

## **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.

>Your institution's strategy and priority objectives for all development-related research activity funded through all sources for three years from 2018-19.

Coventry University (CU) has a growing reputation as a successful research university with a strong international profile, investment and expertise in professional development for researchers, and an excellent track record in delivering programmes to develop research capability with international partners. We are investing £150m in research, including in programmes and initiatives, structures and systems that support researchers. This includes the establishment of a Doctoral College and Centre for Research Capability and Development in April 2017.

CU also has an extensive international footprint with an innovative Centre for Global Engagement and a significant portfolio of international joint ventures. We are the sixth largest provider of transnational education and have been recently expanding some of our

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

major transnational education partnerships in the Middle and Far East to incorporate doctoral programmes and research capability development activity. This is building on Coventry's expertise in research and innovation capacity-building at home and internationally and the University's strong, sustainable and systemic, trust-based relationships with international partners.

CU has recently developed two new flagship partnerships which are central to our development-related research: the first in South Africa with Stellenbosch University (SU) and the second in China with the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST). Both partnerships are multi-touch relationships which include jointly-supervised doctoral training programmes, early-career researcher mobility and pump-priming for joint research projects that are related to development.

The "International Doctoral Training Programme for Africa" (IDTPA) is central to the work with Stellenbosch University and incorporates a cotutelle programme with 15 jointly-supervised development-related doctoral research projects in the areas of agro-ecology and water resilience, safety and security and transformational entrepreneurship.

The relationship with USST is built around the USST-CU Joint Research Centre for Advanced Manufacturing which will see a joint research programme underpinned by 36 co-supervised doctoral research projects over six years.

In addition, Coventry recently successfully negotiated an agreement with two Indonesian government ministries to deliver a programme of 50 pre-doctoral fellowships and integrated PhDs in order to support research capacity and capability-building in Indonesian universities.

Other activities in development-related research include: i) Marie Curie IRSES Staff Exchange Programmes with universities in Turkey and Palestine; ii) EU Tempus programme to support infrastructure and enhanced human capacity development in innovation and entrepreneurship at 14 Central-Asian universities; iii) British-Council-funded research capacity development with University of San Carlos, Philippines; v) delivering research methods training, research capacity development activity and standards-setting in Indonesia; vi) capacity-building projects for the development of social science research with universities in East Africa and with universities/local researchers in the Dominican Republic and South India.

Coventry University is currently the recipient of a £1m portfolio of Newton-funded GCRF projects which are: Humanitarian Energy for Displaced Populations in Refugee Camp (EPSRC) in Rwanda and Nepal, Seismic Cities (NERC) in Chile and Performing Empowerment: Disability, Dance and Inclusive Development in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka (AHRC).

In the next three years Coventry University's strategy for development-related research will focus on building from our current activities to expand and develop a coherent portfolio that:

- (i) supports the institutional research strategy in terms of capacity and capability building, delivering excellent research that is challenge-led, interdisciplinary and achieves transformational impact with international reach
- (ii) builds on sound international partnerships to address problems faced by developing

- countries in line with the global development aims
- (iii) amplifies the existing synergies between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (cited in the UK Strategy for the GCRF) and our six major research themes – Safety and Security, Sustainability and Resilience, Health and Well-being, Intelligent Products and Processes, Creative Cultures and Global Learning, Education and Attainment – which shape and inform the research that is carried out in CU research institutes and centres to address the economic development and welfare of developing countries

The strategy is underpinned by the following objectives.

