plans and expectations. This should be in diagrammatic form. Guidance for developing a theory of change is included in the guidance documents section of the call webpage.

Successful awards will need to provide a finalised theory of change along with a log frame and more detailed evaluation and monitoring plan within 6 month of the start date.

**Part 3** – A monitoring and evaluation framework. This should address the following questions:

- How the project's monitoring and evaluation be managed in terms of governance and broader project management?
- With reference to your theory of change, explain the main components of the monitoring and evaluation for the project. This section should account for:
  - how progress will be identified and monitored;
  - how research impact against relevant challenge will areas be measured;
  - how work in other key areas, such as capacity building and equitable partnership, will be tracked;
  - how attribution will be demonstrated.

### **Justification of Resources**

All resources requested (directly incurred, directly allocated and exceptions, including PI and Co-I time) must be fully justified. If using Research Council facilities, please name them and provide a full justification for these costs.

For items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, a justification must be included both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the Research Organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).

A clear justification must be provided for the amount of indirect costs requested for international research partners and a breakdown given for how it will be spent. Costs eligible to be claimed as indirect costs are outlined in the ['What can be applied for'](#) section (Section 2).

In addition a table providing a brief summary of the organisational contributions from each organisation involved in the Hub should be provided. It is suggested that this comprises no more than 1 page of the Justification of Resources.

## **Pathways to Impact**

The Pathways to Impact document should explain the programme's strategy for engagement with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the potential beneficial impacts of the research are realised. It should provide timelines and milestones for grant specific activities which will contribute to the delivery of a breadth of significant and measurable impacts both within the lifetime of the award and beyond. Proposals should demonstrate understanding of the societal and cultural context of the research and its potential influence on the ability to deliver ODA impact in the country(ies) in question.

You should also outline the approaches taken to ensure that the proposed Hub offers a sustainable programme with the potential for legacy beyond the initial investment. This should include a description of the steps taken ensure that partnerships, resources, capacity and capability are sustained and strengthened beyond the lifetime of the award, and the strategy to leverage additional activity, impact and financial/in-kind contributions (including from the private sector).

Further guidance is available at [www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts)

## **ODA compliance statement**

Please note that this attachment is called 'Non-UK component' on Je-S.

The ODA compliance statement should be one side and explicitly demonstrate how the proposal meets key ODA requirements. It must answer the following three questions in order:

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?

Particularly in the case of broad challenges affect a number of countries, applicants must explicitly identify aspects of these broader challenges which are particular to the partner country(ies) they are working with, as well as specific benefits in the target country(ies).

Further guidance on ODA compliance is included in the guidance documents section of the call webpage.

## **Data management plan**

RCUK recognises that plans for sharing data will vary according to the type of data collected. Data sharing should be driven by scientific benefit and should also be cost effective. Data should be shared using established standards and existing resources where this is possible.

Applicants should include details of:

- **Data areas and data types** – the volume, type and content of data that will be generated, e.g. experimental measurements, models, records and images
- **Standards and metadata** – the standards and methodologies that will be adopted for data collection and management and why these have been selected
- **Relationship to other data available in public repositories**
- **Secondary use** – further intended and/or foreseeable research uses for the completed dataset(s)
- **Methods for data sharing** – planned mechanisms for making these data available, e.g. through deposition in existing public databases or on request, including access mechanisms where appropriate

- **Proprietary data** – any restrictions on data sharing due to the need to protect proprietary or patentable data
- **Timeframes** – timescales for public release of data
- **Format of the final dataset**

If your Hub will produce environmental science NERC relevant data, then you must work with the relevant NERC Data Centre(s) to cost this as part of your proposal, and enter it as an 'Other Directly Incurred cost'. <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/>. These costs should be flagged as an exception and will be awarded at 100%.

### **Workplan**

This should be a standalone document and it cannot be used to extend the case for support. Project-specific timelines and milestones should be clearly and accurately shown. Use of a Gantt chart focusing on the visual diagram with minimal text is recommended.

### **CVs**

CVs should be included for the Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators. Each CV should be no more than 2 pages (including publications).

### **Letters of Support**

Please attach letters from **all research partner organisations** (UK and overseas) involved including international partners, signed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (or equivalent). The letter should summarise the organisation's support for the project, confirm that they are able to meet the eligibility and assurance requirements identified on pages 6-7, and agree to provide information to the Research Councils when requested. A contact email address for any due diligence enquiries should also be included.

