

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. 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.¹
 - 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 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list developing countries you intend to collaborate with.

Maximum 3,000 words

Our strategy for development-related and GCRF research activity for the three years from 2018-19 has been developed by taking into account:

- An assessment of our research strengths and their alignment with key statements of development-related policy and strategy, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Fund, GCRF Delivery Partner strategies and the Newton Fund.
- Our experience in development-related research, including in multiple projects funded by the Newton Fund, our use of QR GCRF to date (via our GCRF Development Fund) and work funded by charities and other agencies. We have also reflected on our efforts to engage in GCRF-supported work funded by GCRF Delivery Partners and have identified

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

a need to continue to develop strong existing collaborative relationships so that we can move more quickly and securely when opportunities arise to seek support for ODA-funded and other development-related research.

- The plans, track record and proven potential of our researchers to engage and build productive, development-related research networks.

The aim of our strategy is to increase our participation in productive, impact-driven and sustainable research collaborations focused directly on development challenges in eligible countries. In order to achieve this aim we have identified the following objectives:

- 1) To develop and invest in a group of skilled development-related researchers at Edge Hill, creating a core of knowledge and experience that can be shared with colleagues
- 2) To fund at least five new ODA-compliant research projects, providing wraparound support to help build capacity at EHU and in our in-country partners
- 3) To support two-way development challenge research exchanges between EHU researchers and researchers and non-academic partners in DAC-listed countries. This will aid the framing of research questions, support research planning and enable the development of strong collaborative relationships
- 4) To support knowledge exchange in order to promote the generation of impact from our work, focusing on the Newton-funded projects at EHU, our existing QR GCRF supported projects and new ODA-compliant research projects
- 5) To secure and deliver larger projects funded through external sources, including via GCRF Delivery Partners and the Newton Fund.

We will do this by:

- Pump-priming collaborative ODA-compliant research in order to prepare the way for a future increase in larger funding applications (generating preliminary data and forming and/or cementing the in-country collaborations required for these larger projects)
- Building researcher capacity and capability at EHU with partners in DAC-listed countries
- Bending, improving and expanding existing research support mechanisms to help address the particular challenges and opportunities associated with collaborative, international, development-related and challenge-led research. Research development and impact support staff will work alongside our academic staff engaged in development-related research in order to support sustainable strands of research and impact generation activity.

QR GCRF monies will play a central role in this strategy. QR GCRF provides flexible funding through which we can allocate resources to new high quality projects, build capacity in development related research networks and enhance and build upon existing projects (including Newton funded). It supports the continued operation of our GCRF Development Fund, which acts as a stimulus and focal point for development related research. We will use (and where appropriate supplement) our QR GCRF allocation to continue our GCRF Development Fund over the three years from 2018-19.

Researchers can apply for funding from our GCRF Development Fund. This fund is closely aligned with the aims of the UK Strategy for the GCRF. Its eligibility and award criteria ensure that the activity funded is:

- Problem and solution focused, with applicants required to identify the specific UN Sustainable Development Goals targeted and to locate the project within the overarching framework of the UK Strategy for the GCRF (Equitable Access to Sustainable Development, Sustainable Economies and Societies, Human Rights, Good Governance and Social Justice).
- Marked by research excellence
- Focused on defined project or challenge areas only
- Intended to support capacity building and partnership development in specific project areas through research planning/networking travel grants

Based on indicative allocations for 2018-19, we expect our QR GCRF allocation to be approximately £60,000 per annum. In order to maximise the impact of this investment our resources must be targeted on those research areas with the greatest potential to generate ongoing strands of excellent development-related research. Taking into account our development-related research strengths and the proven potential and track record of our researchers we will focus on the following research areas over the next three years:

- Environmental monitoring and environmental resource management
- Disease prevention, including the monitoring and management of animal vectors
- Combatting anti-microbial resistance
- Development and strengthening of civil society
- Applied, welfare and development economics
- International education and development (particularly policy and practice for teachers and parent/community engagement)
- Healthcare practice and policy (including the treatment, management and prevention of specific conditions and end-of-life care).

