



Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council

EPSRC Early career researcher international collaboration grants/collaborations for global development – FAQs

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Eligibility

New investigator award related

Q. What are the eligibility criteria if you have already been successful with a EPSRC New Investigator Award? Is it the same (without counting the successful NIA)?

A. Applicants who hold or have previously applied for (regardless of the outcome) a New Investigator Award, but otherwise still satisfy the other New Investigator Award eligibility criteria are still eligible to apply to this early career researcher international collaboration funding opportunity.

Q. I understand that this call, if successful, does not prevent the PI to apply for a NIA? Is this correct? With this in mind, is a synergy between the NIA research proposal and this project expected / acceptable / discouraged?

A. Applications to this call, whether successful or unsuccessful, do not prevent the PI from applying for an NIA providing they still meet the other NIA eligibility criteria. Synergy between grants is not an assessment criterion, each application is assessed on its own merit. In addition, EPSRC does not accept uninvited resubmissions therefore applications submitted to EPSRC by the same PI should be significantly different from each other.

Q. Would you please elaborate more, when it is said EPSRC NIA recipients are eligible to apply if they satisfy other eligibility criteria? E.g., are the requirements on PDRA time and leading independent research team waived as well?

A. If you meet all the NIA eligibility criteria, but you have an EPSRC NIA award leading independent research with PDRA time then you are still eligible to apply.

Q. To remain eligible for the NIA, does the support requested through this scheme need to be less than 100K, or is any amount up to 200K OK?

A. Any amount up to £200k is ok. Applications to this call don't affect eligibility for NIAs. Whether they are successful or unsuccessful, applicants who apply for an early career researcher international collaboration grant are still eligible to apply for a New Investigator Award.

Q. Can the project be a sub-part of a NIA application, or does it need to be a complete different project?

A. The project should be a stand-alone project, meeting the funding opportunity assessment criteria.

Application/grant history

Q. Will I still be eligible to apply if, at the time of submission, I have a standard proposal as a PI submitted and under review?

A. You would not be eligible to apply as applications to this scheme must be the applicant's first to EPSRC as a principal investigator.

Q. Does applying for another grant with the same project partners on a larger project involving extensive PDRA time make us ineligible for this scheme?

A. Applications to this funding opportunity should be your first to EPSRC as a PI. In addition, leading projects which included more than 6 months PDRA time, capital equipment in excess of £20,000 or single research grants over £100,000 full economic cost may not be eligible but will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Applicants who have previously directed the vision of a research group are not eligible to apply. Please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. I have a project (as PI) that involves supervising a 12-month Research Assistant (i.e., a Master's degree holder). As far as I know, Research Assistant is a completely different role compared with PDRA; can I understand that I am still eligible to apply for this grant?

A. A research assistant would be considered the same as a PDRA to determine the PI eligibility, and unfortunately you would not be eligible to apply if you have been supervising a research assistant for 12 months.

Eligibility and employment

Q. Can a current PDRA apply for this funding?

A. PDRA's are not eligible to apply for funding as PIs, investigators must be academic employees (lecturer or equivalent) of an eligible organisation.

Q. Investigators must be academic employees (lecturer or equivalent) of an eligible organisation. What do you mean equivalent here?

A. EPSRC recognises that not all academic employees may be lecturers, the equivalent is to include academic employees that have the same status as lecturers. Please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. Am I eligible to partner with a university where I was recently appointed an adjunct position? Is it considered an "extensive working connection"?

A. Partnering with a university where you hold an adjunct position would not be eligible.

Q. Are we allowed to be multi-disciplinary in the UK institute? In that case, more than one member from the UK institute will be on board. Is that okay?

A. Multidisciplinary research may be included however, the majority of the research must fit within the remit of EPSRC: [EPSRC remit – EPSRC – UKRI](#). UK Co-Is can only be included if they are from a different discipline to the PI.

Q. Can people in secondments for the duration of the grant apply?

A. To apply as a PI, you must meet the requirements of EPSRC's NIA eligibility: [Eligibility – UKRI](#). This includes being an academic employee (lecturer or equivalent) of an eligible organisation.

International Collaborators

Career stage of the international collaborator

Q. I understand that the partner from UK has to be an ECR, but does the international partner need to be an ECR as well?

A. The PI of the application must be an ECR, meeting the EPSRC New Investigator Award criteria ([Eligibility – UKRI](#)), however the international collaborator(s) don't need to be ECRs.

Q. Is there any advantage to have a partner who is also ECR in international countries (rather than a senior researcher)?

A. There are no assessment criteria on the career stage of your international collaborator, therefore having a partner who is an ECR shouldn't be an advantage or disadvantage.

Q. How senior the international partners need to be?

A. There is no requirement for the seniority of international partners, however PhD students and international PDRAs cannot receive funding from the grant.

Numbers and types of collaborators

Q. For early career researcher international collaboration grants, are we looking into academic collaborators or industrial collaborators?

A. International collaborators can be from any international organisation that has research capabilities, e.g. can be a university, or a government research institute or an independent research organisation.

