

Section A: Official Development Assistance (ODA) and GCRF strategy

The strategy

- Summarise the key aspects of your three year **strategy for development related and GCRF research activity**:

Maximum 3,000 words

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

NTU is committed to working towards the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Integrating social, environmental and economic themes in learning and teaching, research and our knowledge exchange activities and in our approach to how we do business as a university is a strategic priority, as shown in our Strategic Plan.

Our research strategy (see *section c*) is geared to practical projects that have real impact on world problems. Thus, NTU is committed to using our expertise and realising the impact of our research by working in partnership with and for people in developing countries in order to improve their welfare and drive economic development.

NTU priority objectives for all development-related research activity funded through all sources aims to:

- enable more NTU academics to establish and / or strengthen partnerships with developing countries;
- facilitate the co-creation of research programmes that directly address and primarily benefit the specific problems of developing countries;
- establish and enhance sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries;
- increase our capacity and capability to undertake ODA-eligible research both at NTU and with partners in developing countries;
- increase our capacity to support the delivery of ODA-eligible research, outcomes and impacts in the UK and developing countries.

Year 1: 2018/19

In 2017, NTU conducted an exercise to map areas of our research strength and capability against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the following research priority areas outlined in the UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF):

- Equitable access to sustainable development
- Sustainable economies and societies
- Human rights, good governance and social justice

A selection of NTU's development-related research activity has been showcased in the recent University Alliance publication: "*UK research and innovation overseas: A snapshot of University Alliance activity in developing countries*".¹

This exercise enabled us to identify priority areas for support in year 1 (see *section b*) – namely NTU academics who have already have:

- established partners in place in eligible developing countries;
- a proven track record of ODA compliant research;
- secured external GCRF / Newton funding.

¹ <https://www.unialliance.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/UA-GCRF-Spotlight-Paper-web-PDF-Feb-2017.pdf>

Years 2-3: 2018/19 & 2019/20

In 2015 NTU developed and launched a new and ambitious Strategic Plan, 'Creating the University of the Future'. The Connecting Globally theme has the following vision statement:

"As an international University, we nurture global citizenship, engage with the international research community, and attract talented students and staff from around the world."

One of the approaches that we are adopting in order to achieve this ambition is:

"We will focus on building a strategic network of international partnerships with peer universities, businesses and civic authorities in selected territories."

NTU has developed a number of strategic partnerships in both China and India, each of which consist of a set of academic, business and civic relationships. It is envisaged that in future years (2019/20 and 2020/21) that these new strategic relationships with our international partners will result in new opportunities for development-related research.

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.

Year 1: 2018/19

Given the strict ODA compliance requirements, along with the very tight expenditure timeframe the University Executive Team has agreed that NTU's 2018/19 allocation of QR GCRF funding will only be used to support research projects that align with the following two pathways:

- a) **Capacity and capability building** (4 projects totalling £105k). This pathway will only be used for NTU academics who have already secured external GCRF / Newton funding or who have a proven track record of ODA compliant research with partners in developing countries. The key objectives and desired outcomes of this pathway include:
- establishing or enhancing equitable and sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries;
 - growing people-based capacity and capability to undertake ODA-eligible research across career stages in the UK and developing countries;
 - investing in people capacity to support the delivery of ODA-eligible research, outcomes and impacts in the UK and developing countries.
- b) **Pump-priming activities to underpin future GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building** (9 projects totalling £75k). The key objectives and desired outcomes of this pathway include:
- delivering networking meetings and other events with partners from developing countries to develop sustainable strategies and partnerships for future activities;
 - developing co-created research programmes / small pump-priming projects to generate preliminary data for future applications to GCRF / Newton funding calls.

NTU's proposed strategy is in year 1 to utilize the Pump-priming pathway to enable more NTU academics to establish and / or strengthen partnerships with developing countries in order to facilitate the co-creation of research programmes that directly address and primarily benefit the specific problems of developing countries.

Years 2-3: 2018/19 & 2019/20

It is envisaged that in future years (2019/20 and 2020/21) that this approach will lead to an increased capacity of NTU academics who have the capability to also fully benefit from the 'capacity and capability building' and / or 'generating impact from research' pathways as their partnerships and ODA research activities with developing countries mature.

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

Valuing Ideas

In 2015 NTU developed and launched a new and ambitious Strategic Plan, 'Creating the University of the Future'. The strategy is built around five core themes: Creating Opportunity, Valuing Ideas, Enriching Society, Connecting Globally and Empowering People. The Valuing Ideas theme focuses on research and has the following vision statement:

'We possess strong relationships and robust processes that enable discovery, drive innovation, and change the world, our students, and ourselves. They promote our disciplinary breadth, our intellectual depth, and our commitment to working across boundaries'.

