



**UKRI-UNDP joint report: ‘How science, research and innovation can best contribute to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals for developing countries’**

**Call specification and guidance**

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UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites expressions of interest for a joint team of UK researchers and UNDP policymakers to collect evidence, develop original arguments and compose a major UKRI-UNDP report on how science, research and innovation might most effectively accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for developing countries. The joint project will be funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (<https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research-fund>).

## 1. Background

UNDP produces regular reports to inform its programmes globally and in-country. Typically, a small UNDP team is assembled to engage with leading researchers in the field, gather evidence, develop arguments and produce a set of recommendations. A recent example is the UN-World Bank report Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/publication/pathways-for-peace-inclusive-approaches-to-preventing-violent-conflict>).

## 2. Objectives and Scope

The stimulus for the report is provided by the Sustainable Development Goals, which set out an agenda for inclusive and sustainable global development. The aim of the call is to support a joint UK-UNDP team (this can also include international Co-Is) to develop a landmark report on how investment in science, research and innovation might best deliver the innovations in policy, practice and products required to achieve the SDGs in developing countries, while taking into account the many intersections, interaction, and tensions between individual goals.

The focus of the report will be on how science, research and innovation (including technology) could accelerate progress towards the SDGs in the context of multiple challenges and opportunities. These range from environmental degradation to the disruptive potential of artificial intelligence, to digital technologies and big data, while taking into account the social, political, cultural and technological constraints that new approaches to global development are likely to encounter.

The team will be expected to consider examples of science, research and innovation for development funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund. However, the scope of the report will need to be broader, including examples from national, multilateral, public and private initiatives from around the world.

The report will be a significant policy intervention that will inform UNDP programmes in the immediate and medium terms, as well as inform a call for action and a new way of engaging science, research and innovation for the 2030 Agenda.

Expressions of interest (EOI) are invited which should briefly detail how your report will address the following:

- The potential and importance of science, research and innovation for meeting the SDGs in developing countries;
- How advances in science, research and innovation can enhance our understanding of the relationships and interlinkages between the SDGs: the tensions and trade-offs, the synergies and positive benefits, etc. in such a way as to better inform, target and calibrate policy interventions;

- The opportunities for science, research and innovation to make the casual pathways between the SDGs more visible, more intelligible and more tractable: making innovation more possible, or making innovation more affordable;
- The areas in which science, research and innovation can make the most difference, over different time scales, on concrete development outcomes: such as products, innovations, inventions, vaccines, etc.
- The obstacles to properly deploying science, technology, research and innovation in sustainable international development, and how might we overcome them;
- New ways of engaging policymakers with science, research and innovation, and making evidence from science, research and innovation central to decision-making, including in developing countries.

### **3. How to Apply**

#### **3.1 Who can apply?**

The lead research organisation must be eligible under the research council's eligibility criteria which can be found at <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>. The lead organisation will be responsible for the overall management of the project for the research team, including control, disbursement and assurance of funds.

#### **3.2 Composition of the teams**

Please list your proposed research team within your expression of interest, including any project partners. It is envisioned that applicants will create dynamic teams which contain senior researchers, post-doctoral fellows and support staff as necessary. The team's composition must be fully justified.

The Principal Investigator (PI) must be employed at the lead organisation, have sufficient standing within the community and be able to demonstrable ability to lead and manage an integrated work programme. The PI will provide intellectual leadership and oversight of the report and project management. The PI must be employed by the lead organisation and the term of employment must extend beyond the duration of the proposed award Please note, the Principal Investigator cannot be changed between the EOI and full proposal stages without prior permission from UKRI/UNDP. Applicants may submit only one expression of interest as the Principal Investigator.

Co-Investigators 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. International Co-Investigators from anywhere in the world can be included on proposals, for guidance on the inclusion of international co-investigators please visit:

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/internationalfunding/international-co-investigators/>

Researchers and other support staff can also be costed on the proposal.

Participating organisations that do not meet the criteria to be research partners can be project partners, these include:

- Third sector organisations - NGOs, charities and other non-profit civil society organisations;
- Government departments and business.

Interdisciplinary projects are encouraged within this call.

UNDP will identify and provide a team of one senior person, who will be the joint Principal Investigator, with two to three supporting staff members.

### **3.2 Expression of interest (EOI)**

Researchers planning to submit to this scheme are asked to submit a short expression of interest form (<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/42MP7/>) by **16.00 on 31 August 2018**. Researchers do not need to connect with the UNDP at this stage. If you are invited to submit to the next stage of the call, you will be connected with the appropriate teams and receive detailed guidance on how to submit a full proposal. It is envisioned approximately 3 teams will be invited to go through to the full application stage.

UKRI and UNDP will be hosting a **webinar on 20 August 2018** to provide more details about the call. Representatives from UKRI and UNDP will be present to answer questions. Further details and registration information will be announced closer to the date.

## **4. Funding available**

UKRI will provide up to £500,000 for this initiative to fund the one successful team to produce the report. UKRI will provide the funding for the research team and UNDP will provide funding for the UNDP employees.

All UK costs will be supported at 80% FEC (see <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/fecfaq-pdf/> (PDF)) in line with standard research council rules. Please note that all funds will be administered through the lead research organisation. Please seek advice/approval from your research organisation before submitting your expression of interest.

Applicants may also apply for travel and subsistence and publication costs under this call. It is not anticipated that applicants would need to apply for equipment, capital or fees and/or stipends associated with Masters and PhD studentships. Further information will be provided if you are invited to proceed to the full proposal stage.