Q. How many researchers from a host (international university) can be involved?

A. There are no limitations on the number of international collaborators that can be involved. However, the visiting research guidelines give details on how visiting researchers should be included: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#). There are no limitations on the number of project partners that can be included, however, as with visiting researchers, you should suitably justify their involvement in the project.

Q. Which type of international interactions are expected? Would short visits for networking purposes be OK or are longer interactions like visits to conduct actual experiments expected?

A. Short visits for networking purposes are ok, as are longer interactions. The specifics of each should be whatever is best for the project, but we do expect a balance of between partnership building activities and direct research.

Q. Do we need to identify potential international partners before we submit our application, or they can be explored during the initial phase of the project?

A. It is expected that you will have already identified your international partners and include them all in your application.

Q. Is there a preference for whether international partners should be individual researchers or whole research groups?

A. There is no preference, however this will depend on how international collaborators are included in your application. If they are visiting researchers, individuals will need to be specified and justified. If they are project partners, the research group can be included but details would be needed of the researcher/researchers you plan to work with within the group.

Q. How many “collaborators” can we nominate on this grant?

A. There is no limit on the number of collaborators, provided they are necessary for the project and fully justified.

Q. Is there a minimum number of international partners that should be part of the application?

A. There is no minimum number that should be part of the application, but all international collaborators should be well justified.

Q. Is it possible to indicate more than 1 country?

A. Yes, you can include international collaborators from more than one country, but you should all be collaborating within the one project.

Previous relationship with collaborators

Q. What if I have no prior collaboration at all with international partner, is that OK?

A. Yes, this is ok, the aim of the funding opportunity is to initiate or develop international collaboration. You will still need to include details of your collaborator in your application even if you have not collaborated together previously.

Q. Is it okay to have a CI (for international route) whom you don't have previous collaboration/publication with? Does the CI have to be someone researching on different areas from PI as well?

A. You can have collaborators you don't have previous collaboration or publications with, but we do expect them to be known and named in the application. For the open route, international collaborators cannot be included as Co-Is. For the international development route, collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can be included as Co-Is. Only UK Co-Is need to be from a different discipline to the PI.

Q. Is having an extensive collaboration with the international partner in the past considered a disadvantage of the grant application?

A. Extensive previous collaboration with the international partner would mean your application is not eligible for this funding opportunity. We're not specifying the number of previous collaborations or publications, for example, but if you have any queries on whether a specific collaboration is suitable please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. Does previous extensive collaboration with an overseas partner exclude us from applying together?

A. Extensive previous collaboration with the international partner would mean your application is not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Q. What is meant by extensive work together for the sake of eligibility?

A. You and your international partners may have a previous relationship, but we do not expect you to have worked together extensively- we're not specifying the number of previous collaborations or publications, for example, but if you have any queries on whether a collaboration is suitable please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. The grant is for ECR to initiate or develop new collaborations. If we (PI and Co-I) have co-authored one paper, is this still eligible?

A. Co-authoring one paper together is acceptable. Please note that for the open route, international collaborators cannot be included as Co-Is, they should be included as visiting researchers or project partners.

Q. I have worked with the international collaborator in the 6-month project, but I was Co-I for that one. Is this eligible for this call?

A. Extensive previous collaboration with the international partner would mean your application is not eligible for this funding opportunity. We're not specifying the number of previous collaborations or publications, for example, but if you have any queries on whether a specific collaboration is suitable please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. If the PI and the international partners have received small funding (approx. £10K) to initialise collaboration, are they still eligible to apply for this grant to extend their current collaborative project?

A. Yes, this would be ok, provided you still include collaboration and partnership building activities in the project. Extensive previous collaboration with the international partner would mean your application is not eligible for this funding opportunity. We're not specifying the number of previous collaborations or

publications, for example, but if you have any queries on whether a specific collaboration is suitable please contact us to discuss any specific eligibility queries: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. Can an overseas researcher be involved in two independent applications? Will both of them be desk rejected or equally reviewed as other applications?

A. Overseas researchers can be involved in two independent applications. However, their involvement should be reasonable and fully justified within each application. We expect that if both applications are successful, the overseas researcher should have a suitable plan for managing all collaborations.

Visiting researcher/project partner/co-investigator clarifications

Q. For the open development funding route, what is the definition of the role of the international collaborator? Would he/she be "external collaborator" or "co-I" or maybe another formal definition?

A. For the open route, international collaborators should be included as visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). For the international development route, international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can also be included as co-investigators.

Q. Can the collaborator be listed as Co-I or Co-PI? Will the collaborator share part of the funds?

A. For the open route, international partners can be included as either visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). International partners cannot be included as Co-Is. For the international development, Co-Is may be named from research organisations based in partner lower middle income, low-income or least developed countries and eligible costs can be included for them (slide 26 of the webinar slide deck shows eligible overseas costs).

Q. Should the international partner be a PI or can it be a PDRA at an international institute who can be listed as a project partner?

A. Anyone can be listed as a project partner, however project partners are not eligible to receive funding directly from the grant except for small amounts, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#).

Q. Can a partner/visitor be recognised as Researcher Co-I, if they have co-authored the proposal and will be supported by the grant while visiting the PI?

