

ODA review Questions and Answers – 12 August

Q: Have all the outcomes been communicated of the review process?

A: The outcomes of the review process have been communicated to the GCRF and Newton Fund grant holding research organisations.

Q: How many projects did UKRI terminate?

A: No grants have been terminated.

At the start of the ODA review process, to ensure that we could mitigate the impact of the budget reductions on our commitments, grants which were close to starting had to be stopped before funds were committed.

Q: Given the scale of the budget reductions, how have so many projects been able to carry on?

A: This is they have taken the option to reduce their spending.

We will also continue to work with HEIs and our wider community over the coming months to fully understand the impact of the ODA cuts and our response.

Q: What has been the impact on individual grants?

A: The impact on individual grants will vary depending on a number of factors, including decisions made by the award holding institution across their portfolio of GCRF and Newton grants; whether a special consideration was applied; or whether the grant received any additional funding via the ICF or DHSC. Applying the financial changes to our systems is a significant undertaking which is still ongoing, therefore we are not able to publish a list of individual grants and their adjusted grant value at this stage.

[Gateway to Research](#) carries information of all UKRI funded grants including those funded via GCRF and Newton Funds. Given the complexity of updating our systems with the new grant values, GtR currently shows the original total grant value.

UKRI has just started an evaluation of the consequences of the ODA reductions for the GCRF and Newton portfolio. This includes surveys of grant holders, overseas partners and research organisations. The aim is to systematically assess the financial and non-financial consequences for research and innovation projects. We aim to complete the assessment by the autumn.

Q: What is happening with the GCRF Hubs?

A: UKRI is carrying out a formal review of the Hubs programme - this is in place of the intended stage gate review and will provide evidence for their funding for 2022/23 onwards. The outcome of this formal review will be reported to BEIS and it will feed into their planning for the next Spending Review process. It is vital that we make as strong a case as

possible for future funding and are thankful that we have the opportunity to work with the GCRF Hub community and learn from their expertise on this latest review to prepare the evidence.

Q: What is happening with GCRF grants held by overseas institutions?

A: VCs and grant holders at overseas institutions were written to in a similar way to those based in the UK and asked to complete a similar template. Because these institutions don't receive the same support as UK-based organisations, for example from the dual funding system, institutions based in countries on the OECD DAC list of recipients were offered additional funding for 21/22, to a total of 6 months funding.

Q: How many cases for special consideration were granted?

A: UKRI received 64 requests for special consideration for GCRF and Newton, of which 55 were approved.

Q: How were cases for special consideration assessed?

A: All cases for special consideration were assessed on the basis of their fit against the key categories which UKRI has prioritised for the small amount of exceptional funding available. Cases were then evaluated on the basis of the evidence provided and ranked according to the strength of the case for funding.

The categories prioritised for exceptional funding are:

- Clinical trials or animal research currently underway - where there is a need to comply with specific ethical or legal frameworks or obligations which would not be possible in the event of termination/reprofiling;
- Interventions where curtailment/termination of funding could result in risk of serious harm to vulnerable individuals or groups.

Where a case for special consideration has been supported, it will result in a small amount of additional funding to allow a specific activity or intervention which is underway to conclude. No new activity can be funded via an exception unless its primary purpose is to draw the existing treatment / intervention to an ethical or safe closure.

Q: What options were grant holders asked to consider in submitting their returns?

A: All HEIs and businesses were asked to assess the funding against the following three options:

1. Termination of those grants which become inviable on this reduced level of funding. For example, a grant may no longer be able to realise development impact on a reduced level of funding;

2. For GCRF, acceptance of reprofiling of the four months funding that we can offer across up to 12 months of financial year 2021/22. For Newton acceptance of a simple 24% cut to the 21/22 funding (no reprofiling allowed);
3. Make a case on an exceptional basis for a small amount of additional funding for a particular grant.

We have assessed the returns and made final decisions based on affordability to ensure it is within our new allocation for 2021/22 set by BEIS.

Q: How were equality issues arising out of the cut to ODA funding taken into consideration?

A: Through GCRF and the Newton Fund, UKRI is committed to both the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and to equitable partnerships. These principles were incorporated in to UKRI's processes and decision making. Equality impact assessments (EIAs) were undertaken for the key stages of the process. These assessments informed how the processes were designed and delivered. The impact of the decisions made will be captured in on-going evaluation work.

Grant holding organisations were prompted to consider equality diversity and inclusion in their decision making. Specifically, grant holders were asked to consider Gender Equality Statements, to ensure their continued validity, and policies and guidance relating to safeguarding, preventing harm, and bullying and harassment. For grants made to HEIs, the responsibility to consider the public sector equality duty falls mainly on the grant-holding institution. UKRI is mindful of its public sector equality duty and responsibility for oversight of its assessment and decision-making processes.

Q: Is the FCDO's review of ODA research grants separate to this process?

A: Yes – UKRI councils and Innovate UK were also affected by reductions in FCDO funding for joint programmes, where UKRI is the grant-awarding partner. This included ESRC-FCDO Raising Learning Outcomes, Innovate UK Agri-Tech Catalyst and MRC-FCDO Global Health Concordat, including Joint Clinical Trials. Overall FCDO funding was reduced by 42.5% (from £30.1M to £17.2M) for UKRI awards. Councils managed these reductions with FCDO, by cancelling discretionary activities, using underspends, slippage and rebalancing between programme funders (UKRI, FCDO, DHSC, Wellcome). However, some in-flight grant applications were stopped and seven Innovate UK projects fully funded by FCDO were terminated.

