

# **RCUK GCRF Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Development Challenges**

## **General observations following the Outline Panel assessment**

Following the Outline Panel meeting for the RCUK GCRF Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Development Challenges call, RCUK have compiled the following general observations. These are provided as a guide to support applicants, and may be useful to those developing GCRF and other ODA relevant applications for future funding opportunities. These comments are not specific to any application.

Generally the quality of applications received was high, however the Panels noted some common elements which caused a number of proposals to be scored less favourably.

### **Fit to call**

The Panels noted that some applicants had not clearly articulated the specific need for a Hub or that the programmes were not transformative and innovative enough, instead proposing programmes which appeared more similar to standard large grant applications or just a continuation of existing research programmes.

In addition the Panels noted that in some cases the proposals were not sufficiently challenge led i.e. it appeared that the challenge had been formulated around the research interests of the applicants in the Hub as opposed to a Hub designed to address an identified challenge.

### **International research partnerships**

In some cases applications proposed very UK centric teams, particularly the leadership and management team. The Panels also noted that some proposals demonstrated a poor recognition of the key aspects underpinning the development of ethical international research partnerships.

### **Potential for Impact**

In general there was a poor articulation of the intended pathways to implementation and impact. In particular, some applicants did not demonstrate sufficient 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.

### **ODA compliance**

A number of ODA compliance statements were too general in their description, referring to global challenges and/or global benefits. In order to meet the ODA requirements it is necessary for applicants to be more specific, explicitly identifying aspects of broader challenges which are particular to the partner country(ies) they are working with, as well as specific benefits in the target country(ies).

In addition, the Panels noted the importance of going beyond demonstrating the minimum requirements for ODA compliance and clearly articulating a programme which has been designed and developed in the spirit of international development and delivering ODA impact.