A. For the open route, international researchers cannot be included as Co-Is or Researcher Co-Is on the application, they should be included as Visiting Researchers or Project Partners. For the international development route, Researcher Co-Is can be included if they are from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries.

Q. Could you please clarify what is the difference between a visiting researcher and a project collaborator?

A. You are required to have an international collaborator under this funding opportunity. For the open route, international collaborators can be included as either visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). For the international development route, international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can also be included as co-investigators.

Q. Please can you define 'visiting researcher' and what they are expected to do?

A. Support may be requested for visits by scientists and engineers of acknowledged standing from within the UK or abroad to the investigator's organisation. Funding is limited to 12 months per individual. EPSRC guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#).

Q. If I have a visiting researcher from a partner, can this research visit exceed one year? Can the collaboration with a particular partner exceed one year in general?

A. For visiting researchers funding is limited to 12 months per individual. Collaborations with project partners are not time constrained.

Q. What would differentiate a collaborator, a project partner and a sub-contractor in the proposal?

A. A collaborator is a general term for anyone you are working with on the project but there is no mechanism for adding a 'collaborator' to your application. A project partner is a collaborating organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research, they should provide a contribution to the project and generally cannot receive funding from the grant: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#). A sub-contractor can be included if they are providing a specific service to the project, research organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts are subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety. All costs should be fully documented/invoiced and available to EPSRC if required.

Q. If the international "project partner" is an academic institution and they must "do a significant part of the work" but we cannot budget their time on the project as Co-Is, are limiting this to being the PI doing work with support of "international partners" in terms of advice and/or use /access to facilities and/or secondments abroad...?

A. International collaborators can be included as visiting researchers under the open route and budget included as per the visiting researcher guidelines: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#).

Q. Is it required for the international academic partner to include an in-kind support value in the letter of support?

A. If international collaborators are included as project partners, they are required to provide a contribution to the project and a project partner letter of support (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)).

Q. Would there be any (financial) contribution required from the partners or the partner's institution?

A. If international collaborators are included as project partners, they are required to provide a contribution to the project and a project partner letter of support (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)).

Q. Is a 2-page CV of this international collaborator necessary or just his/her track record in the form of a few lines as usual in standard EPSRC applications?

A. CVs only need to be included for named postdoctoral staff, researcher co-investigators and visiting researchers.

Q. Can the Co-Is be based in different countries?

A. Under the open route, only UK Co-Is can be included and only if they are from a different discipline to the PI. Under the international development routes, Co-Is can be included from least developed, low income and lower middle income countries and the project must meet ODA compliance.

Q. Can we have one Co-I who is a new international partner while another Co-I a fairly established collaborator?

A. It is expected that you will not have worked together extensively with one of your collaborators in order to be eligible. You can then include other collaborators. Please note that for the open route, international collaborators cannot be included as Co-Is, they should be included as visiting researchers or project partners.

Q. Can we add additional international partners after submitting the EOI, if required?

A. Yes, whilst your intention to submit should include some details of the planned project, you can give the full details of your international collaborators in the full proposal.

Q. Do international research partners need to register as a user in Je-S for this call?

A. It depends how they are being included on the application and which funding route you are applying through. For the open route, international partners can be included as either visiting researchers or project partners. If they are a visiting researcher or project partner, you will be able to manually add their details on Je-S. For the international development/ODA route, co-investigators may be named from research organisations based in partner lower middle income, low-income or least developed countries. All co-investigators will need to have a Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) account before they can be added to the Je-S proposal form; the individual co-investigators will also need to activate their account. Please also be aware that if the co-investigator's institution is not listed in our grants database, a request will need to be submitted for that institution to be added before a Je-S account can be created. Please allow a minimum of 10 working days to complete the necessary steps before the closing date of the opportunity. We will not reopen the opportunity for applicants who do not complete this step in time.

Q. Following the Money Follows Cooperation agreement with Norway, can Norwegian Co-Investigators be included?

A. As the ECR international collaboration grants funding opportunity was open before the agreement with Norway started, this funding opportunity is not included in the agreement. This means that for the purposes of this call, Norway is treated the same as any other country.

Q. Are there any restrictions on collaborators as it is for International Partners?

A. For the open route, international collaborators should be included as visiting researchers or project partners. For the international development route, international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can be included as Co-Is. There are no limitations on the choice of collaborating research organisations, except to meet the ODA eligibility in the international development route, however we will be following our trusted research guidance: [trusted research and innovation principles](#).

Q. How many hosts do we need to have?

A. There will only be one host organisation, the organisation the PI is employed by.

Q. Can I include Co-I from the same university or another UK institution in the application?

A. UK Co-Is can only be included if the grant crosses disciplinary boundaries and it is demonstrated that they are from a different discipline to the principal investigator.

Q. Can a research fellow be hired? Does the RF need to be based abroad?

A. Research fellows can be included in the application, and they can be based in the UK.

Q. Can a Co-I join multiple proposals on both routes?

A. We are limiting the applications so you can only be involved in one grant application and individuals are only involved in one of these funding opportunities.