Edge Hill researchers in other areas may also bring their expertise to bear on challenged research. These areas may include computational data science expertise to assist in the collection, management, analysis and presentation of large environmental datasets, and expertise in nursing, nutrition and midwifery.

Within these areas, our QR GCRF budget must also be committed to those activities that will make the greatest contribution. As such, we will focus on the following key activities:

- Funding new mono-disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborative research with partners in DAC-listed countries
- Capacity and capability building (primarily through the provision of additional support wrapped around funded research projects)
- Generating impact from research
- Pump-priming through the funding of research networking travel grants.

Our strategy does not include a focus on rapid responses to emergencies with an urgent research need. Instead, each year we will commit resources to projects rooted in our areas of enduring research strength and which make clear contributions to tackling established development challenges, linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs of greatest relevance to our research base include:

- 15: Life on Land
- 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- 13: Climate Action
- 4: Quality Education
- 5: Gender Equality

Our strategic approach to development-related research and the GCRF mirrors our wider institutional strategy for using QR through its:

- Openness to researcher-led proposals for a wide range of new research activity
- Focus on pump-priming projects (generating preliminary data and publications, proving concept and feasibility) to underpin larger projects (often to be submitted to external funders)
- Requirement to demonstrate impact planning
- Promotion of collaboration and the development of research networks.
- Allocation of funds to projects via an internally branded and promoted fund, with projects reviewed by academic peers and internal funding panels.

Where this strategic approach yields activity which cannot be funded through our QR GCRF resources alone we will use general QR funds to enable more good ODA-compliant research activity to proceed.

However, there are also differences in the way in which our use of QR GCRF is promoted and managed, including:

- Rigorous ODA eligibility screening at an early stage in project development
- Closer support from research development and impact support staff to help shape projects which respond directly and primarily to clearly identified economic development and wellbeing challenges in countries on the DAC list

- A reduced emphasis on early career researchers in order to ensure that projects built on established networks and experience of development-related research are not screened out.

We have identified a number of potential barriers to the implementation of our strategy for development-related research and GCRF. These are:

1) Strength and range of existing research networks in DAC-listed countries. Good and secure ODA-compliant research requires the commitment, know-how and trust of partners in the UK and in DAC-listed countries. Good projects that address the most important research questions through excellence research with clear and well-designed pathways to development impact cannot often be put together quickly. This has been a barrier to our ability to apply for and secure larger amounts of project-specific funds through GCRF Delivery Partners. Our strategy is intended to build the experience, knowledge and networks required to bring more projects forwards through funding for research projects and for research networking travel grants.

2) Experience with ODA funding and with the wider challenges and risks of development-related research. The challenges of good development-related research should not be underestimated. Not all researchers will have experience of designing, managing and reporting on development-related research and this may inhibit proposals. Our strategic approach seeks to overcome that barrier by providing opportunities for researchers to gain and share experience and to spend time discussing and planning their projects with their partners.

3) Potential difficulties in securing follow-on funding. GCRF Delivery Partners, Newton and other development-related research funders often need to move quickly and to address specific issues or challenges. We will overcome this barrier by preparing the ground for larger development-related research projects through pump-priming investment in research projects, and support for network development so that we are better placed to work with strong partners in-country and other partners (e.g. building on existing collaborative relationships with organisations such as the US Centers for Disease Control). Our strategy identifies a small number of research areas on which we intend to focus and we will monitor funder strategies, pre-calls and calls relevant to these areas to maximise our chances of being able to respond to opportunities.

We expect implementation of our strategy to be enabled by:

1) A clear focus on a defined list of research areas and the development of a core group of development-related researchers, allowing greater levels of information, advice, guidance and practical support to be targeted on them

2) The experience, stronger overseas networks and project pipelines of this core group of researchers, not least through our participation in four Newton Fund projects (via the British Academy and the British Council) and projects supported in year 1 of our

GCRF Development Fund.

3) An established and well-understood mechanism for funding development-related research with QR GCRF resources (the GCRF Development Fund).