Please note that a proposal will be funded under this call subject to funding being secured.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will act as the administering Research Council for awards under this call, working on behalf of, and closely with, the UKRI GCRF team and the other Councils in UKRI, reflecting that this call cuts across all of UKRI and GCRF delivery partners' remits and portfolios. Unless stated otherwise, in this call and the full proposal guidance, standard UKRI terms and conditions will apply to the award issued under this call.

### **4.1 Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)**

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a 5-year £1.5 billion fund, and a key component in the delivery of the UK Aid Strategy: tackling global challenges in the national interest. ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>) and is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective. (See <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/international/gcrfodaguidance-pdf/> (PDF).)

#### **4.1.2 ODA Compliance**

If invited to submit a full application, you will need to provide an ODA justification statement. Within your expression of interest, please take into account:

- Which country/countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal and are these countries likely to continue to be ODA eligible for the duration of the research?
- How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
- 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?

## 4.2 UNDP

UNDP works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. We help countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results. This is a critical time for the world. At UNDP, we see this period as a huge opportunity to advance the global sustainable development agenda. In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. UNDP is working to strengthen new frameworks for development, disaster risk reduction and climate change. We support countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals, which will guide global development priorities through 2030.

UNDP focuses on helping countries build and share solutions in three main areas:

- Sustainable development
- Democratic governance and peacebuilding
- Climate and disaster resilience

In all our activities, we encourage the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women, minorities and the poorest and most vulnerable.

## 5. Duration

Proposals must start by December 2018/January 2019 and be up to 24 months in duration.

## 6. Key dates

- Expression of interest open - 19 July 2018
- Webinar - 20 August 2018
- **Expression of interest stage closes - 31 August 2018**
- Shortlisting - 7 September 2018
- Outcome given. Approximately three applicants invited to submit a full proposal and connected with relevant UNDP colleagues - w/c 10 September 2018
- **Call for full proposal closes - 5 November 2018**
- Interview Panel for full proposals - 27 November 2018
- Decision to applicants - 6 December 2018
- Award start - December 2018 / January 2019

## 7. Assessment criteria and process

Assessment will be through a two stage process. The first assessment stage will consider the expressions of interest which have been submitted through SmartSurvey. These will be assessed by appropriate GCRF Challenge Leaders (<https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research->

[fund/gcrf-challenge-leaders/](#)) and the UNDP using the criteria below. The second stage will consider the full proposals submitted in collaboration with UNDP. Full proposals will be assessed by an independent interview review panel using the criteria below. There will not be written reviews on the proposals.

### **7.1 Expression of interest stage assessment criteria**

At the expression of interest stage the assessment will focus on the development challenge(s), proposed vision for the report and the team.

Please note, feedback will not be provided after the shortlisting stage. Following the submission of a full proposal (by applicants shortlisted at the EOI stage), applicants will be invited to interview at a peer review panel. Feedback will then be provided on full applications.

#### **Strategic rationale/ Fit to call**

- Understanding of the interdisciplinary breadth of research for development, and of the opportunities and barriers to its effective deployment;
- Understanding of international research for development initiatives, including but not limited to the Global Challenges Research Fund, and a feasible plan for engaging with such initiatives;
- Clear rationale for the approach to be taken to collating, synthesising and interrogating evidence for the production of the report;
- Clear rationale for how the report might be structured, and for what kind of evidence/examples might be deployed;

#### **Capability and interdisciplinary research team**

- Does the proposed team have the appropriate track record, knowledge and expertise within the broad field of research for development?
- Have the appropriate range of disciplines been identified and is the team well integrated?

#### **Leadership and management**

- Good experience of the managing a research team, and of building relationships with other stakeholders;

#### **Engagement**

- Competence to develop and coordinate a major report aimed at multiple audiences, including academics, policymakers, senior decision-makers, and the public;
- Strong experience of engagement with international NGOs or large multilateral bodies such as the UN, and clear understanding of institutional cultures and the frameworks within which policymakers operate;

#### **Ethics**

- Have the applicants identified the ethical implications arising from the proposed report and provided sufficient detail of how these will be addressed?

#### **ODA compliance**

- Potential to contribute to/advance/inform international development policies and strategies for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in middle and lower income countries.

## **7.2 Full stage assessment criteria**

### **Strategic rationale/ Fit to call**

- Clear evidence of a deep understanding of the interdisciplinary breadth of research for development, and of the opportunities and barriers to its effective deployment;
- Clear evidence of a deep understanding of international research for development initiatives, including but not limited to the Global Challenges Research Fund, and a feasible plan for engaging with such initiatives;
- Clear rationale for the approach to be taken to collating, synthesising and interrogating evidence for the production of the report.
- Clear rationale for how the report might be structured, and for what kind of evidence/examples might be deployed;

### **Capability and interdisciplinary research team**

- Does the proposed team have the appropriate track record, knowledge and expertise within the broad field of research for development?
- Have the appropriate range of disciplines been identified and is the team well integrated?

### **Leadership and management**

- Good experience of the managing a research team, and of building relationships with other stakeholders;

### **Engagement**

- Clear evidence of competence to develop and coordinate a major report aimed at multiple audiences, including academics, policymakers, senior decision-makers, and the public;
- Strong experience of engagement with international NGOs or large multilateral bodies such as the UN, and clear understanding of institutional cultures and the frameworks within which policymakers operate;

### **Likelihood of impact**

- Does the proposed report identify realistic pathways with the potential to deliver significant and measurable impacts?

### **Ethics**

- Have the applicants identified the ethical implications arising from the proposed report and provided sufficient detail of how these will be addressed?

### **ODA compliance**

- Potential to contribute to/advance/inform international development policies and strategies for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in middle and lower income countries;

### **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?

## **8. Contact**

### **8.1 UKRI**

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### **8.2 UNDP**

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