Q. Is it necessary to have industrial partner beside international collaborator for projects?

A. No, only international collaborators are a requirement for the application.

Q. Is it ok to have UK-based "partners" on this grant too?

A. Yes, you can include UK-based partners as project partners (both industry and academic) and Co-Is. Please note that UK Co-Is can only be included if the grant crosses disciplinary boundaries and it is demonstrated that they are from a different discipline to the principal investigator.

Country specific queries

Q. Are there any limitations on the choice of collaborating organisations: US, China, Japan? (I think you've already said that collaborators are included as project partners (rather than Co-Is), but could you confirm, please?)

A. For the open route, international collaborators should be included as visiting researchers or project partners. For the international development route, international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can be included as Co-Is. There are no limitations on the choice of collaborating research organisations, except to meet the ODA eligibility in the international development route, however we will be following our trusted research guidance: [trusted research and innovation principles](#).

Q. Is working with partners in Ukraine viewed as ODA compliant?

A. Ukraine is included as a lower middle income country on the DAC list ([DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf \(oecd.org\)](#)), so working with them would be eligible under the international development route. Further requirements for the development route and ODA compliance are on the funding opportunity page: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#). However, due to the current conflict in Ukraine, we advise you speak with your research office to check if your institutions has any policies on working with Ukraine. Note, eligible costs include resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations which reduce the need to travel.

Q. I am planning to have collaborators from India -will it be the case of applying through the Open Route? And could I still demonstrate impact to India through this route?

A. You can apply through the open route with your collaborators from India as visiting researchers or project partners and demonstrate the impact to India, however, this is not an assessment criterion for the open route in the same way that it is for the development route. Please see guidance on importance for open route: [Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#).

Q. Are there any limitations on the choice of collaborating organisations from Iran?

A. For a collaboration with partners at an Iranian University, you must be able to demonstrate that the collaboration and proposed partnership would not breach any existing government guidance or sanctions and must also take into account [UKRI's principles on trusted research and innovation](#). We would advise you to have a conversation with [RCAT](#) and your research office for specific advice whilst you develop this proposal.

Q. Can I propose a research collaboration with partners in Switzerland that I worked with for limited time (and two publications)? Also, would be a good framework to have my SRA visiting the partner for 6 months and the Swiss SRA visiting for 1 month? Also having seminars and workshops in both visits.

A. A collaboration with Switzerland would be eligible under the open funding route. SRA's can be included in the application and you can include costs for them to visit your collaborator. However, Swiss SRA costs for visits to the UK cannot be funded as research assistants are not eligible to be visiting researchers. Seminar and workshop costs can also be included. Eligible costs guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), slide 26 of webinar slide deck.

Q. Can I work in India and Poland for the international stream?

A. Under the open funding route, you may work with collaborators from any country. Under the international development route, collaborators should be from least developed, low income or lower middle countries on the DAC list: [DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf \(oecd.org\)](#).

Funding

UK Eligible costs

Q. What expenses can be covered in our application? Salary, and accommodation etc. once we are overseas.

A. Please see EPSRC guidance for details of eligible costs: [Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#). In addition, slide 26 of the webinar slide deck details eligible overseas costs.

Q. Are consumables allowed?

A. Consumables are permitted under other directly incurred costs: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#).

Q. Could the costs of equipment and consumables for the collaborators' research outside the UK be covered?

A. Eligible costs are detailed on EPSRC's website: [Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#), and slide 26 of the webinar slide deck details the eligible overseas costs.

Q. Can we use the equipment costs for cloud computing?

A. The EPSRC website has further details on allowable costs: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#). Cloud computing costs would be eligible if fully justified.

Q. Are the costs for conferences and journals limited in any specific way?

A. Please see EPSRC eligible costs guidance: [Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#). Costs for standard publications are not eligible.

Q. Is funding for meetings and workshops available only for events held in the UK or also for events organised overseas at a partner organisation?

A. Funding for meetings and workshops overseas are eligible costs provided the UK PI is organising and attending the events.

Q. Can I support multiple pieces of equipment, each costing less than £10k (inc. VAT), as long as they constitute different equipment and do not comprise components of the same setup?

A. Yes, you can include multiple pieces of equipment/consumables each less than £10k (inc. VAT) provided they are not components of the same setup.

Q. Are researchers, not listed in the proposal, from my team (colleagues, postdocs, PhD students) eligible for any support (e.g., travel)?

A. All support requested should be associated with the staff included in the proposal. If, for example, PDRAs are not yet known they should be included as unnamed PDRAs. Unnamed researcher costs FAQ in peer review toolkit. No costs for PhD students are eligible for funding through this opportunity.

Q. It was mentioned that “EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost”, what does that mean? What is the other 20%?

A. All research grant applications submitted will be costed on the basis of full economic costs (fEC). If a grant is awarded, research councils will provide funding at 80% of the fEC. The organisation must agree to find the balance of fEC for the project from other resources. EPSRC guidance: [Principles of full economic costing \(fEC\) – UKRI](#).

