

## Section A: Official Development Assistance (ODA) and GCRF strategy

### The strategy

1. Summarise the key aspects of your three year **strategy for development related and GCRF research activity**, including:
  - a. Your institution's strategy and priority objectives for all development related research activity funded through all sources for three years from 2018-19.
  - b. A summary of the key aspects of your three year strategic plan for QR GCRF, in light of the criteria and objectives for the GCRF outlined in the guidance.
  - c. How activity funded through QR GCRF fits into your broader strategy and priorities for all development related research activity.
  - d. How activity funded through QR GCRF relates to the UK strategy for the GCRF.<sup>1</sup>
  - e. How your development-related and GCRF strategies relate to your wider institutional strategy for using QR.
  - f. Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy.
  - g. The key activities by which you will realise your objectives, such as capacity and capability building; mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research; generating impact from research; meeting the full economic cost of GCRF activity funded through other sources; rapid response to emergencies with an urgent research need; and pump priming.
  - h. The main developing countries, included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, which you intend to collaborate with.

Maximum 3,000 words

**a. Your institution's strategy and priority objectives for all development related research activity funded through all sources for three years from 2018-19.** The Courtauld's strategy and priority objectives for development-related research activity for the three-year period from 2018-19 focus on the conservation and investigation of cultural heritage in ODA countries. In particular we focus on the conservation of wall painting – a medium of great cultural significance in the countries in which we have partnerships, and an art form that must by definition be conserved and investigated in situ. Therefore this is a programme that can only be delivered on site, and its primary beneficiaries are and will remain in the ODA partner countries. The development-related aspect of this programme is the transfer of conservation-related research skills and

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<sup>1</sup> UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund,  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/challenges/>

expertise to participants from ODA countries. Experts from The Courtauld conduct research at sites (currently at Nagaur in India; recently at Tango in Bhutan, Vardzia in Georgia; Dunhuang in China) and this is shared with local researchers to build up expertise within ODA countries. Alongside this, we are concerned with the sustainability of these projects, and are also committed to the involvement of local and national government agencies in order to demonstrate the importance of the work for the local economy and heritage, and the potential to be gained from embedding this work in their future planning.

**b. A summary of the key aspects of your three year strategic plan for QR GCRF, in light of the criteria and objectives for the GCRF outlined in the guidance.**

Our aim is to develop research and embed it in ODA countries, transferring knowledge of the principles of conservation, assessment and recording of condition, technical and multispectral imaging, assessment of materials, understanding and recording the environment, and issues of biodeterioration and their control. Our conservation research programmes place special emphasis on developing transferable skills and on the effective deployment of accessible technology, so that participants of the programme subsequently have the maximum opportunity to apply what they have learned at other sites or collections.

**c. How activity funded through QR GCRF fits into your broader strategy and priorities for all development related research activity.**

The department for the conservation of wall painting at The Courtauld has since its inception in 1982 been dedicated to the conservation of wall painting as a global concern. It has undertaken the research-driven conservation of historic wall paintings in Bhutan, China, Malta, Cyprus, India, Georgia as well as the UK. The expertise developed over the past 30 years at the Courtauld has driven a strategy based around the importance of local buy-in to the success of a long-term sustainable system for the conservation of wall painting in situ. Local partnerships have been developed, and since 2008 we have been working in India on an annual basis, where participants from India and a number of other ODA countries have been involved.

**d. How activity funded through QR GCRF relates to the UK strategy for the GCRF.**

The Courtauld's use of QR GCRF to support the preservation, conservation and interpretation of historic wall paintings in ODA nations is consistent with the Fund's strategy 'to ensure UK science takes the lead in addressing the problems faced by developing countries, whilst developing our ability to deliver cutting-edge research.' One of the problems faced by the ODA nations in which we have worked is the grave risk to cultural heritage caused by factors ranging from environmental instability, vandalism, neglect, and the unintended consequences of previous (sometimes misguided) conservation interventions. Our Wall Painting Conservation department is internationally recognised as one of the world's leading centres for training and research in this specialist area, and its work addresses the problem of the conservation of cultural heritage as it relates to wall paintings through advanced interdisciplinary

research (spanning, perforce, the fields of conservation science; the history of art; and history, and sometimes with other fields, e.g. engineering, literature). Our collaborations, past and present, with researchers from the ODA nations in which we work are intended to advance world-class research through conservation practice and to build capacity by offering intensive advanced training for specialists, many of whom are at the start of careers in this field.