4) Participation (by researchers and research support staff) in networks and initiatives intended to support the GCRF. These will include formal events (e.g. our attendance at NERC's GCRF Hub event in 2017, ARMA sessions on GCRF research development and due diligence) and informal networking via SIGs, contact with experts in the development community, etc.).

We have used the presence of existing relationships, collaborative projects and networks relevant to ODA-eligible research to identify the DAC list countries that we expect to collaborate with over the next three years. These are:

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Cape Verde
- South Africa
- Colombia
- Viet Nam
- India
- China.

However, as investment in activity will be researcher-led it is possible that we will collaborate with partners in other DAC-listed countries. Indeed, part of our approach to achieving development impact through research is to identify other countries where the development challenges addressed by our research are present in a comparable form.

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

Maximum 500 words

The precise character and outcomes and impacts of our strategy for development-related research and GCRF activity will be driven by the nature of the development-research activity supported. However, our strategy should lead to the following primary outcomes and impacts:

Outcomes in partner countries:

Improvements in research performance and capacity, to be measured by additional research outputs in leading academic journals, increased research income, increased collaboration with UK and other international partners.

Improvements in environmental monitoring and management practices.

Improvements in disease prevention practices.

Improvements in healthcare and education resource allocation practices.

Impacts in partner countries:

Increased sustainability and vitality of research environments and infrastructure.

More sustainable environmental resource management practices.
Reduced transmission of disease and improved health (with the associated social and economic benefits)
More efficient resource allocation
Economic benefits associated with potential sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

Geographical focus

Outcomes and impacts are expected in:

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Cape Verde
- South Africa
- Colombia.

Based on our research development work and international networks there is also the potential for outputs and impacts to arise from work in:

- Viet Nam
- India
- China.

Management of GCRF

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

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

Maximum 1,500 words

All ODA and GCRF activity at Edge Hill University is undertaken under the close supervision of the central research support function (the Research Office).

Non-GCRF ODA activity (e.g. Newton Fund) is approved at application stage by the Research Office, ensuring that there is a central review of the project, a risk assessment and an assessment of ODA compliance issues likely to arise in the project. Once funded, the Research Office also takes responsibility for project set-up, approving and monitoring all expenditure, holding project inception, project monitoring and post-project review meetings and the preparation and approval of project finance reports. We have operated this process in the four Newton Fund projects that we have secured. We have yet to secure GCRF projects via the GCRF Delivery Partners but would replicate these arrangements.

All of our QR GCRF is managed and allocated through our GCRF Development Fund. The Development Fund sits alongside our other internal investment funds (for research, impact and knowledge exchange).

A GCRF Development Fund Panel reviews and approves all QR GCRF spending. Our focus to date has been on funding ODA compliant research in accordance with GCRF rules. The GCRF Development Fund seeks to:

- fund the direct costs of new ODA compliant development related research by inviting applications from academics for funding for research projects. These can include allowances for more general partnership development and impact/ knowledge exchange driven work. These can be collaborative research projects up to £30,000 in direct costs.
- fund the costs of networking travel grants of up to £5,000 each to pay for two-way exchange visits between Edge Hill researchers and those in partner countries. These networking travel grants are for collaborative research planning (from research design through to impact activities) and support work with academic and non-academic partners in DAC list countries. They must be linked to a programme of collaborative work intended to lead to the mobilisation of new ODA compliant GCRF research.

The GCRF Development Fund Panel is comprised of senior academics who scrutinise applications and make final funding decisions. Where necessary, their expertise is supplemented by academic peer review capacity from elsewhere in the University (or beyond). This ensures that research excellence is embedded in and central to our GCRF activity.

Before reaching the Panel, all applications for GCRF Development Funds must pass through an eligibility and compliance check. This occurs early in the application process to ensure that non-compliant activity is rejected or reshaped to achieve ODA compliance. It is also repeated when the application is received and before distribution to reviewers and members of the Panel. This checklist is administered by the Head of Research Support and is used to confirm:

- the presence on the DAC list of the country(ies) focused on
- the extent to which the proposed research is directly and primarily related to the economic development and wellbeing of DAC-list countries
- the presence and substantive role of research partners from DAC list countries
- fit with at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. An assessment is also made of the fit with the UK Strategy for the GCRF.
- The extent to which mono or inter/multi-disciplinary research will be present in the project.

