

Challenge Clusters

Seed fund Network proposals

Je-S guidance for applicants

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Call summary

UKRI invites applications for Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Challenge Clusters. These ambitious grants seek to harness the power of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research to address global challenges and deliver sustainable development impact. The applications are intended to be research community driven, requiring GCRF grant holders to identify new Challenges which could be addressed through clustering of current or previously funded GCRF projects whilst also leveraging external expertise to accelerate impact, share knowledge and build capability and capacity beyond GCRF.

This is a two-stage call which will provide seed funding for around 20 initial projects over an initial 12 months of up to £150k each. The first stage projects will be evaluated and in the second stage £1m - £2m funding will be made available for 6 to 8 projects over the subsequent three years. Challenge Clusters should bring together current and/or former GCRF projects, along with associated partners from non-government organisations, industry, charity, civil society and other policy makers who have agreed to collaborate to accelerate impact against a specific global challenge. Clusters are encouraged to bring together other development projects funded by either UK or International organisations to leverage knowledge and deliver new synthesis of research findings.

Proposed activities must be additional to the currently funded activities undertaken by GCRF projects. The types of activities in Challenge Clusters could include synthesis of research findings to support the use of evidence in decision-making, co-creating new insights, or the application of best practice. Research synthesis could also be used to assist in developing future research agendas and proposals in stage two could include research activity resulting from this synthesis. There is an expectation that research activity would be co-developed by the cluster to achieve specific impact against the identified challenge. Proposals could also include activities related to sharing and dissemination of research resources. Proposals should foster knowledge exchange and provide an environment supportive for early career researchers.

Proposals should be bold and inspirational, crossing disciplinary and sectoral boundaries while addressing the Sustainable Development Goals. The research and innovation described should be ambitious but realistic, setting a clear, targeted, measurable and time-bound pathways to impact. The identified challenge may align with or across current GCRF Challenge Portfolios, although Clusters are not limited to these GCRF portfolio areas.

Applications are expected to set out a strong narrative underpinned by evidence which demonstrates why the identified challenge needs cluster funding and how a coherent cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral and multi-agency approach can achieve the stated aims and objectives.

Call type:

Standard proposal

Closing date:

16:00 UK time on 24 September 2019

Funding available:

This is a two-stage call which will provide seed funding for around 20 initial projects over an initial 12 months of up to £150k each. The first stage projects will be evaluated and in the second stage £1m - £2m funding will be made available for 6 to 8 projects over the subsequent three years. For UK based applicants the Research Councils will pay 80% of the fEC, with the research organisation (RO) contributing the other 20%. Overseas applicants from DAC-listed nations can apply for up to 100% fEC.

How to apply:

Proposals submitted via Je-S.

Assessment process:

Proposals will be assessed by written peer review. Applicants will be given the opportunity to provide a PI response, then proposals will be assessed by an independent assessment panel.

Assessment process:

Outline proposals will be assessed by an independent panel.

Please note we reserve the right to implement short-listing criteria based on number of applications received.

Key dates:

25 June 2019	Call announcement
30 July 2019	Call opens in Je-S
24 September 2019 16:00 UK time	Call for proposal closes
February 2020	Panel meeting
February/March 2020	Funding decision is announced
April 2020	First stage grants start
Winter 2020	Deadline for second stage submissions
Spring 2021	Second stage grants start

Contacts:

All queries about this call should be submitted to: gcrf@ukri.org

Contacts:

Natasha Stanton, International Development Policy Manager

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Please read the full call text for guidance before submitting your proposal.

Introduction

This guidance is created to assist applicants in the completion of their outline application. It is specific to this outline scheme and should be used in conjunction with the following information:

- **Je-S help text** 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)
- **Je-S helpdesk** (for all Je-S system enquiries)
jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org or 01793 444164

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, helpdesk staff can be contacted Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays and other holidays). Out of hours: please leave a voicemail message.

When reporting problems by email or telephone, please give your name, organisation and user id, the date and time, what part of the form or system you were working on, and the nature of the problem.

Other guidance:

- GCRF ODA guidance:
<https://www.ukri.org/files/funding/gcrf/gcrf-oda-guidance-pdf/>
- GCRF Strategic Advisory Group: Criteria for GCRF Funding:
<https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/gcrf-calls/gcrf-sag-criteria-for-gcrf-funding-pdf/>
- Gender Equality in International Development: <https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research-fund/gender-equality-and-international-development-research-and-innovation/>
- Equality impact assessment:
<https://www.ukri.org/files/funding/gcrf/equality-impact-assessment-form-grta-call-pdf/>
- UN Sustainable Development Goals:
<https://www.ukri.org/files/funding/gcrf/gcrf-oda-guidance-pdf/>
- DAC list:
http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2014to2017_flows_En.pdf
- Research ethics:
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/>

Important: Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance offered in these linked sources, you should adhere to the guidance in this document.

Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S)

All applications under this scheme must be completed and submitted through UKRI's Joint Electronic Submissions system (Je-S). To be able to do this the organisation must be registered (or self-registered) for Je-S, and the applicants must hold Je-S accounts.

Proposals can be submitted from institutions previously registered for Je-S to submit to international focused schemes (but would not be eligible to apply for other responsive mode schemes). A list of these organisations is available from the Je-S login page. Organisations, principal investigators, co-investigators not currently registered will have to do so a minimum of two weeks before the call closing date.

Je-S accounts for applicants

All principal and co-investigators must have a Je-S account which has been verified by a third party before they can be found in searches within the Je-S System and added as an applicant. To get you started on creating an account please refer to the [Je-S helptext](#).

Please ensure that applicants select the 'Account Type: Research Proposal' and the option: 'An Applicant on a Standard or Outline Proposal' - see [helptext](#).

If your organisation is registered, **it is recommended that applicants forward their application to the submitter pool at least 24 hours before the call deadline to allow sufficient time for the approval and final submission process.** The proposal must be submitted through Je-S to UKRI by the institution's nominated contacts. Once the applicant completes and submits the proposal, notification is then sent to their organisation's 'submitter' to action. The 'submitter' is the person in that organisation authorised to approve the proposal and do the final stage of submission.

The applicant will receive an email confirming the proposal has been submitted to the Submitter Pool – this means the proposal is still with the organisation but is **not** yet submitted to research councils. The final submission process is the responsibility of the host institution, and the UKRI cannot accept responsibility for any delay that may occur at this stage. We strongly advise applicants check they receive an email confirmation from the Je-S System, confirming the proposal has been submitted to the research councils.

Use of your personal information – UKRI capture and process personal information in line with current data protection legislation; General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any amendments by the UK Data Protection Bill and/or relevant acts of parliament.

Before creating your application

Research applications may **only** be made on Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) forms.

Please note that the deadline for Research Organisation submission of proposals is 16:00 on 24 September 2019. You should allow sufficient time for completion of the Research Organisation submission process checks/ authorisation. The Je-S system will not allow proposals to be submitted after 16:00 on 24th September 2019. The Research Councils cannot accept responsibility for any delay which may occur as a consequence.

You can view all Je-S registered organisations via the Je-S login page, to ascertain whether the proposed submitting organisation is registered.

Creating your proposal

To create your proposal:

1. Log in to [Je-S](#).
2. Log into your Je-S account
3. Select Council: EPSRC
4. Document type: Standard proposal
5. Scheme: UKRI
6. Call/Type/Mode: GCRF Challenge Clusters

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is created and submitted against the correct call (and consequently correct scheme). **Please do not select any other UKRI or GCRF call. We will not accept proposals for processing that are not submitted using the above call route.**

Completing your proposal

The initial Je-S document instructions page will give you general guidance on the navigation layout, specifically icon descriptions.

The left hand column 'Document Menu' lists all the sections associated with this call and clearly identifies which ones are mandatory (green tick).

The details below are not an exhaustive step-by-step guidance, and we recommend you refer to the Je-S helptext for additional information.

Please note you may return to edit saved documents at any time.

Project details

- Select organisation and department from drop-down lists
- 'Your Reference' should be supplied by your research organisation (consult your Research Office). If your administration cannot provide a reference, a suitable reference of your own choice will be acceptable.
- Enter Project Title (maximum limit of 150 characters). *Please refer to the ODA transparency and reporting section in the call text.*
- For Proposal Call, select *GCRF Challenge Clusters*. Please note that the option will only be available once the call is live.

Investigators

Enter the name of the principal investigator (PI) and any co-investigators if applicable. Investigators may be from more than one research organisation, but the PI must be from the organisation that will administer the grant. The PI will take intellectual leadership of the project and manage the research; this individual will be the contact person for UKRI correspondence. All named investigators are responsible for ensuring successful applications are undertaken and completed in the manner specified.

Letter of Support

Principal and Co-investigators may be based anywhere in the world, but, additionally for GCRF calls, all co-investigators from the UK and overseas, and principal investigators from overseas (not UK) must submit a 'Letter of Support' from their organisation. This is to ensure comparability of standing between international organisations and UKRI recognised UK research organisations, and to ensure the organisation's commitment to the project.

