

## UKRI Ayrton Challenge Programme

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Will you fund smaller projects below £2 million?**

No, the projects should be between £2 and £3 million. This ensures the projects are able to deliver the solutions required by the funding opportunity.

#### **Can I include international project co-leads (PcL (I)) from developed countries not on the OECD DAC List?**

Yes, if there is also a co-lead from a beneficiary DAC list country. International co-leads not from DAC list countries will be funded at maximum 30% FEC.

#### **Can I apply as project lead on more than one application?**

No, individuals can only be listed as project lead on one application. However there is no limit to the number of proposals on which a project lead on one project, or anyone else on the project team, can appear as a co-lead or other collaborator on different applications.

#### **Is it expected that projects will focus on only one country, or is more than one country acceptable?**

Proposals are allowed to focus on one or more beneficiary countries, there is no expectation on this.

#### **Can international collaborators from a business, NGO or overseas government department apply as a PcL (I) and therefore receive funding from the award?**

Project co-leads must be from eligible research organisations to receive funding from UKRI. The international RO would be expected to meet the general [equivalent eligibility requirements](#) to receive UKRI funding as a PcL (I), taking into account the national context of the equivalent international RO. This means the international RO should meet the relevant equivalent criteria specified in the guidance applicable for:

- registered Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- research institutes receiving long term investments through relevant national funders
- independent research organisations with existing in-house capacity to carry-out and lead research

Profit-making companies are allowed to apply only as project partners and are expected to provide contributions to the delivery of the project and should not therefore be seeking to claim funds from UKRI. However there may be specific circumstances where project partners do require funding for minor costs such as travel and subsistence, which will be funded at 80% FEC if fully justified.

Overseas government departments are not eligible for any funding from UKRI.

#### **Does my project need to address all of the Ayrton themes/challenges or can it address one?**

Your project should address one or more of the challenge areas listed.

#### **Could you advise if my project is in scope if a brief one-page summary is provided?**

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We are unable to provide advice on whether specific proposals are in scope, this will be done at the outline expert panel stage who will assess each individual application.

**Is there any guidance on the number of partners expected for this call?**

There is no limit or expectation as to the number of partners involved in the project, as long as the eligibility criteria regarding international partners are met.

**Are the ODA compliance and EDI statements required as the outline stage?**

No, we do not require ODA compliance statements or gender equality statements at outline stage. This will be required for invited proposals at the full stage. However we do expect that gender equality and EDI considerations are integrated into the project's development from the start.

**Is there a guidance about costing for the outline stage proposal?**

We do not require project costing details at the outline stage, this will be required at full stage for applicants who are successful at outline. This decision has been made to streamline the application process for applicants and make outline applications quicker to complete.

**Can we claim funds for studentships/PhD stipends?**

No, studentship/ PhD stipend costs cannot be claimed under this opportunity for both UK and partner countries. UKRI funds doctoral training by awarding training grants to research organisations. Research organisations then support studentships from those grants and recruit students to them.

**Does the programme's scope include interdisciplinary teams, e.g. led by humanities?**

Yes, we are not limiting the research areas that can provide solutions to the listed challenges. We are encouraging broad interdisciplinary solutions.

**Are industry expected to participate in the proposal?**

This is not a requirement. But viable plans to deliver impact in the beneficiary country are required. It is likely for some proposals this might mean having industry partners.

**How confirmed do partners need to be at the outline stage? How much difference between the outline and full application will be permitted?**

Enough information should be supplied to support a judgement on the composition of the project at the outline stage. We understand partnerships will likely evolve and grow throughout the process and will permit some minor changes to the application and list of partners involved. However, we would not expect to see major changes from outline to full stage.

**Can an organisation be included under the UKRI dual role allowance (as a project partner and as a sub-contractor)? At what % of FEC will they be funded?**

An organisation or individual can act as both a project partner and subcontractor, however this must be fully justified and will be subject to peer review. Project partner related costs are expected to be minor. UK sub-contractors can be funded up to 80% of FEC, sub-contractors in a beneficiary DAC list country can be funded up to 100% of FEC.

Please see this link for more detail: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UKRI-161123-FECGrantTermsAndConditionsGuidance-Nov2023.pdf>

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**Is there an expected technology readiness level (TRL) for the projects?**

We have not set a TRL but as this is a research funding opportunity, we could expect projects to typically sit within the research levels.

**Is there any limit for fund allocations between UK vs ODA co-lead?**

There is no expectation or requirement as to the ratio of funding between UK and partner countries.

**Is there a timeframe for when the solutions to the challenges are expected to be delivered by?**

There is no expected timeframe or expectation of what the solutions will look like as this will differ per project.

**Does the Project Lead need to be in a permanent position?**

The project lead does not need to be in a permanent position, however the lead organisation must provide full support to the project lead throughout the full duration of the award.

**Will one UK university receive the entire fund and then distribute to other partners?**

The Project Lead organisation will receive the project fund on a quarterly basis and will be responsible for distributing the funds to the involved partners.

**Does the grant cover capacity building initiatives such as training?**

Capacity building initiative costs can be incurred providing full justification and relevance to the project is provided.

**Can the R&D department of a company be classed as a research organisation?**

No, businesses are eligible only as unfunded project partners.

**Can there be more than one country listed on the project?**

Yes, there is no limit.