### **Project Partner Letters of Support**

Letters of support are also required from all project partners involved in the proposal and listed on the Je-S form. These should:

- confirm their rationale for support for the programme and describe how they have been involved in the preparation of the proposal
- confirm any contribution of cash and in-kind support
- show an outline of their intended involvement during the lifetime of the programme and be dated and on headed paper, making clear the role of the signatory in the stakeholder organisation

### **Animal research statement (if applicable) (attached as a Letter of Support in Je-S)**

In addition to completing the animal usage section on Je-S, if your proposal involves the use of animals, you must submit a signed statement (attached as a Letter of Support to the Je-S Standard Proposal). This should be a single statement from both UK and overseas PIs that:

- they will adhere to all relevant national and local regulatory systems in the UK and overseas.
- they will follow the guidelines laid out in the [www.nc3rs.org.uk/responsibility-use-animals-bioscience-research](http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/responsibility-use-animals-bioscience-research) document and ensure that work is carried out to UK standards.
- before initiation of the proposed research work, appropriate approvals from institutional and/or central animal ethics committees will be obtained for experimental protocols to be adopted in their projects. (Successful proposals may be expected to provide copies of these permissions before funding is released.)
- details where the animal research will take place (UK or overseas) and through which funder the resources are being sought.

**“Additional questions on the use of rodents overseas” form (if applicable) (attached as**

### **a Letter of Support in Je-S)**

If the research involves the use of rodents overseas rather than in the UK, please also complete the “Additional questions on the use of rodents overseas” form (included in the guidance documents section of the call webpage), and attach as a Letter of Support.

### **Covering letter (optional)**

Within the covering letter you may wish to reference any significant updates or changes to the proposal since the outline stage for example the addition of new Co-Investigators or partners. You may also wish to refer to any specific changes implemented to address points of feedback from the outline Panels.

### **Technical assessment form (if applicable) (attached as an ‘Other attachment’ in Je-S)**

Technical assessment forms must be provided for all facility costs requested for any facilities listed in **Annex 1**.

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants wishing to use any facilities in Annex 1 must contact the facility to seek agreement that they could provide the service required. You must obtain a ‘Technical Assessment’ form completed by the service provider, which should be attached in Je-S as an ‘Other attachment’. The technical assessment is required to detail the outline discussions that have taken place with the research facility, to ensure the facility will be available to you at the required time. Please also confirm the start and end date of use of the facility, support requirements and a brief summary of the facilities use and importance of their use for the project. Please include any other information you consider relevant.

The costs for the service or facility must be included within the Directly Incurred Other Costs section of the standard proposal on Je-S, and counts towards the funding limits of the proposal.

High Performance Computing: ARCHER and NEXCS. Applicants should submit a quote for HPC only when use in any one year exceeds 160 MAU, otherwise costs are not required.

For the STFC large-scale facilities i.e CLF, Diamond, ESRF, ILL and ISIS, which are free at the point of access, a quote is not required.

**Please be aware that the costing process can take over 2 months, so any requests need to be submitted as soon as possible.**

Further information on facilities can be found here:

[www.bbsrc.ac.uk/research/facilities/](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/research/facilities/)

[www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/facilities/](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/facilities/)

[www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/facilities/apply/](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/facilities/apply/)

[www.stfccareers.co.uk/location-facilities/](http://www.stfccareers.co.uk/location-facilities/)

## **3. Assessment procedure**

### **Full stage assessment process**

The purpose of the assessment at the full stage is to:

- ensure alignment to the aims of this call
- ensure alignment with ODA expectations
- facilitate a strong portfolio of awarded Hubs across a spectrum of challenges, approaches and disciplines

Proposals submitted by the deadline will be considered by one or more multi-disciplinary international expert review panel with representation from across academia and other

stakeholder groups and assessed against the below criteria. Decision will be final and will not be open to appeal.

### **Full stage assessment criteria**

Invited full proposals will be assessed using the following criteria. All criteria are equally important.

#### *Strategic rationale*

- Is the proposed Hub challenge-led and impact-focused, identifying a key research need?
- Is the scale of investment and activity justified by the size and persistence of the identified challenge(s)?
- Have the applicants made the strategic case for how the proposed Hub will add value in a global context?

#### *Research excellence*

- Is the proposed research novel, innovative and timely?
- Does the research programme offer a well-integrated and interdisciplinary approach?
- Does the proposed research meet the highest international standards and is it likely to advance the field?

#### *Capability and interdisciplinary research team*

- Does the proposed team have the appropriate track record, knowledge and expertise?
- Have the appropriate range of disciplines been identified and is the team well integrated?
- Does the whole team have access to appropriate preliminary data, resources, tools, and technology to undertake the proposed research?

#### *Capacity building and international partnerships*

- To what extent have appropriate developing country partners (including researchers, practitioners and policy makers) played a leading role in challenge identification and the design and implementation of the proposed approach?
- Does this proposal identify an appropriate range of relevant partners, and are these partnerships authentic, equitable and sustainable beyond the initial award?
- To what extent will the Hub develop new or enhanced research capacity for addressing development challenges/the SDGs in the relevant partner countries?