- (1) To develop the scope, reach and depth of key strategic partnerships in South Africa and China and add a third key strategic partner from another ODA-recipient country by:
- a. Developing the partners as regional hubs by co-delivering a programme of local events and initiatives with the partners to engage local government and non-governmental agencies
  - b. Prioritising and supporting the co-development of successful interdisciplinary challenge-led joint funding proposals
  - c. Growing existing researcher mobility between partner institutions through targeted use of the institutional mobility programmes
  - d. Investing pump-prime funds in joint research activity that tackles some of the intractable development issues associated with the respective regions and which delivers high-quality internationally co-authored papers
- (2) To grow the portfolio of research funding for development-related research activity and to maximise the outputs from existing funded activity through:
- a. Delivering specific and targeted training, development and profile-raising activities within the University from PGR to Professor in the area of development-related research, co-creation and interdisciplinary working to increase the pipeline of funding proposals that support development-related research activity such as GCRF, European Commission and charitable trusts and foundations
  - b. Delivering targeted training and additional funding support to existing funded GCRF grant-holders in order to maximise the project outputs and build towards follow-on activity
  - c. Supporting, facilitating and encouraging international networking for development-related research activity through mobility schemes targeted at early-career researchers in order for them to develop and sustain relevant international communities of practice (with researchers, practitioners and policy-makers).
- (3) To expand the portfolio of large-scale strategic doctoral programmes by:
- a. Exploring the potential to develop doctoral training hubs allied to key strategic partners
  - b. Expanding capacity for virtual communications - training, development and data-sharing and models for mobility at doctoral level.
  - c. Developing the portfolio of pre-doctoral programmes in areas that are cognate to research that supports sustainable global development
  - d. Enhancing existing training for supervisors on international working to

incorporate topics including partnership-building with developing countries and interdisciplinary and challenge-led doctoral research.

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

Coventry University is projected to receive £130k p.a. of QR GCRF and as such this funding will contribute a small percentage of the funding committed to the delivery of the CU Institutional strategy for development-related research. The majority of resource will come from the strategic allocation of existing QR funds and other additional investment in research activity.

The strategic plan for allocating QR GCRF will prioritise across all three years support for:

(1) existing GCRF grant-holders to cover dissemination and impact activities as well as to support the development and roll-out of the projects and their findings in other developing countries;

(2) pump-prime funds for new interdisciplinary research projects addressing the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their primary purpose with a CU early-career researcher working in partnership with a researcher from one of the key strategic partners outlined above; and

(3) mobility activity to support partnership development with researchers, local policy-makers and/or practitioners leading to the early-stage formulation of a research project proposal aligned with one of the strategic partnerships outlined above.

The balance of the funding between the three areas will be agreed by a panel constituted from members of the Research Leadership Team following the assessment of the activity proposed against published criteria in an annual call.

All QR GCRF funding will be allocated according to the principles of the GCRF strategy and will relate to a proposed research activity which:

- aims to promote the welfare and economic development of a country or countries on the DAC list of ODA recipients
- clearly addresses a development need
- focuses on developing country problems.

Priority will be given to excellent research that is challenge-led, interdisciplinary in nature, builds on existing sound partnerships where appropriate and that has the potential for transformational impact.

All recipients of QR GCRF will be obliged to submit a final report (narrative and financial) to University Research Committee to evidence that the funded activity was carried out in line with the original proposal and to report the associated outputs. Recipients will also contribute a case study of their work in support of profile-raising activities and to participate in training others within the University from PGR to Professor in the area of development-related research.

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

QR GCRF funding will be one element in a comprehensive plan to further enhance our portfolio of development-related research activity which spans practical programmes of training, development and profile-raising, pump-prime investment in research projects and network development (at the level of individual researchers) and strategic partnership development (joint programmes of research and doctoral training).

The activities above that will be funded through QR GCRF through an open annual call will support the scope, scale and reach of existing development-related projects funded through GCRF, catalyse future research projects and foster new international partnerships and networks leading to the next generation of research activity that is aligned to GCRF strategic aims.

These activities will contribute to the actualisation of Coventry University's strategy for development-related research by supporting capacity and capability building institutionally and internationally amongst researchers who are undertaking excellent challenge-led research to find practical solutions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals within one of our six major research themes and to bring about transformational impact with international reach.

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

The aims of the UK strategy for the GCRF are set out below (summarised from UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund) with the three priority areas of activity to be funded by QR GCRF mapped against them. Compliance is assured by the criteria for all three funding schemes being assessed by senior academic panel before award and is verified by an award report to University Research Committee.