**e. How your development-related and GCRF strategies relate to your wider institutional strategy for using QR.**

As a small, specialist institution with three academic departments and a researcher population of ±30FTE individuals, our strategy for allocating QR funding is relatively straightforward. QR funds are used to support the proportion of academic salaries that relate to research activity; additionally, we allocate a share of a ±£70k annual budget to each researcher to support research expenses (e.g., for travel, conference fees, image rights, technical equipment, and books). A significant proportion of our research activity is supported by philanthropic income from individuals and trusts. Our strategy for GCRF is consistent with this approach, in that we plan to apply this funding to support a proportion of three salaries (33% for three individuals, one of whom is retiring at the end of the current academic year, and whose successor will be appointed in the coming months). GCRF underpins core salaries and thus allows philanthropic revenue to support the cost of delivering research programmes in ODA countries, which is significantly more expensive than most other research that we undertake (because it includes, inter alia, travel, accommodation, subsistence, equipment, materials, testing, and costs associated with programme delivery on sites that are often remote and challenging).

**f. Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy**

We are confident that we will be able to implement our strategy on the basis of our substantial track record of success, which brings with it in-house expertise and a substantial international network. We run the only conservation programme of this kind in South Asia, and we are the only institution in the UK with the capacity to deliver it; this gives us a distinct advantage in securing the philanthropic support that underpins the programme. Our current research activity in this area is only possible thanks to additional philanthropic funding, so we have to acknowledge that although QR GCRF money is a critical enabler, it does not cover the full costs of this work. We therefore identify as a risk the provision of philanthropic funding. Another is the ability to attract and retain outstanding researchers in this field: two key staff members in the department are imminently to retire, so recruiting successors is a critical challenge for the coming

months. (We plan to apply GCRF funding to one of these 'successor' posts in addition to two other permanent posts.) Mitigating against these risks are our excellent Development team, who are committed to raising the funding that is required, and the strength of our reputation internationally (for The Courtauld as a whole and for this programme), which enables us to attract strong fields for posts. We can point to an excellent record of philanthropic funding in support of this programme.

**g. The key activities by which you will realise your objectives, such as capacity and capability building; mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research; generating impact from research; meeting the full economic cost of GCRF activity funded through other sources; rapid response to emergencies with an urgent research need; and pump priming.**

Our conservation objectives are met by annual programmes in ODA countries, currently centred in India, which conserve cultural heritage and provide training that builds capacity locally.

We have a good record of attracting outstanding participants from ODA countries. Evidence of our success in capacity building comes from participants in the programme, including from the National Museum Institute, National Gallery of Modern Art and INTACH in New Delhi; the conservation section of the Mehrangarh Museum Trust; INTACH, Bangalore. Other participants have come from Bhutan, Nepal and Georgia.

Fieldwork projects are central to our research strategy; through these opportunities, our researchers develop methods and skills that are then be applied and disseminated. Wall painting conservation as we practice it is always multidisciplinary, coming at the intersection of conservation science, art history, chemistry and environmental studies.

**h. The main developing countries, included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, which you intend to collaborate with.** India, Bhutan, Georgia.

2. Provide details of the main intended **outcomes and impacts** of your strategy.

Maximum 500 words

The key intended outcomes from our conservation work are:

- 1) the conservation and interpretation of at-risk cultural heritage;
- 2) the development of research capacity among local professionals in ODA countries; 3) significant advances in the understanding of cultural heritage through academic

publications generate impact within and beyond the academy; 4) The development of transferable skills in conservation research;

and

5) An enhanced profile for the conservation of cultural heritage as a critical objective of the discipline of art history.

Based on our track record in this area, and the strength of relationships that we have with ODA partners, we anticipate that the impact of our research programmes entails a significant contribution to local expertise in conservation practices, technologies, and ethics, and an increased interest in and concern for cultural heritage in ODA countries. We are also optimistic about the benefit that conservation work has for regional economies in terms of tourism and regeneration which arises from the raised profile of conserved sites.

### **Management of GCRF**

3. How will your HEI **monitor** and **evaluate** its progress and compliance in ODA and GCRF activity, including assessing geographical distribution of activity, outputs, outcomes and economic and social impacts?

Please describe the policies, procedures and approach you have in place to measure progress, evaluate outcomes, identify lessons learned, and ensure ODA compliance.