Q: What additional funding has been made available for Climate Change and health?

A: Some projects, which met the strict qualifying criteria, have had some funds made available via International Climate Finance (ICF) in order to mitigate the reductions to them. The total additional funding made available was £14 million. The Department for Health and

Social Care also agreed to provide £1.6 million additional funding for the joint programmes in Global Effort for Covid Research (GECO) and the GCRF Global Maternal and Neonatal Health. These additional measures resulted in GCRF awards being offered up to five months funding on average rather than four.

Q. Why were some projects moved from GCRF and excluded from the ODA reductions.

A: These are cases where Councils have used GCRF funding to support responsive mode or other unsolicited proposals which are unambiguously ODA. For these circumstances, where the original source of ODA funding was discretionary, UKRI has been able to reclassify these projects and will use other ODA budgets to support them. 114 such projects were re-classified from GCRF to other ODA.

Q: Can I apply for a no cost extension for my GCRF or Newton project?

A: We cannot approve extensions with a new end date after the 31st of March 2022. This is because we are unable to move any financial commitments into future financial years.

If you wish to apply for a no cost extension that would finish during this financial year (21-22) please wait until your institutional submission has been approved by UKRI before submitting the extension request via Je-S in line with the standard process.

UKRI will still commit to cover any additional payments and allow extensions necessary to cover statutory rights to maternity and parental leave.

This guidance only applies to GCRF and Newton Fund projects. For all other projects please apply in the usual way through Je-S.

Newton Fund

Q: Why are the Newton cuts less severe than the GCRF cuts?

A: Newton and GCRF have separate, ringfenced budget allocations. For UKRI Newton Fund we had £24m of commitments in 21/22 and have been allocated £19m. This leaves a shortfall of £5m at a time when the majority of Newton Fund projects are coming to an end. Because the Newton Fund allocation is provided to UKRI as a separate, ringfenced budget line from GCRF, one cannot be used to support the other.

Q: Can funding be moved between GCRF and Newton Fund projects?

A: Our GCRF and Newton Fund budgets are separately ring fenced by BEIS and funding cannot be moved between grants in different ODA Funds.

Background

Q: What was UKRI's ODA allocation for 2021/22?

A: UKRI received a reduced settlement in February of £125 million in total. This included:

- £106 million for the Global Challenges Research Fund
- £19 million for the Newton Fund

This represented an overall cut of about 70% in all planned ODA expenditure for 21/22, and left UKRI with a total shortfall of £120 million against its commitments.

As noted above, additional funding was subsequently provided for climate change and health projects – please see answer above.

Q: What was UKRI's allocation last year?

A: Our allocation for the FY20/21 as of June 2020 was £422m (£367m for GCRF, £55m for Newton)

Q. Why can't UKRI use money from its core budget to support ODA programmes?

A: Our ODA allocation from BEIS is capped meaning UKRI is not allowed to seek alternative UKRI budget sources to support GCRF and Newton activities. Non-ODA activities will be supported as part of UKRI's wider settlement.

Q: Why can't money from other UKRI international funds such as the Fund for International Collaboration (FIC) be used to alleviate the ODA cut in funding?

A: Our funding for GCRF and Newton are provided separately by BEIS, classified as ODA and capped. We cannot therefore move non-ODA funding from other international funds to support them.

Q. Why is UKRI announcing new funding calls whilst reductions are being made to ODA?

A: The new funding calls being announced by Councils are funded via UKRI's core allocation and not via ODA funding. No new ODA activities are being funded.

Q: Does this mean that UKRI is in effect withdrawing from ODA work?

A: No. Over the past year we have seen just how important it is to share knowledge across borders. The sustainably development goals and ODA funding remain a high priority for UKRI and we will continue working collaboratively to tackle many of the pressing challenges facing the UK and the rest of the world in the months and years ahead.

Q: How do the cuts sit with the Government's recently announced international ambitions in the Integrated Review?

A: The government's Integrated Review recognises the importance of research and innovation to tackling global challenges and delivering prosperity. We welcome the government's continued commitment to increase research and innovation funding as a

percentage of GDP and to spend 0.7% of gross national income on development when the fiscal situation allows.

Q: Will UKRI be making a case to Government for future ODA funding?

A: We will make the case for substantial investments in ODA research and innovation as part of the next Spending Review, expected in autumn 2021. We note that the Integrated Review, published on 16 March 2021, reaffirmed the role of ODA research and innovation in Britain's global partnerships. However, at this time, we simply do not know how much ODA funding will be allocated to UKRI for the financial year 2022/23.

Q: When will UKRI know what the funding envelope for the 22/23 financial year will be?

A: We don't currently have a confirmed timeline for this. We are working hard to make a clear case to BEIS around the need to have stability of funding in 22/23 and beyond. Conversations with BEIS colleagues are ongoing.

Q: Who in the research community has been consulted?

A: UKRI has worked with a range of stakeholders to mitigate the impact of these cuts including through Universities UK, the Russell Group and our international networks as well as directly with grant holders, funding partners, the most affected HEIs and small specialist institutions.

Q: If organisations/grant holders have questions, who should they contact?

A: We encourage everyone with questions to contact our ODA email address: ODAenquiries@ukri.org, or questions on Innovate UK grants to support@innovateuk.ukri.org.

For press enquiries please refer to UKRI press office at press@ukri.org