The main approaches that we are adopting in order to achieve this ambition are:

- to implement a robust strategy to expand our research excellence and further our capability and capacity to be a valued partner in projects of high commercial and/or public salience.
- to develop and nurture the next generation of researchers and research leaders.

Research delivering tangible benefits

Our research strategy is geared to practical projects that have real impact on world problems. Our discoveries have the potential to save lives, prepare society for the future, and help different sectors advance their thinking. The big challenges that face the world are complex. Responding to them depends on insights from a multitude of disciplines. We work hard to cultivate relationships in the academic, business and professional worlds. We bring our research experts together in combinations that help us to solve the challenges and priorities of our collaborative partners in business, industry, the professions and society. Our key goals are to increase our research quality and the volume of research we do. We believe we can achieve this by running innovative research programmes and giving our researchers the support and facilities that they need. By keeping our focus on societal challenges, we believe we can deliver research excellence at the same time as making a positive difference in the world.

University-wide research themes

Identifying and nurturing synergies across these areas of disciplinary excellence has resulted in the establishment of five university-wide interdisciplinary research themes:

- Sustainable Futures;
- Global Heritage;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Medical Technologies and Advanced Materials;
- Safety & Security of Citizens and Society.

NTU has made significant strategic investments in these themes including the acquisitions of new research leaders to drive interdisciplinary and challenge-lead research within and across these domains. These five themes provide the focal point for NTU's development focused and ODA compliant research. Therefore, the majority of current and envisaged future GCRF research activity will be supported and enhanced by these themes.

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

Nominated GCRF projects for 2018/19 support were shortlisted both on the basis of their ODA compliance and also their alignment with NTU's research strengths and capability. For 2018/19 all proposed GCRF projects (13 in total) align with one of NTU's university-wide research themes:

- Sustainable Futures (5 projects);
- Global Heritage (4 projects);
- Health and Wellbeing (3 projects);
- Medical Technologies and Advanced Materials (1 project).

These NTU Research Themes and associated research projects also align closely with one or more United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with one or more of the following research priority areas outlined in the UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF):

Equitable access to sustainable development (11 of the projects have elements which show alignment with)

- *secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and agriculture (4 of the projects);*
- *sustainable health and wellbeing (6 of the projects);*
- *inclusive and equitable quality education (4 of the projects);*
- *clean air, water and sanitation (1 of the projects);*
- *affordable, reliable, sustainable energy (none of the projects).*

Sustainable economies and societies (10 of the projects have elements which show alignment with)

- *sustainable livelihoods supported by strong foundations for inclusive economic growth and innovation (8 of the projects);*
- *resilience and action on short-term environmental shocks and long-term environmental change (3 of the projects);*
- *sustainable cities and communities (5 of the projects);*
- *sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources (5 of the projects).*

Human rights, good governance and social justice (6 of the projects have elements which show alignment with)

- *understand and respond effectively to forced displacement and multiple refugee crises (1 of the projects);*
- *reduce conflict and promote peace, justice and humanitarian action (3 of the projects);*
- *reduce poverty and inequality, including gender inequalities (3 of the projects).*

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

NTU's established annual School Research Planning process sets, reviews and monitors strategic research priorities and implementation plans. This informs the investment of NTU's QR funding across NTU Schools and Research Themes. A proportion of this funding is utilised to foster the development of new research collaborations and partnerships that will enable our research and researchers to deliver real impact for regional, national and global challenges.

NTU's proposed three-year institutional QR GCRF Strategy will align closely with and complement NTU's strategy for the investment of QR funds, as it will focus primarily upon

nurturing and strengthening partnerships with developing countries as well as delivering ODA compliant research that addresses and benefits their specific development needs.

f. Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy.

Awareness of ODA-requirements

NTU has adopted a distinctive approach to researcher development spanning our entire researcher base from research students through to Distinguished Professors. Our researcher development programme for research active staff (early career academics and research leaders) will play a pivotal and underpinning supporting role in helping to ensure both increased awareness of both ODA requirements and greater understanding of external GCRF / Newton Fund funding opportunities.

Mentoring and Peer Support

NTU recognises that the effective development of researchers requires support from senior colleagues and research leaders across the institution. Thus, the job descriptions for the newly created School Associate Deans for Research and all Professoriate have recently been revised and now include the specific requirement to support the career development of NTU research staff and researchers. This undertaking by our experienced senior academics will continue to develop a supportive culture and enhanced research environment for all our Researchers.

This has enabled NTU to empower its research leaders, with a proven track record of delivering ODA compliant research, to provide expert advice, mentoring and peer support to colleagues with less experience of conducting development-related research.

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.