	(1) Additional grant (existing GCRF grant-holders for dissemination impact and next-phase development)	(2) Pump-prime funding for new research projects with strategic partners (China and South Africa)	(3) Mobility activity to support new partnership development with researchers, local policy-makers and/or practitioners
Developing UK ability to deliver cutting-edge research	✓	✓	✓
Increasing research capacity and capability	✓	✓	✓

in the UK and in Global South			
Building partnerships with researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the Global South and working in collaboration with experts in other areas	✓	✓	✓
Taking disciplinary and interdisciplinary novel approaches	✓	✓	✓
Delivering challenge-led, solutions-focused research that addresses problems identified by partners from across the Global South	✓	✓	✓
Generating innovative solutions to intractable development issues	✓	✓	✓
(Identifying practical pathways to healthier and safer lives, sustainable development and prosperity for all, equal and effective education, social justice and human rights, stable institutions	✓	✓	✓
Delivering transformational impact (such as improved social and economic welfare, environmental sustainability or an evidence base that support policy-making)	✓	✓	✓
Transparent and rigorous decision-making processes for funding and spending			

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

Coventry University divides its investment of QR funding between three priority areas:

1. direct support for its thirteen Research Centres to support their development and growth in six thematic areas (Safety and Security, Sustainability and Resilience, Health and Well-being, Intelligent Products and Processes, Creative Cultures and Global Learning, Education and Attainment);
2. doctoral research, through a sustainable portfolio of match-funded studentships;
3. strategic support for research excellence with impact, capacity and capability building through institutional funding schemes (inward and outward mobility, pump prime funding, research equipment and impact activity).

This is complemented by substantial internal investment in research and research infrastructure.

GCRF QR provides a valuable contribution specifically to the growth of the portfolio of research, skills and international networks that are relevant to development-related research.

Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy

Barriers	Enablers (mapped to institutional strategic objectives for development-related research)
<p>Poor researcher engagement in CU</p>	<p>(2a) Delivering specific and targeted training, development and profile-raising activities within the University from PGR to Professor in the area of development-related research, co-creation and interdisciplinary working to increase the pipeline of funding proposals that support development-related research activity such as GCRF, European Commission and charitable trusts and foundations.</p> <p>(1d) Investing pump-prime funds in joint research activity that tackles some of the intractable development issues</p> <p>(2c) Supporting, facilitating and encouraging international networking for development-related research activity through mobility schemes (with researchers, practitioners and policy-makers).</p> <p>(3d) Enhancing existing training for supervisors on international working to incorporate topics including partnership-building with developing countries and interdisciplinary and challenge-led doctoral research</p>
<p>Poor engagement with researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in international partner countries</p>	<p>(1a) Developing the partners as regional hubs by co-delivering a programme of local events and initiatives with the partners to engage local government and non-governmental agencies</p> <p>(1b) Prioritising and supporting the co-development of successful interdisciplinary</p>

	<p>challenge-led joint funding proposals</p> <p>(1d) Investing pump-prime funds in joint research activity that tackles some of the intractable development issues associated with the respective regions and which delivers high-quality internationally co-authored papers</p> <p>(3a) Exploring the potential to develop doctoral training hubs allied to key strategic partners</p> <p>(3b) Expanding capacity for virtual communications - training, development and data-sharing and models for mobility at doctoral level.</p> <p>(3c) Developing the portfolio of pre-doctoral programmes in areas that are cognate to research that supports sustainable global development</p> <p>(3d) Enhancing existing training for supervisors on international working to incorporate topics including partnership-building with developing countries and interdisciplinary and challenge-led doctoral research.</p>
<p>The challenges of working across disciplines impedes timely progress on research projects</p>	<p>(2a) Delivering specific and targeted training, development and profile-raising activities within the University from PGR to Professor in the area of development-related research, co-creation and interdisciplinary working to increase the pipeline of funding proposals that support development-related research activity such as GCRF, European Commission and charitable trusts and foundations.</p>
<p>Cross-institutional and international working causes practical challenges such as problems with communications, data-sharing</p>	<p>Additional investment in infrastructure and technical support.</p> <p>(1c) Growing existing researcher mobility between partner institutions through targeted use of the institutional mobility</p>