International eligible costs

Q. Can we only cost consumables and staff time for the visiting researcher when working in UK and not when overseas?

A. Yes, visiting researcher costs are only eligible when the visiting researcher is travelling to or working in the UK.

Q. If I plan to perform experimental tests at the international partner, can I cover the costs related to these tests?

A. Consumables for UK researchers when working overseas is an eligible cost.

Q. Can costs for visas be included in the budget?

A. Visa costs cannot be included in the budget.

Q. If a researcher(s) has already been employed and has a contract with their centre, by the EPSRC they can get additional payment? If so, what expenses are covered for them, for instance, their accommodation in the UK, salaries etc.?

A. The visiting research guidelines give details on eligible costs for visiting researchers: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#).

Q. Can some of the grant cover family travel costs for extended stays abroad?

A. Family travel costs cannot be included. Investigators or members of their team can access support for cost over and above standard care arrangements when they need to participate in specific activities related to the grant such as visits, meetings, conferences and overseas travel. This applies where the activities cannot be covered by the employer: [Equality, diversity and inclusion support – EPSRC – UKRI](#).

Q. Can we allocate part of the budget for the international collaborators? If yes, what can be included?

A. For the open route, international partners can be included as either visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). International partners cannot be included as Co-Is. For the international development/ODA route, Co-Is may be named from research organisations based in partner lower middle income, low-income or least developed countries and eligible costs can be included for them (slide 26 shows eligible overseas costs).

Q. Could you clarify the point below related to the costs for overseas researchers (on page 4 of the open-route guidelines). "EPSRC will not support overheads, salary or research activity costs for overseas researchers during times that they are not working in the UK." If the overseas researcher will carry out some lab validation work in their labs abroad that cannot be done in the UK, can these costs be covered by the grant as an "Exception for validation costs"?

A. Only activities carried out by the overseas researcher in the UK are eligible for funding under the open route.

Q. Is there a limit on the amount of fund that may be requested for sub-contracting to international not-for-profit organisations?

A. There is no limit for sub-contractor costs, however research organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts are subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety. All costs should be fully documented/invoiced and available to EPSRC if required.

Q. Can the international collaborators and sub-contractors be paid in their native currency instead of in GBP?

A. All funding is paid to your organisation in GBP. How funding is disseminated after this is as per your organisation/research office guidelines. There are additional grant conditions concerning costs under the international development route: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#).

Project partner costs

Q. What are the rules behind funding the international partner in a project? Also, regarding the equipment use, if a project requires use of a specialist to support operating the equipment, what are the mechanisms around this?

A. For the open route, international collaborators should be included as visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). For the international development route, international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries can also be included as co-investigators. UK technicians/specialists can be included in the grant application if they are required to operate equipment that is necessary for the project.

Q. Can the project support consumables costs for domestic industrial partner?

A. Project partners consumables costs are not generally eligible, there is further guidance on our website: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#).

Q. Under the open route, can the PI pay for travel and subsistence for project partners?

A. The project partner can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#).

Q. I know that traditionally, project partners cannot benefit financially from EPSRC projects. Can budget for international project partners be requested e.g. consumables?

A. Project partners are not eligible to receive funding directly from the grant except for small amounts, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#).

PDRA and student costs

Q. Can the PDRA hired by the UK lead institute work on field work in the developing country for 50% of their time (e.g., 1 year)?

A. Yes, this is acceptable. Any PDRA time included should be well justified.

Q. In this funding, can I rent a research fellow?

A. Costs for research assistants and research fellows can be included, however their inclusion should be fully justified.

Q. Does the funding cover salary for a PDRA to be recruited?

A. As per EPSRC standard rules, recruitment activities for PDRAs can be included. However, please keep in mind the value of the grant, the maximum duration of the grant which is 24 months and that PDRAs are not required. If PDRAs are to be recruited and included on the grant, this should be fully justified in your application. The aim of this funding opportunity is to encourage the PI ECR to initiate and develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. PDRA time can be included, but it is expected to be well justified given the aims of the call.

Q. Could we include 1 PDRA (say 12 months), send them to the international organisations for exchange for a period of time (e.g. 6 months)?

A. Yes, PDRAs can be included and travel and subsistence costs for UK project members are eligible. Any PDRA time included should be well justified. Further guidance on costs can be found on our website ([Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#)) and in the slide deck.

Q. Can the visiting researcher from the partner institution be a PhD student?

A. No, PhD students cannot be included as visiting researchers. No costs associated with PhD students are eligible for funding under this opportunity.

Q. Can the cost of our partner's post doc be covered?

A. No, international PDRAs cannot receive funding from the grant.

Q. Can we request budget to host the research visit of a PDRA from our collaborator institution?

A. No, costs for international PDRAs are not eligible and they cannot be included as visiting researchers.

Q. For researchers with fellowships that cover their full salary, there is no point in applying for PI time - in this case can we use the grant to fund a PDRA, or is that not really the purpose of this grant.

A. The aim of this funding opportunity is to encourage the PI ECR to initiate and develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas, so it is expected that PI time will be requested in the application. In addition, currently holding a fellowship may impact eligibility for this scheme: [Eligibility – UKRI](#).

Q. Would it be OK to allocate most of the requested funds for PDRA work and less for travel, workshops, etc.? Or is this undesirable under this scheme?

A. The aim of this funding opportunity is to encourage the PI ECR to initiate and develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. PDRA time can be included, but it is expected to be well justified given the aims of the call.