#### *Likelihood and pathways to impact*

- Does the proposed Hub identify realistic pathways with the potential to deliver a breadth of significant and measurable impacts?
- Have the applicants taken into consideration the relevant in-country context and demonstrated local appetite and capacity to implement solutions?
- Does the proposed Hub offer a sustainable programme with the potential to leverage activity, impact and financial/in-kind contributions (including from the private sector)?
- Will the partnerships, resources, capacity and capability developed through the Hub be sustained and strengthened beyond the end of the award?

#### *Leadership and management*

- Does the leadership team demonstrate the appropriate skills and experience to deliver the proposed vision and effectively manage the proposed Hub?
- Is there an appropriate balance of leadership and management between the partners, including an appropriate balance between developed and developing country partners?

- Does the framework demonstrate flexibility to adapt over the lifetime of the award and respond with agility to opportunities arising over the lifetime of the award?

*Organisation, governance and evaluation*

- Does the proposal describe an appropriate plan for the research and operational management of the proposed Hub (including financial and risk management, assurance and governance)?
- Does the proposal outline an appropriate framework for monitoring and evaluation, and identify a robust set of deliverables, indicators and measurables for success?

*Ethics*

- Are the proposed partnerships ethical and equitable?
- Have the applicants identified the ethical implications arising from the proposed research and provided sufficient detail of how these will be addressed?
- Where appropriate, does the proposal provide sufficient details of procedures involving human subjects or vertebrate animals?

*Value for money*

- Are the requested costs appropriate and justified?
- Are there appropriate processes and controls to ensure due diligence and assurance are in place?

**Feedback**

RCUK will provide general feedback and observations to all applicants following the full assessment stage. In addition those applicants invited to interview will be provided with additional individual feedback.

**Interview stage**

Interviews for invited proposals will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October. This will provide applicants with an opportunity to present and answer questions about their proposal. Applicants will be informed as to whether their proposal is invited to interview as soon as possible following the sift panel.

If invited to interview each proposal will receive project specific feedback from the sift panel to aid in preparation for the interview. Applicants will be invited to send up to five people in total from the leadership team to the interview including the PI and anyone who might be joining the interview via video-conference.

Further guidance will be provided to the relevant applicants in due course.

**The Hubs portfolio**

RCUK wishes to establish a strong portfolio of Hubs, which address a broad range of development challenges, incorporating different approaches, disciplines, and contexts. The final funding decisions will give consideration to the need for balance and diversity within this portfolio.

RCUK will not support multiple Hubs aiming to address similar research challenges.

**4. Key dates**

Outline proposal outcomes announced	January/February 2018
Call for full proposals opens (invite only)	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Applicants' event	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
Call for full proposals closes	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2018

Full proposal sift panel	5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
Full proposal interview panel	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
Full proposal outcomes announced	November 2018
Successful awards start	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2018

## 5. Contacts

All queries about this call should be submitted to [gcrf@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:gcrf@rcuk.ac.uk)

Sian Rowland  
 Senior Policy Manager – Global Challenges Research Fund  
 01793 444014

For all **Je-S system enquiries** please contact the Je-S helpdesk  
[jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk)  
 01793 444164

## Change Log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Sian Rowland	15/02/2018	1	N/A

**Annex 1** – List of facilities for which a quote is mandatory

NERC Airborne Research and Survey Facility (NARF)  
ARCHER  
Atmospheric Measurement Facility  
Argon Isotope Facility (AIF)  
Chilbolton Facility for Atmospheric and Radio Research (CFARR)  
Cosmogenic Isotope Analysis Facility (CIAF)  
Culture Collection of Algae & Protozoa (CCAP)  
Earlham Institute  
EPSRC National Service for AC-STEM  
EPSRC National Service for iii-v Technologies  
EPSRC National Service for Solid State NMR  
EPSRC National Service for X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy  
EPSRC national Wave Testing Service  
European Incoherent Scatter Radar Facility (EISCAT)  
Facility for Airborne Atmospheric Measurements (FAAM)  
Field Spectroscopy Facility  
Geophysical Equipment Facility (GEF) -  
Ion Beam Centre at University of Surrey  
Ion Microprobe Facility (IMF)  
Life Sciences Mass Spectrometry Facility,  
Mesosphere, Stratosphere And Troposphere Radar (MSTRF)  
National Marine Facilities  
National Wind Tunnel Facility  
NERC Biomolecular Analysis Facility (NBAF)  
NERC Earth Observation Data Acquisition and Analysis Service, (NEODAAS)  
NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory  
NERC Radiocarbon Facility  
NEXCS  
Research Data Facility (RDF)  
Space Geodesy Facility