

## **Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Strategic Advisory Group: Criteria for GCRF Funding**

### **Introduction**

The GCRF provides a unique opportunity to build a global community of researchers committed to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. It aims to encourage and support new and existing partnerships between UK and developing country researchers, national and international development agencies, and policy-makers in both North and South. It allows UK research excellence to be deployed in a strategic and coherent way to understand and suggest solutions to the most significant and complex problems faced by the developing world, while at the same time strengthening research capability in developing countries. It promotes meaningful and equitable relationships between UK research institutions and developing country partners that will help ensure relevance and the identification of realistic pathways by which research can impact on national, regional, and international development policy and practice.

The promise of substantial and sustained levels of ODA funding provides an opportunity to engage researchers - particularly the best early career researchers - who care about development and want their work to help make the world a better place. The GCRF will be geared to understanding and solving real world development problems. Given the complex nature of these problems, it will also stimulate work across different disciplines, drawing on the distinct contributions that each has to make and encouraging truly original and transformative approaches to multidimensional challenges.

The GCRF is above all good news for the poor and the marginalised in the developing world. The UK already carries out world class research and is a world leader in international development; the GCRF allows these two spheres to come together in a new way by increasing the scope and depth of research activities. It offers UK academics the chance to co-create useable research evidence through a new model of transdisciplinary collaboration and equitable partnerships between researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers in both developed and developing countries that will aspire to be world leading. By stimulating the development of these new capabilities and strengthening existing transdisciplinary partnerships where they exist, the GCRF will also allow the UK to enhance its own capacity and capability to contribute to sustainable development through research.

### **Purpose of the Criteria**

The GCRF will support a diverse but balanced portfolio of activities with the common feature that they all in some way address the challenges defined for developing countries in the [Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#) (the SDGs). In order to ensure coherence across the portfolio and to maximise its impact a common set of core criteria will be used to guide funding decisions. These will also provide a framework for future evaluation of the programme as a whole.

The criteria set out below will be applied by the GCRF Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) when it is invited to comment on the plans and proposals of GCRF Delivery Partners. The SAG also expects that they should provide the framework for all Calls against the GCRF, although each of these will include elements that are specific to each case, and it is understood that not every project can be expected to address all the issues set out in these criteria.

## **Core Criteria**

### Problem and Solution Focused

GCRF research is aimed first and foremost at addressing global sustainable development challenges, and is intended to transform the lives of the maximum number of poor people. The starting point for research proposals should therefore be a significant problem or development challenge. The extent to which southern partners have played a leading role in problem identification and the design, definition, and development of the proposed approach will add to the credibility of proposals for funding as it will demonstrate relevance and also local appetite and capacity to implement solutions. A balance of research will be sought across all the challenge areas thrown up by the SDGs. Successful proposals will need to demonstrate that they address the multiple dimensions of sustainability in an integrated way.

### Research Excellence

An underlying assumption behind the GCRF is that new perspectives, not constrained by traditional methodologies or disciplinary silos, are needed to address these challenges. Evidence should therefore be provided of how new research communities and learning alliances will be brought together to address the problem and why this approach will bring new and valuable insights, contributing to a step change to existing knowledge and approaches. Evidence will be sought that Southern partners - including policy makers and practitioners, as well as researchers - have played a leading role in research design, and planning for implementation and uptake.

### Likelihood of Impact

The GCRF will be judged by how much it makes a real contribution to improved social welfare, economic development, and environmental sustainability, and redresses inequalities. Proposals should therefore contain robust indicators that show: how they will create the knowledge to bolster communities' resilience to environmental and human-made challenges, such as climate change, epidemics, conflict, and other emergencies; how they will provide a stronger evidence base for sustainable development policy and practice and help both donor and recipient governments to spend limited resources wisely; how they will encourage the effective use of knowledge and technology to create opportunities for economic development, community and business engagement, commercialisation and innovation, leading to new and improved products, processes, services, and business models.

### Capacity Building and Partnership

The GCRF aims to build UK and global development research capacity and capability by forging strong and enduring partnerships between academic communities in the UK and the Global South and by enhancing the research and innovation capacity of both. This requires strong networks to be built involving researchers, policy makers, and practitioners, plus the involvement of civil society and the private sector. Calls for proposals should encourage the development of new approaches and ways of working across conventional boundaries that will deliver this goal. Individual research proposals should provide credible evidence that such networks either exist or will be grown as part of the research project and that they will be sustainable.

GCRF Strategic Advisory Group

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