Q. Did I understand correctly that asking for a 2-year PDRA position is not what is expected in this call?

A. The aim of this funding opportunity is to encourage the PI ECR to initiate and develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. PDRA time can be included, it is expected to be well justified given the aims of the call.

Application and Remit

Q. How many hosts do we need to have?

A. There will only be one host organisation, the organisation the PI is employed by.

Q. Can I include Co-I from the same university or another UK institution in the application?

A. UK Co-Is can only be included if the grant crosses disciplinary boundaries and it is demonstrated that they are from a different discipline to the principal investigator.

Q. Since the ECR is the PI here, is there a minimum FTE on the main PI/ECR time?

A. There is no minimum time required from the ECR PI. However, the requested time should be sufficient to carry out the relationship building, and research activities detailed in your proposal.

Partnership and research activities

Q. Is this call about people physically moving from one place to another - or can these be done remotely online?

A. Eligible costs include resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations, which reduce the need to travel. As the focus of the call is for ECRs to initiate and develop international collaboration, this can be carried out remotely if you demonstrate you are able to develop your collaboration. Please note for the open route that any costs included for international collaborators can only be claimed when visiting researchers are visiting the UK.

Q. Are there any constraints on the ratio between the time that PI spends in visiting partners and the time that partners visit PI? Does this call expect to see PI visits partners more often?

A. There is no expectation for this, as the visiting time should be whatever is most beneficial for the project. However, please note that visiting researcher time is limited to 12 months per individual.

Q. What differences do you have in mind when saying "collaboration plan" vs "research project"?

A. The collaboration should be any activity that focuses on initiating and developing the collaboration. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. The international academic project partners must also have an integral role in the proposed work.

Q. What is the specific meaning of building a relationship between the PI and partners? Is leading a PDRA to collaborate with oversea partners considered building a relationship between the PI and partners?

A. The PI should initiate or develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas. This could include meetings, networking, exchange visits. Whilst a PDRA could be included, the relationship building must be between the PI and the international partners.

Q. Should we not expect to add any salary for researchers onto the grant? It should instead be focused on some proof-of-concept studies run by existing researchers already based in the collaborating labs?

A. The focus of the call is for ECR PIs to initiate and develop international collaboration. UK PI, Co-I and PDRA salaries can be included on the grant (note restrictions on the inclusion of UK Co-Is: [Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)). International collaborators can be included as Co-Is under the international development route, visiting researchers can be included on either route and project partners can be included on either route. Salaries can be requested for Co-Is under the international development route ([Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#)) and visiting researchers on either route (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#), [Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)). We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity.

Q. Could you clarify on “balance between partnership building activities and direct research” and how it should be reflected on funding allocation?

A. We are not stipulating a necessary balance between the partnership building activities and direct research. Both should be included in your application, and the balance should be as required for your proposed project.

Q. Should the work be carried out mainly in the UK? Is there guideline for the work sharing between the countries?

A. The work doesn't need to be mainly carried out in the UK, and there is no guidance for the work sharing between countries. However, please keep in mind the eligible costs [Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#), slide 26 in the webinar slide deck details eligible overseas costs and the assessment criteria which includes UK national importance for the open route ([Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)) and international development importance for the international development route ([Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#)). For the international development route, activities can occur within the UK and, or the partner country but end-usage must tackle development changes within the developing country.

Q. Could this scheme be used as an ECR “network grant”?

A. Networking activities can be included in your budget for this grant. However, due to the limitations on Co-Is ([Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)) and costs that can be included for international collaborators, it is not envisaged that these grants would follow the same form as EPSRC's standard network grants. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity.

Q. The grant I have in mind would fund the creation of a network with multiple partners involved as steering committee/governance. Instead of asking for specific PDRA time on a single prelim project, would it be possible to let network members apply for research exchanges?

A. The PI will need to apply for and detail the funding required for the project. How this is disseminated afterwards is up to the PI/their institution. However, due to the limitations on Co-Is ([Early career](#)

[researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)) and costs that can be included for international collaborators, it is not envisaged that these grants would follow the same form as EPSRC's standard network grants. The aim of this call is to enable PI ECRs to initiate or develop new international partnerships with researchers overseas. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity.

Q. For open scheme, what does the following sentence mean: 'where the focus of the research is outside the official development assistance compliance criteria'?

A. The open funding route has assessment criteria that is different to the assessment criteria of the international development route. If you are including international collaborators from lower middle income, low income, or least developed countries in an open route application you should meet the open route assessment criteria ([Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)) rather than the official development assistance compliance criteria which is necessary for the international development route ([Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#)).

Q. Could International partnership development and research co-exist in one proposal?

A. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. The international academic project partners must also have an integral role in the proposed work.

Q. What ratio of building activities to direct research is expected? 50% to 50%?

A. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity. The international academic project partners must also have an integral role in the proposed work. There is no requirement for a specific ratio, it should be whatever works best for the project.

Q. I was wondering what is the level of risk accepted in the project that we are developing with our partner. For example, I was planning to kick off the project after our proof of concept data, but there is an aspect where we will explore brand new ideas. Would it be acceptable or seen as high risk project and not funded.