The checklist also informs the planning of due diligence activity that may need to be undertaken to work with partners in DAC-listed countries.

All applications to the GCRF Development Fund must follow a specified structure. This includes the completion of a pathway to development impact which is used to identify the theory or change (or logic chain) and the mechanisms by which development impact will arise, and how the researchers, impact and KE managers at Edge Hill and in partner countries can promote impact. Edge Hill's Research Impact Manager adds these projects to a portfolio of projects that are monitored and supported more closely.

All applications include full detailed budgets, justifications of budgets requested, research plans including Gantt charts and impact plans. These provide the basis of project monitoring undertaken by the Research Office annually through a well-established process used with all internally-funded projects.

All GCRF Development Fund allocations are reported to the University Research Committee (three meetings per annum). All expenditure on direct costs is approved by the Research Office and allocated to a project code. This is always checked against the approved budget. Any requests for variation from the approved budget must be approved by the Research Office.

As a new initiative, we intend to form a development-related researchers group to help ensure that the lessons of development-related and challenge-led ODA-compliant research projects are learned and shared. The Research Office (Head of Research Support and the Research Impact Manager) will take part in this group alongside researchers active or interested in development-related research.

As noted in answer to Question 1, our strategy for ODA and GCRF activity is centred on increasing the volume of development-related research underway by investing in areas of genuine research excellence in order to pump-prime projects, build networks and develop researcher capacity and capability. In 2017/18 £60,000 has been allocated to the direct costs of new projects (exceeding our QR GCRF allocation). Our strategy for QR GCRF will be to continue to invest in the direct costs of these activities but if funds cannot be allocated via the GCRF Development Panel we will also use GCRF to make a greater contribution to the full economic costs of other projects that meet the ODA and GCRF compliance criteria. We will also seek to put in place additional wraparound or continuation support for our Newton Fund-supported projects.

We will evaluate our use of QR GCRF, taking into account the:

- _ number and type of activities for which funding is sought (the application pipeline)
- _ nature of the development-related challenges addressed in applications
- _ number and value of projects funded
- _ types of project supported
- _ geographical distribution of the work
- _ planned and actual outcomes and impacts of the work, measured by the close monitoring of the implementation of the *pathways to development impact* statements. All

QR GCRF-funded activity will be written up as impact case studies (whether or not submitted to a REF-exercise). The University's Research Impact Manager will work closely with researchers to prepare these reports, liaising with policymakers, statistical agencies and practitioners in the partner countries as required to capture the impact of the work.

- _ level of external development-related research funding sought and secured from other sources (e.g. GCRF Delivery Partners)
- _ expenditure of QR GCRF and other development-related research funding
- _ results of annual monitoring of projects, progress meetings and post-project reviews
- _ compliance-driven and due diligence activity undertaken.

An annual evaluation report will be prepared by the Research Office, approved by the GCRF Development Panel and submitted to the University Research Committee.

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

4. Please complete the table in Annex A2 detailing the expected spending and activities for QR GCRF in the academic year 2018-19. Note that the total QR GCRF spending must equal the indicative allocation (available in Annex C), and all activities must be ODA-compliant for strategies to be assessed as ODA-compliant overall.
5. Please add here any explanatory notes on how you have completed the table in Annex A2 that will help inform assessment of ODA compliance.

Maximum 200 words

The full indicative allocation of £59,452 has been committed to the continued operation of Edge Hill's internal GCRF Development Fund. Edge Hill researchers may submit competitive funding applications in response to scheme-specific guidelines for A) New research projects with a directly-incurred cost normally up to £25,000 per project, or B) research networking travel grants to support the costs of two-way research planning visits linked to a specific development-related research area.

Applicants may request funding for the costs of project-specific capacity and partnership building or impact planning activity (e.g. time spent in-country to meet with partners and stakeholders to inform research questions, methods, impact planning, etc). The aim here is to wrap support resources around specific projects rather than to spread them across a larger number of less well-developed or speculative proposals.