	<p>programmes.</p> <p>(2c) Supporting, facilitating and encouraging international networking for development-related research activity through mobility schemes targeted at early-career researchers in order for them to develop and sustain relevant international communities of practice (with researchers, practitioners and policy-makers).</p> <p>(3b) Expanding capacity for virtual communications - training, development and data-sharing and models for mobility at doctoral level.</p>
<p>Research outcomes are unpredicted and proposed impact is not achievable</p>	<p>2c) Supporting, facilitating and encouraging international networking for development-related research activity through mobility schemes targeted at early-career researchers in order for them to develop and sustain relevant international communities of practice (with researchers, practitioners and policy-makers).</p> <p>(2b) Delivering targeted training and additional funding support to existing funded GCRF grant-holders in order to maximise the project outputs and build towards follow-on activity</p> <p>(1a) Developing the partners as regional hubs by co-delivering a programme of local events and initiatives with the partners to engage local government and non-governmental agencies</p> <p>Specialist support from the University's Research Excellence team</p>
<p>Pathway to impact becomes difficult to achieve within funding envelope and complex to evidence</p>	<p>(2b) Delivering targeted training and additional funding support to existing funded GCRF grant-holders in order to maximise the project outputs and build towards follow-on activity</p> <p>(1a) Developing the partners as regional hubs</p>

	<p>by co-delivering a programme of local events and initiatives with the partners to engage local government and non-governmental agencies</p> <p>Specialist support from the University's Research Excellence team</p>
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The main developing countries, included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, which you intend to collaborate with.

The main focus of strategic partnership development will be with China and South Africa. Existing GCRF-funded projects (where QR GCRF funds will provide additional investment to support dissemination and impact activities as well as the development and roll-out of the projects and their findings in other developing countries) focus on Nepal, Rwanda, Chile and Sri Lanka.

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

The main outcome and impact of the strategy for development-related and GCRF research activity are as follows:

- (i) For the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list: Coventry University will deliver a portfolio of research projects with the primary purpose of promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The research will be of an internationally excellent standard and will address an identified problem for a developing country or countries. The research will produce transformational impact that will benefit the developing country or countries. The research activity will be carried out in partnership with local researchers, policy makers and practitioners and will contribute to capability and capacity building in the developing country or countries. Coventry will grow the quality and quantity of its key partners to facilitate the development of this research portfolio – expanding from two strategic partnerships to three and deepening and widening existing activity. The University will deliver training and development (including funding schemes for pump-prime activity and mobility) and will implement the necessary systems and processes to support these outcomes.
- (ii) For UK research: Coventry University will produce fully trained postgraduate and early career researchers who will be part of the next generation of UK research and who will understand the development-related research agenda and have the tools and competencies to work internationally, across disciplines, cultures and

types of organisation to bring about real-world change. Coventry will also deliver new and innovative pre-doctoral and at-distance PhD and professional doctorate programmes which will provide new models for the sector in training researchers in developing countries in more accessible and relevant ways to find implementable solutions to intractable problems.

- (iii) **For Coventry University:** Coventry University will develop the scope, reach and depth of key strategic partnerships in South Africa and China and add a third key strategic partner from another ODA-recipient country. The University will grow its portfolio of research funding for development-related research activity and maximise the impact from existing funded activity and will expand the portfolio of ODA-compliant doctoral programmes. Coventry will expand the existing training and development offer and will implement the necessary systems and processes required to support the delivery of these outcomes through its Research Office and Doctoral College and Centre for Research Capability and Development.

### **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.

There are an established set of processes in place to support ODA-aligned and GCRF projects, as well as evolving good practice that Coventry is developing through dialogue with ARMA and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

At a basic level all ODA projects are assigned project finance and project management support. This includes support for the mobilisation of new projects and the development, monitoring and support of project plans.

ODA projects attract enhanced Risk Management support and the following processes are in place across the project delivery cycle:

- **Informal/Formal Peer Review:** The formation and development of ODA projects is supported from within Research Centres (internal peer-review) and also by the Research Development Executives team. Formal peer review at an institutional level may also be requested.
- **Due diligence:** A risk log exists to provide early insight into country-specific risks, as well as risks that have been observed relating to types of call, partners and practices. This is intended to inform pre-award decisions and anticipate possible risks.