Letters of Support must:

- Be dated within the last three months, on headed paper, and a maximum of 2 sides of A4 paper
- Be signed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for research (or equivalent authority)
- Confirm the institution is able to meet the eligibility and, if relevant, assurance requirements
- Provide a contact email address for due diligence checks and agree to provide information to UKRI if required

Post will outlast project

Select Yes or No. Please note, there is an expectation that the PI's post will be in place for the duration of a funded project. This means if this question is answered with "No" then a pop-up message will display, confirming that if the proposal is successful at a subsequent full call stage, it is the RO responsibility to ensure the PI's post will be extended to match the project end date. By submitting the proposal, the RO is taking collective responsibility to comply with this request.

Objectives

The objectives of the proposed project should be listed in order of priority, and should be those that the investigators would wish UKRI to use as the basis for evaluation of work upon completion of any project grant awarded. *(4000 character limit)*

Impact summary

Applicants are required to consider carefully how best to build links and contacts at the concept and development stage of the proposal with the potential beneficiaries and users to be involved within the grant, and to work towards co-production of knowledge with research users where appropriate. It is vital the economic and societal impact of all projects funded by UKRI is maximised.

Please address the following questions:

- **Who will benefit from this research?** List any beneficiaries from the research, for example those who are likely to be interested in or to benefit from the proposed research - both directly or indirectly. Beneficiaries must consist of a wider group than that of the investigators' immediate professional circle carrying out similar research.
- **How will they benefit from this research?** Describe the relevance of the research to these beneficiaries, identifying the potential for impacts arising from the proposed work.
- **What will be done to ensure they have the opportunity to benefit from this activity?** Describe how you will communicate and engage with these stakeholder groups/ different audiences to ensure they have the opportunity to benefit from the research.

Please note this section may be published to demonstrate the potential impact of UKRI funded research. Please ensure confidential information is not included in this section. *(4000 character limit)*

Resource summary & UK and Overseas Costs

All costs incurred in countries on the DAC list of recipients are eligible to receive 100% of the requested cost. Any UK costs requested will be awarded at 80% full economic cost (fEC) in line with standard UKRI rules as per the following table:

Research Organisation Location	Direct Costs	Indirect (overheads and Institutional) costs
DAC list countries	Up to 100% eligible costs	Up to 20% of eligible costs
UK	Current fEC policy (80% direct & indirect)	

All costs expected to be covered by UKRI funding should be included in this section. All prices and salaries should be calculated at current rates. Costs will need to be broken down as described in the [‘Resource Summary’ section of the Je-S help text for outline proposals](#).

Please note that costs cannot be claimed from government bodies, and businesses cannot receive costs.

It is recommended that potential UK co-investigators from business or civil society should contact the Je-S Helpdesk (jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org) if their organisation is not selectable as part of the Je-S person account registration process. These organisations will then be added to the Je-S database, which will allow relevant selection as part of the required person account registration process (that co-applicants are obliged to initiate, via the login page).

All project costs relating to UK business or civil society co-investigators must be prefixed as ‘UK Co-I’s business or civil society costs’ and must be entered into the costs section on Je-S as follows:

Co-investigator ‘time’ allocation must be entered under the standard Co-I section, but the salary rate must be entered as zero. The co-investigator salary costs must then be entered under ‘Other Directly Incurred Costs’, as should all other claimed staff salaries and related costs associated with the UK Co-I’s business or civil society body.

All costs must be specifically justified, and applicants must explain why such costs are required to achieve the aims of the research project.

Host/submitting institutions are reminded that for calls that encourage non-academic Co-Is, that a suitable support structure should be in place to assist such individuals in registering for Je-S accounts and contributing to the research case.

Costs for international principal and co-investigators

Please note that any academic researcher (PhD or equivalent) from an established International Research Organisation of comparable standing to an UKRI-eligible UK research organisation will be eligible to be listed as an international principal or co-investigator under this call.

It is recommended that potential overseas-based principal or co-investigators should contact the UKRI case officer in the first instance if their organisation is not selectable as part of the Je-S person account registration process. If it is determined the relevant organisation complies with the guidance above then Je-S Helpdesk (jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org) should be contacted to add them to the Je-S database, which will allow relevant selection as part of the required person account registration process (that co-applicants are obliged to initiate, via the login page).

GCRF will fund 100% of the justified costs for international principal and co-investigators from countries on the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients (DAC list). Principal and co-investigator 'time' allocation must be entered under the standard PI/Co-I section, but the salary rate must be entered as zero. International costs should be submitted under Other Directly Incurred costs and marked as Exceptions.

GCRF calls further permit the fully justified costs associated with international Investigators' contribution to the project to exceed 30% of the overall cost of the grant (at 100% fEC). No upper limit will be applied, though all costs will need to be fully justified.