A. Risk is not an assessment criterion for this funding opportunity ([Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)), therefore it will not be considered in the assessment. We expect the proposed collaborative project to present a balance between partnership building activities and direct research, as appropriate, considering the key objectives of the funding opportunity.

Q. What TRL is expected from these calls?

A. EPSRC expects the majority of the research to be within TRL 1-3.

EPSRC remit

Q. What are the themes acceptable for this call?

A. This funding opportunity is open to all EPSRC themes and research areas.

Q. How tightly would you apply the remit of EPSRC? Would you encourage Economics research questions on a specific technology?

A. The majority of the research must fit within the remit of EPSRC: [EPSRC remit – EPSRC – UKRI](#).

Q. Can you please provide idea about the research themes? Are those only limited to EPSRC remit or could go beyond EPSRC to interdisciplinary research on ESRC/NERC.

A. This funding opportunity is open to all EPSRC themes and research areas. Interdisciplinary research may be included however, the majority of the research must fit within the remit of EPSRC: [EPSRC remit – EPSRC – UKRI](#).

Q. Does this call support education research proposals?

A. This funding opportunity is open to all EPSRC themes and research areas. Interdisciplinary research may be included however, the majority of the research must fit within the remit of EPSRC: [EPSRC remit – EPSRC – UKRI](#).

Attachments and submissions

Q. Is there a need to justify how the early career person in the UK will progress their career?

A. There are no assessment criteria on career progression. The assessment criteria are available on the funding opportunity page: [Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#).

Q. The JoS should be 2 pages (in your link <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/early-career-researcher-international-collaboration-grants/>) and not 1 page, is this right?

A. The JoR should be 2 pages.

Q. In the list of attachments given for the full application, we have to provide CVs for named investigators. Would that include our main project partner overseas?

A. CVs only need to be included for named postdoctoral staff, researcher co-investigators and visiting researchers.

Q. About the Host Statement, please could you expand on what sort of content are you expecting to see in this?

A. The host organisation statement guidance is on the EPSRC website: [Host organisation statement – UKRI](#).

Q. Given that applicants need to comply with the eligibility requirements for the EPSRC NIA scheme, does the Host Organisation Statement need to address the points in the NIA 'Statement of Expectations'? And, relatedly, are applicants expected to have mentors etc.?

A. Guidance for what should be included in the host organisation statement is on the NIA scheme webpage: [Host organisation statement – UKRI](#), however we do not expect applicants to address the points in the NIA Statement of Expectations. Mentors are not a requirement of this funding opportunity.

Q. For project partner letters of support, the guidance states: Where relevant to the project, details should be provided of:

- the projected market size, customers and sales
- how the organisation will commercialise the technology beyond the project.

If the project is low TRL and not close to commercialization, do we still need to provide the above?

A. Project partner letters of support should be included for any project partners included in your application. The above points only need to be included if it is relevant to the project. Guidance on project partners: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#).

Q. What is the 7 December deadline?

A. We are requesting all applicants to submit an intention to submit by the 7 December. These will not be assessed; however, they will allow EPSRC to gauge interest and likely final submission numbers for the funding opportunity.

Q. Will the £5M be divided equally between the two funding streams? I.e. open and development?

A. EPSRC is anticipating there will be £4m for the open route and £1m for the international development route.

Q. Does the Open Call require an EDI statement?

A. No, the open route does not require an EDI statement.

Q. Will there be another round of this grant next year?

A. This is a pilot activity, and we will review the potential for follow-on calls at a later date.

Q. Do you expect letters of support from industrial / non-academic partners (as in the case of standard EPSRC grants)? Or is this just the letter of support from home institution and collaborating institution?

A. Project Partner Letters of support are expected from anyone who is included as a project partner. Host institution statements are a required attachment, but a Letter of Support from your collaborating institution is not required. Track record should be included for the collaborating researcher and a CV is

required for any named visiting researcher. EPSRC only accepts Letters of Support in exceptional circumstances, for example when an organisation cannot be listed as a project partner.

Q. Is the starting date flexible? If so, how flexible?

A. We expect to authorise grants in May 2023 with grants starting in the Summer 2023. As per standard EPSRC guidance, the PI will have up to 6 months to start the grant from the initial start date.

Q. What does the following sentence on the website mean: Submissions to this funding opportunity will count towards the EPSRC repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy.

A. EPSRC have a [repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy](#) through which EPSRC has restricted the number of proposals that can be submitted by applicants who are repeatedly unsuccessful (based on the success of their proposal submissions over the previous 24 month period). Applicants who are repeatedly unsuccessful over the previous 24 months are restricted to submitting one application, as either a principal or co-investigator, in the following 12 months (constrained applicants). Unsuccessful applications to this funding opportunity will count towards this policy.

Q. If unsuccessful, would the project be eligible for other EPSRC calls?

A. No, you will not be able to submit the project under other EPSRC calls. Applications submitted to EPSRC by the same PI should be significantly different from each other.

Review and panel process

Assessment criteria

Q. Could you tell us the weightings (if any) on the following when deciding the score for each proposal? 1) the applicant's track record, 2) the partner's track record, 3) the novelty of the proposal, 4) the impact of the proposal to partner country, 5) the impact of the proposal to the UK.

