

Update following 2021 Spending Review – GCRF and Newton Fund – 18 November 2021

Following the recent Spending Review, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has communicated to the delivery partners of its Newton Fund and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) that legal commitments for existing projects from 2022/23 will be met, including UKRI's GCRF Hubs.

UKRI is awaiting specific details on our overall ODA allocation following the Spending Review. The ODA funding commitment for the UKRI GCRF Hubs was decided separately in an independent review process and UKRI has now received a specific allocation for the 12 Hubs, which will enable them all to continue for the remainder of their grant period.

Professor Christopher Smith, UKRI International Champion said:

“This has been an extraordinarily difficult time for all our researchers and partners involved in GCRF and Newton, and we acknowledge with regret how challenging this has been for everyone concerned.

“We are pleased to have confirmation that following the Spending Review outcomes, BEIS remain committed to funding these crucial projects and the GCRF Hubs, all of which are addressing complex global challenges that impact us all. We would like to thank our community for their dedication, hard work and resilience.

“We can now look forward to working with our community and our international partners to ensure research and innovation remain central to solving many of the world's most pressing challenges, to continue to seek every opportunity to deliver impact for communities in need, and to work in equitable partnership with countries across the world on excellent science and innovation for sustainable development goals.”

Questions and answers - GCRF and Newton Fund - general

Q. What does 'legal commitments' mean in practice?

A UKRI has not yet received details of our allocation following the spending review outcomes in October. Our current understanding is that we will be able to support projects still running for the remainder of their grant period and that no further cuts will be applied. However, we will not have sufficient funds to reimburse funds cut from 21/22.

Q. Will no cost extensions be permitted?

A.UKRI has not yet received details of our allocation but unless we provide another update please assume there is no flexibility for UKRI to allow extensions past March 2022 other than for the reason of statutory leave. Cases which meet the criteria for special consideration (i.e. criteria that previously applied in the ODA Review: where there is a need to comply with specific ethical or legal frameworks, or where there is a risk of serious harm to vulnerable individuals or groups), may be eligible for a no cost extension beyond March 2022.

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To see full Q&As published during UKRI's ODA review, please visit: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/collaborating-internationally/oda-review/oda-review-questions-and-answers/#contents-list>

GCRF Hub specific**Q. Why was this review carried out?**

A. This review was carried out at the request of BEIS to provide robust evidence to help inform the continued support for the Hubs programme and it replaced the previously planned stage gate review.

From the outset of the programme, a stage gate review was planned for 2021 (the end of year two) to ensure that each Hub is making appropriate progress and managing the award effectively. However, as a result of changes to the broader political and financial context the Stage Gate review was redesigned to inform the 2021 Spending Review exercise, playing a key role in determining the future funding for this programme.

Q. What were the findings of the GCRF Review?

A. The review highlighted the very high quality of the Hubs programme, the breadth of partnerships developed, and the impacts delivered to date despite the significant challenges posed by the on-going pandemic. It also considered all Hubs to demonstrate strong alignment to local, national and international priorities, including the UK HMG Strategic Framework for ODA and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The programme was considered to represent good value for money, and it was recommended that if possible the programme should continue for the remaining duration.

Q. What is the new settlement for the GCRF Hubs?

A. Following the 2021 Spending Review allocation and the outcomes from the Hub review, no further cuts to the programme budget will be implemented. However, we will not have sufficient funds to reimburse funds cut from 21/22.