If a principal or co-investigator is from a country flagged as likely to graduate from the DAC list during the course of the project this should be treated as a country NOT on the DAC list. The overhead rate for DAC list country Investigators is up to 20% of direct costs. Please note that only DAC list country Investigators are eligible for 20% of international salary related costs as overheads/indirect costs and that this does not apply to non-DAC list country investigators. For UK based applicants the Research Councils will pay 80% of the fEC, with the research organisation (RO) contributing the other 20%.

Other eligible / ineligible costs

Third sector organisations (e.g. NGOs, charities and other non-profit civil society organisations) are eligible to receive a contribution to their costs on the project funded by the research councils. Any non-staff costs must be reasonable; indirect costs and overheads are not allowed. The total costs associated with all third-sector project partners, however, must not exceed 20% of the total Network award (100% fEC).

Applicants must also state clearly in the 'Justification for Resources' section of the Je-S form which costs in the application relate to international research organisations.

Capital or infrastructure expenditure is not an eligible cost for this call. Individual items of equipment above £10,000 are not an eligible cost for this call. Fees and/or stipends associated with Masters and PhD studentships are not eligible under this call; however, Network-specific travel and subsistence associated with students may be included.

The network stage is related to costs associated with networking activities (including staff time). This includes research synthesis but not undertaking new research. Research activities, including staff time for research, consumables, or access to equipment are not an eligible cost for this call.

All staff costs must be based on basic local salaries (i.e. not day rates).

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 UKRI)
- 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

Summary

Provide a plain English summary of the research you propose to carry out in a language that could be publicised to a general, non-academic audience. Please note this section may be published so please ensure confidential information is not included in this section. (4000 character limit)

Project partners

If you have secured a commitment from another funding body or organisation to provide additional resources for this project, please give details of the organisation.

Notes and comments

Please note that this section is purely for use in drafting the proposal. Any notes/comments added will *not* be included in data submitted with this proposal.

Attachments

Attachments should be uploaded in Pdf (rather than Word) format, to reduce document corruption issues.

Document	Maximum page length	Je-S attachment type
GCRF Challenge Clusters	8 pages	Case for Support
Justification of Resources (JOR)	2 pages	JOR
ODA compliance statement	1 page	Non-UK component
Data management plan	½ - 3 pages (see template)	Data management plan
Gender Equality Statement	1 page	Non-UK component
CV (for PI and Cols)	2 pages each	CV
Pathways to Impact	2 pages	Pathway to impact
Letters of Support (where applicable)	2 sides of A4	Letter of Support

Other Useful Guidance Documents

- [GCRF ODA guidance](#)
- [Pathways to Impact](#)
- [Justification of Resources \(JoR\)](#)
- [CV \(for PI and Cols\)](#)
- [Data Management Plan template](#)
- [Gender Equality in International Development](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [DAC list](#)
- [Research ethics](#)
- [Je-S System](#)
- [Je-S Helpdesk](#)
- [Setting up a Je-S account](#)
- [Equality Impact Assessment \(PDF, 233KB\)](#)

Proposal classifications

The information provided in this section will be used by us to identify appropriate reviewers.

It would therefore assist us greatly if you could populate the Research Area/ Qualifiers/ Keyword sections to provide a comprehensive description of your area of expertise.

The Proposal classification area is a harmonised (and expanded) structure agreed with all UKRI councils. Therefore, if your area of expertise crosses the remits of more than one council you will now only need to provide the information once.

Submit your proposal

Please ensure you have completed all attachments that are mandatory requirements against this specific call, although they may not be standard mandatory attachments on Je-S.

After all mandatory sections have been completed, the submit button will appear across the top menu bar. The submit button will route your finalised proposal to the authorising facility within your organisation (as explained in the Registration section above).

Please note the proposal must be formally submitted by your organisation before **16:00 UK Time on 24 September 2019. The Research Councils cannot accept responsibility for any delay which may occur as a consequence.**

Tracking your proposal

There are additional document maintenance actions that can be undertaken via the Document actions button. For example, the 'Show submission path' will indicate where in the organisation submission chain the proposal currently is located (and who holds current responsibility) - e.g. owner, approval pool, submitter pool, or submitted to Council.

Further enquiries

Enquiries relating to UKRI GCRF research funding rules and application procedures should be addressed to:

All queries about this call should be submitted to: gcrf@ukri.org

Contacts:

Natasha Stanton, International Development Policy Manager

Telephone: +44 (0) 1793 41 3296

DeAnna Cardoza, GCRF Challenge Leader Event Coordinator

Telephone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4273

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:

- Je-S helpdesk
Email: jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org
Telephone: 01793 444164

Change log:

Name	Date	Version	Change
Natasha Stanton	12/09/2019	1	N/A
Natasha Stanton	19/09/2019	2	P.10 costs regarding third sector organisations updated