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

Maximum 500 words

If the funding level differs from that outlined in the indicative allocations we would continue to operate the GCRF Development Fund. In doing so, if the funding level was lower than indicated we would prioritise the continued funding of two strong research projects per annum with a normal maximum directly-incurred cost of £20,000 - 25,000. This may require the de-prioritisation of applications for research networking travel grants.

If the funding level was higher than indicated we would seek to increase the number of strong research projects that could be funded, but would also seek to offer more networking travel grants. As the GCRF Development Fund enters a second year of operation we are confident that we could fund the directly-incurred costs of four or five strong ODA compliant research projects comfortably. Any funds not absorbed by direct costs would be used to increase the sustainability of ODA-eligible research funded by external funders, or by the GCRF Development Fund itself, by funding projects to a higher percentage of their full economic cost (i.e. with a contribution to directly allocated and indirect costs).

In all priorities, compliance with the ODA criteria will be assured through eligibility screening of projects, review of applications by the Research Office, academic peer review and panel discussion and by ongoing close monitoring and reporting on projects and budgets.

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

Maximum 1,000 words

Based on an indicative funding allocation of £59,452 per annum our priorities for QR GCRF activity in 2019-20 would continue to be the operation of the GCRF Development Fund to support the directly incurred costs of A) research projects (including impact costs) and B) networking travel grants.

As in 2018-19, if the funding level differed from that outlined in the indicative allocations we would still continue to operate the GCRF Development Fund. In doing so, if the funding level was lower than indicated we would prioritise the continued funding of two strong research projects per annum with a normal maximum direct cost value of £20,000 - 25,000. This may require the de-prioritisation of applications for research networking travel grants.

If the funding level was higher than indicated we would seek to increase the number of strong research projects that could be funded, but would also seek to offer more networking travel grants. As the GCRF Development Fund entered a third year of

operation we are confident that we could fund the directly-incurred costs of four or five strong ODA compliant research projects comfortably. Any funds not absorbed by direct costs would be used to increase the sustainability of ODA-eligible research funded by external funders, or by the GCRF Development Fund itself, by funding projects at a higher percentage of their full economic cost (i.e. with a contribution to directly allocated and indirect costs). Through the ongoing monitoring of existing projects we would also consider the case for further investment in impact-generation activity.

In all priorities, compliance with the ODA criteria will be assured through eligibility screening of projects, review of applications by the Research Office, academic peer review and panel discussion and by ongoing close monitoring and reporting on projects and budgets.

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

Maximum 1,000 words

Based on an indicative funding allocation of £59,452 per annum our priorities for QR GCRF activity in 2020-21 would continue to be the operation of the GCRF Development Fund to support the directly incurred costs of A) research projects (including impact costs) and B) networking travel grants.

As in 2019-20, if the funding level differed from that outlined in the indicative allocations we would continue to operate the GCRF Development Fund. In doing so, if the funding level was lower than indicated we would prioritise the continued funding of two strong research projects per annum with a normal maximum direct cost value of £20,000 - 25,000. This may require the de-prioritisation or refusal of applications for research networking travel grants, particularly where existing projects are generating demand for additional funds to support impact generation activity.

If the funding level was higher than indicated we would seek to increase the number of strong research projects that could be funded, but would also seek identify opportunities to support greater or more rapid generation of impact by further activity in the country in which the research was undertaken and by efforts to disseminate, adjust and localise recommendations and other outcomes for other DAC-listed countries where the same development challenges are present in comparable form.

As the GCRF Development Fund entered a fourth year of operation we are confident that we could fund the directly-incurred costs of four or five strong ODA compliant research projects comfortably. Any funds not absorbed by direct costs would be used to increase the sustainability of ODA-eligible research funded by external funders, or by the GCRF Development Fund itself, by funding projects at a higher percentage of their full economic cost (i.e. with a contribution to directly allocated and indirect costs). Through the ongoing

monitoring of existing projects we would also consider the case for further investment in impact generation activity.

In all priorities, compliance with the ODA criteria will be assured through eligibility screening of projects, review of applications by the Research Office, academic peer review and panel discussion and by ongoing close monitoring and reporting on projects and budgets.