A. The weightings for the assessment criteria are included on the funding opportunities pages:
Open route: [Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#).
International development route: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#).

Q. What differentiates quality and importance?

A. The assessment criteria is full set out on the funding opportunity pages: [Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#), [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#).

Selection process

Q. How do you select the successful application?

A. Details on 'how we will assess your application' are on the funding opportunity pages. Open route: ([Early career researcher international collaboration grants – UKRI](#)) and international development route ([Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#)).

Q. Are there subject specific/theme specific expert panels or only one common panel?

A. Exactly how the panels will be split hasn't been decided yet. Depending on the number of applications we will split the panels by theme and/or by ODA/non-ODA applications. There will likely be several panels, but we will ensure each application goes to a panel with suitable experts for review.

Q. Will there be formal peer review (with an ability to respond)?

A. Full proposals will be assessed by an expert panel. 3 members of the panel, introducers, will be asked to assess each of the projects. The introducers will assess the proposals and can request additional information under all or some of the funding opportunity criteria. The applicant will be given 2 weeks to provide a response to the questions raised by the introducers. The panel will then use the information provided in the applications and the responses to the questions raised by the introducers to rank the proposals, using the assessment criteria, at a prioritisation panel meeting.

International development specific queries

Q. Can we have one partner from OECD middle, low, least developed list of countries and one any other country and still apply through the international development route?

A. Yes, the international development route must include international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries, and you can include additional international collaborators from any country as either visiting researchers or project partners.

Q. Can I have more than 1 ODA country? And Co-I's from these countries?

A. Under the international development route, you can include more than one ODA country, but you must tackle specific development changes within these countries rather than a global issue. Collaborators from this country can be included as Co-Is. Funding page guidance: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#).

Q. Are partnerships with international research institutions working in developing countries eligible?

A. We are checking in with colleagues on this one and will update our answer in due course.

Q. Can the additional partners be from other countries not on ODA list?

A. Yes, additional partners can be from other countries not on the ODA DAC list, however they cannot be included as Co-Is.

Q. Could you please clarify what would be mechanism of consumables/salary payment to developing country partners?

A. Consumables/salary can be included for developing country partners from least developed, low income and lower middle income countries. The payment of these funds will be made to the PI's institution and how they are paid out from there is the responsibility of the institution. The salary costs should be included for Co-Is, and consumables should be added as per EPSRC standard guidance on overseas costs ([Directly incurred costs – UKRI](#)).

Q. Can the international development call be used for PhD scholarships for a mix location project?

A. PhD scholarships and costs are not eligible for funding under this opportunity.

Q. For overseas researcher costs in developing countries, will their salary have to be based on the developing country's salary scale?

A. Visiting Researchers should receive the same salary and conditions as other staff of an equivalent status within the Research Organisation applying for the grant.

Q. International development route guidance says "Applicants should ensure that their proposal focuses on the challenges specific to the partner country or countries and not broader global issues, meaning those that are transboundary beyond 2 to 3 countries.". Can you explain further what this means?

A. In order to meet ODA compliance, one of the requirements is that proposals should focus on specific challenges within your chosen partner countries rather than broader global issues. So, your project should be directly relevant to the development challenges within your partner country, it should not focus on a broader global issue. For example, research into water purification in general would not be eligible, but research into water purification in a developing country and how the challenges related to that specific country would be eligible. There is further information on the OECD webpage: [Home page - OECD](#).

Q. On the website, you mentioned that open grant is for developing countries, but you talked today this open grant for all countries?

A. There are two routes under this funding opportunity. The open route can include international collaborators from any country as either visiting researchers (guidance: [Directly incurred costs – UKRI, Visiting Researcher \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](#)) or project partners (guidance: [Project partners letter of support – UKRI](#)). To be eligible for the international development route you must include international collaborators from least developed, low income or lower middle income countries and they can be listed as co-investigators. Additional international collaborators from any country can be included as either visiting researchers or project partners.

Q. Can you elaborate a bit more on impact on relations to people please?

A. Details can be found in the additional information section of the international development route funding opportunity page: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#).

Q. Can you clarify the assessment weights or reviewing balance given to sometimes competing aims of building a collaboration of equals, and addressing a development goal as a senior partner as intervention in a LMIC?

A. The assessment criteria and their weightings are detailed in the funding opportunity guidance: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#). There is some information on equitable partnerships on the UKCDR website which may be of interest: <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/equitable-partnerships/>. Please get in touch if you have a question about a specific collaboration: international@epsrc.ukri.org.

Q. Is working with partners in Ukraine viewed as ODA compliant?

A. Ukraine is included as a lower middle income country on the DAC list ([DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf \(oecd.org\)](#)), so working with them would be eligible under the international development route. Further requirements for the development route and ODA compliance are on the funding opportunity page: [Early career researcher collaborations for global development – UKRI](#). However, due to the current conflict in Ukraine, we advise you speak with your research office to check if your institutions has any policies on working with Ukraine. Note, eligible costs include resources to enable different approaches to building and sustaining collaborations which reduce the need to travel.