- Risk rating: All successful projects are given a risk rating and ODA ratings are rated either 'medium' or 'high' based on fixed criteria. This rating necessitates a more senior level of staff support among finance professionals and closer monitoring among project management staff.
- Risk monitoring: ODA projects will automatically require a risk monitoring assessment which is completed between the PI/researcher and the assigned Project Partner.
- Risk management/evaluation: Projects are assessed in a rolling 3 monthly basis to evaluate progress, identify challenges and to identifying the need for escalation for emerging risks. The evaluation process takes place between professionals across a range of disciplines: project management, finance; research development, procurement, facilities etc. Lessons learned are added to the Risk Log to enable future bids to anticipate potential problems in advance.

As noted above, all GCRF projects follow a project plan and, in addition, project management support will help primary investigators and researchers to develop Impact Plans that address the journey from intended activities through to outputs and social and economic outcomes. Impact Plans are supported by dedicated Impact staff who are able to advise on good practice, as well as providing external monitoring of achievement. In addition, each Research Centre will have impact support staff and/or sub-groups to monitor progress.

Coventry University also has regional boards and specialist staff that can share detailed experience and operational knowledge of specific regions and provide advice on challenges and opportunities in different countries as these evolve.

In addition, there is a dedicated Research Council specialist post that is in close contact with ARMA and other HEIs to provide insight into best practice and to disseminate guidance as it emerges. A recent example of how this adds value is the attendance of the post-holder at the GCRF Due Diligence Conference in Leeds, after which learning was disseminated to Research Project Managers at a number of team meetings. Other such activities include attendance at the Columbian Embassy event on research partnership with the UK and the subsequent distribution of guidance to Project Management staff including up-to-date information on risk management.

The University also provides training and development for researchers through the Doctoral College and Centre for Research Capability and Development. The programmes include specific and targeted training, development and profile-raising activities within the University from PGR to Professor in the area of development-related research, co-creation and interdisciplinary working to increase the pipeline of funding proposals that support development-related research activity such as GCRF, European Commission and charitable trusts and foundations and to enhance effectiveness at managing these kinds of projects successfully.

As the portfolio of ODA/GCRF projects expands data will be collected on the geographical distribution of projects which will be reported to and reviewed by the research leadership

team to ensure alignment with strategic objectives.

## **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.

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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. If the indicative allocation for Coventry University for 2018-19 were to increase this would allow the University to increase investment in the pipeline of ODA-compliant activity aligned with our two strategic partnerships in China and South Africa and in the development of a third. This would be achieved through an increase in funding allocated to the pump-prime and mobility calls which are focused on supporting early-career researchers. Further funding would also enable additional support for the small portfolio of three GCRF-funded projects (in terms of generating impact from research, meeting full economic costs of research including project management and dissemination). Dependent upon the size of the funding uplift the University would also be able to extend this 'top-up' opportunity to other ODA-compliant grants (funded through European Commission and the charitable sector) in order to build the scope and scale of the existing project portfolio.

If the indicative allocation for 2018-19 were to decrease it would significantly impact on our ability to provide focused funding for ODA-compliant activity. Although the institutional strategy and priority objectives for all development-related research activity would remain unchanged it would adversely affect the realisation of two key objectives: the development in scope, reach and depth of key strategic partnerships in South Africa and China and the addition of a third key strategic partner from another ODA-recipient country; and the growth of the portfolio of research funding for development-related research activity and the optimization of existing funded activity.

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.

The response for 2018-19 will also apply to 2019-20 (and/or 2020-21) as the institutional priority focuses on developing a pipeline of activity (bids, projects, networks, relationships, outcomes) which will take a number of years to build. On this basis, the strategy projects steady growth in the portfolio of ODA-compliant activity which will require the same balanced approach to the investment of QR GCRF funds – dividing funding between development and project optimisation.

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.

The response for 2018-19 will also apply to 2019-20 (and/or 2020-21) as the institutional priority focuses on developing a pipeline of activity (bids, projects, networks, relationships, outcomes) which will take a number of years to build. On this basis, the strategy projects steady growth in the portfolio of ODA-compliant activity which will require the same balanced approach to the investment of QR GCRF funds – dividing funding between development and project optimisation.