Given the strict ODA compliance requirements, along with the very tight expenditure timeframe the University Executive Team has agreed that NTU's 2018/19 allocation of QR GCRF funding will only be used to support research projects that align with the following two pathways:

- **Capacity and capability building** (4 projects totalling £105k). This pathway will only be used for NTU academics who have already secured external GCRF / Newton funding or who have a proven track record of ODA compliant research with partners in developing countries. Eligible activities include:
 - *establishing or enhancing equitable and sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries;*
 - *growing people-based capacity and capability to undertake ODA-eligible research across career stages in the UK and developing countries;*
 - *investing in people capacity to support the delivery of ODA-eligible research, outcomes and impacts in the UK and developing countries.*
- **Pump-priming activities to underpin future GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building** (9 projects totalling £75k). Eligible activities include:
 - *networking meetings and other events to develop sustainable strategies and partnerships for future activities;*
 - *small pump-priming projects to generate preliminary data for future applications.*

Our strategy is to initially utilize the pump-priming pathway to enable more NTU academics to establish and / or strengthen partnerships with developing countries in order to facilitate the co-creation of research programmes that directly address and primarily benefit the specific problems of developing countries.

It is envisaged that in future years (2019/20 and 2020/21) that this approach will lead to an increased capacity of NTU academics who have the capability to also fully benefit from the

'capacity and capability building' and / or 'generating impact from research' pathways as their partnerships and ODA research activities with developing countries mature.

h. The main developing countries, included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, which you intend to collaborate with.

The 2018/19 the allocation of QR GCRF funding will be used to support GCRF research projects in the following developing countries: Kenya (3 projects), South Africa (3 projects), Uganda (2 projects), Iraq (2 projects), India (2 projects), China (2 projects), Egypt (2 projects), Libya (1 project), Syria (1 project), Bangladesh (1 project), Vietnam (1 project), Guatemala (1 project).

It is envisaged that in future years (2019/20 and 2020/21) the allocation of QR GCRF funding will also be used to support GCRF research projects with a number of other developing countries, including but not limited to Turkey and Mexico.

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

Maximum 500 words

The intended outcomes for NTU's development-related research activity are:

- increased numbers of NTU academics with established partnerships with developing countries;
- enhanced co-creation of research programmes that directly address and primarily benefit the specific problems of developing countries;
- increased numbers of established sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries;
- increased capacity and capability to undertake ODA-eligible research both at NTU and with partners in developing countries;
- increased capacity to support the delivery of ODA-eligible research, outcomes and impacts in the UK and developing countries.

Management of GCRF

- 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

Research Governance & Assurance

NTU has established a new GCRF Steering Group (chaired by the Director of the Research Office) which will provide both strategic and operational oversight of all development-focused research projects throughout their lifecycle (including the monitoring of ODA compliance). It formally reports into the University Research Committee (chaired by the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor Research), which in turn reports into Academic Board. Membership consists of both key research professional support and academic stakeholders, including relevant School Associate Deans for Research and research leaders with a track record of delivering ODA compliant research.

Nomination and selection of ODA compliant research projects

School Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) and NTU Research Theme leads nominate potential GCRF projects that align with both NTU research strengths, national GCRF priorities and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Proposed GCRF research projects must meet the following ODA criteria:

- research must be directly and primarily of benefit to the problems of developing countries;
- must already have in place partnerships with one or more eligible developing country.

The GCRF Steering Group will consider nominated projects against the relevant ODA criteria and decide which to support. For those unsuccessful, there will be follow up with the Research Development team to help them further develop a relevant, high quality proposal for the future.

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

- 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.
- 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

No additional comments

- 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

In 2018/19, given the strict ODA compliance requirements, priority has been given to support ODA research projects that align with the following two pathways:

- a) Capacity and capability building (4 projects totalling £105k).
- b) Pump-priming activities to underpin future GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building (9 projects totalling £75k).

The four allocated projects for pathway (a) already have robust mechanisms in place and a proven track record of delivering ODA compliant research with their partners in developing countries. NTU therefore has the capacity to expand the reach and impact of these projects if the allocation of QR GCRF funding in 2018/19 were to be increased. If the QR GCRF allocation for 2018/19 were to decrease, NTU would seek to maintain the level of funding for pathway (a), in order to maximise the return on investment of this funding, and decrease the number of Pump-priming projects in pathway (b).

- 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

It is envisaged that in 2019/20 there will be an increased capacity of NTU academics who have the capability to also fully benefit from the 'capacity and capability building' and / or 'generating impact from research' pathways as their partnerships and ODA research activities with developing countries mature. We are therefore confident that this additional capacity would enable NTU and our partners in developing countries to benefit from any additional QR GCRF allocation in 2019/20.

- 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

It is envisaged that in 2020/21 there will be an increased capacity of NTU academics who have the capability to also fully benefit from the 'capacity and capability building' and / or 'generating impact from research' pathways as their partnerships and ODA research activities with developing countries mature. We are therefore confident that this additional capacity would enable NTU and our partners in developing countries to benefit from any additional QR GCRF allocation in 2020/21.