Maximum 1,500 words

Our Conservation of Wall Paintings activity is supported by a robust governance structure that includes an International Advisory Board (IAB), which meets twice a year. This reports to the Courtauld's Academic Board (in effect the University's senate) and its Governing Board; and it provides annual reports to external funders. The IAB is responsible for monitoring the department's policies (including conservation ethics and health and safety), and ODA compliance will be identified as a standing agenda item for future meetings to ensure that we satisfy our obligations. Since 2008, we have tracked the success of our capacity building activity by maintaining up to date records of participants' country of origin, professional background, and subsequent career trajectory. All GCRF-supported activity will be specifically identified in an annual report to the Governing Board.

### **Section B: Use of QR GCRF 2018-19 allocation and future QR GCRF priorities**

4. Please complete the table in Annex A2 detailing the expected spending and activities for QR GCRF in the academic year 2018-19. Note that the total QR GCRF spending must equal the indicative allocation (available in Annex C), and all activities must be ODA-compliant for strategies to be assessed as ODA-compliant overall.

5. Please add here any explanatory notes on how you have completed the table in Annex A2 that will help inform assessment of ODA compliance.

Maximum 200 words

We are using QR GCRF funds in 2018-19 to support three staff salaries, calculated on the proportion of 33% of each FTE (in recognition that GCRF supports research, which is approximately 1/3 of each post). This funding also makes a contribution to associated lab costs.

We have ensured that this spending is ODA compliant by targeting the funding very specifically to costs associated with undertaking research in ODA countries, and which focuses on the conservation of cultural heritage, capacity building, and research impact in those nations. Through our IAB, we ensure that GCRF support is directed to research on at-risk heritage in nations on the DAC list, and that it is undertaken effectively and efficiently. The excellence of our research is monitored by various mechanisms, including peer review and the Research Excellence Framework.

6. How would your **priorities and activities** for 2018-19 QR GCRF change if the funding level differs from that outlined in indicative allocations? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

Maximum 500 words

As this is a single, relatively small-scale project, the priorities and activities already run at effectively a minimum level for sustainability. Reduction in allocation would threaten their continuity, although we would endeavour to seek increase the philanthropic support on which the project already relies.

If the funding level increased, the priorities would be capacity building, in terms of the opportunity to expand the programme to include more local experts. A significant increase would present an opportunity to develop programmes in other ODA countries.

7. Based on indicative funding allocations, what are your **priorities** for QR GCRF activity in 2019-20? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

Maximum 1,000 words

Our priority for 2019-20 is to maintain the current programme that we run. As a relatively young programme in an area of cultural heritage that has relatively low exposure in ODA countries, and which is often a low priority in local funding and government oversight, the continuation of the programme and the development of its reputation are essential to its

effectiveness. The attraction of participants from Bhutan and Georgia shows that this is beginning to work. However, it has to be a long-term commitment in order to be effective. For local government agencies to be convinced to commit their own resources in the future, we have to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the research and its longterm benefits for the preservation of the sites involved.

Research projects that were conducted in Bhutan (Tango Buddhist monastery) and Georgia (Vardzia Christian monastery) have recently come to an end. A priority for 2019 is to resume negotiations with relevant governmental organisations to start new projects. These are essential in order to show the results to local governmental agencies – to demonstrate the return on the research projects, in terms of long-term preservation of cultural heritage, widening knowledge of cultural heritage (for local and tourist enterprises), as well as embedding skills within the local workforce that will encourage local development of these research skills.

Given the scale of The Courtauld, we do not think that it would be advisable to embark on rapid expansion at this stage. Whilst we can provide additional capacity, it is only value for money if there are good local employment/skills transfer opportunities for the participants to be able to conduct this form of research and to influence local/national policies about cultural heritage and the role of wall paintings in these.

8. Based on indicative funding allocations, what are your **priorities** for QR GCRF activity in 2020-21? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

Maximum 1,000 words

As noted in our response to Q7, our project is a small, highly focused one. As a result, our priorities for 2020-21 will remain the same as for 2019-20.

Should QR GCRF funding increase, we will be in a position to invest more in the programme, and in particular to develop new projects in other ODA countries (there are potential sites in Bhutan and China). Our priorities for increased GCRF funding will depend on a number of factors, including the ability to secure whatever philanthropic support is required to cover the costs; the capacity of our research team; the cultural significance of the sites; and health and safety considerations. The determination of priorities is ultimately determined by The Courtauld's Senior Management Team on the advice of colleagues and our IAB.

Should QR GCRF funding decrease, we would have to consider curtailing our activity in ODA countries in order to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the programme. As noted above, GCRF funding represents a critical element of core funding for a programme which is ultimately reliant on our ability to secure additional philanthropic support, and we have an excellent track record in this.

