

## 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.

#### **Strategy and Priority Objectives:**

Development related research activity at the University of Greenwich is focused in the work of the Natural Resources Institute (NRI); indeed, we have estimated that greater than 90% of the University's research relevant to DAC listed countries is carried out by NRI. There are additional pockets of research activity in other areas of research excellence within the University that is ODA-complaint. Our approach is to grow the volume of high quality, ODA-compliant research and to derive impact from that research using the interdisciplinary work of the NRI as a platform.

NRI's work is focused on making a significant contribution to achievement of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**. The Institute carries out strategic and applied research that is focussed on the food and agricultural sectors of developing countries with broad objectives of contributing to poverty reduction, economic growth, food/nutrition security and sustainable development.

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

The Institute's work can be best summarised in terms of the following high level challenges:

- (a) ensuring food security and improving nutrition;
- (b) reducing food losses and adding value to crops;
- (c) supporting sustainable agricultural intensification;
- (d) addressing plant, animal and human health, with a specific focus on vector-borne diseases;
- (e) adapting agricultural and natural resource systems to climate change
- (f) innovating in land governance and rural finance to benefit poor people and economic growth;
- (g) ensuring and supporting sustainable trade and responsible business;
- (h) addressing gender and diversity in equalities in development;
- (i) capacity strengthening for high quality research on agricultural development and food security.

NRI's work was awarded Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Further and Higher Education in both 2000 and 2016 for our work on food security and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa; the Guardian Award for Research Impact in 2015 for our work on cassava value chain development and the Times Higher Award for International Collaboration of the Year in 2014 for our work with African research organisations. Research work is mainly funded from competitively won grants from, for example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, the European Commission, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Food Programme, Department for International Development, RCUK GCRF, DEFRA/Darwin and Newton Fund. To a lesser degree, NRI is also supported by the private sector.

NRI's work is founded in strong and long-lasting partnerships with organisations in DAC-listed countries, which include regional and sub-regional organisations, national and international research centres (including those of the CGIAR), extension and advisory services, international and local NGOs and the private sector.

Our **overall strategy** is therefore to sustainably grow (a) the volume of high quality research work and (b) its translation into impact on the livelihoods of poor people. This activity - centred on the University's Natural Resources Institute - is based on the University's 125 year history and reputation for development related research and impact. We will also leverage the expertise in ODA-compliant research in the NRI to stimulate other University of Greenwich researchers with international reputations to contribute to this type of work.

Our **specific objectives** are:

- (a) to grow the volume, quality and impact of development-orientated research carried out by NRI in DAC-listed countries to address the UN Sustainable Development focussing on the high level challenges detailed above;

- (b) to grow the volume, quality and impact of development-orientated research in the rest of the University using NRI as a platform;
- (c) to leverage the ODA expertise of NRI through collaborations with world-leading researchers external to our institution in order to promote ODA-complaint research excellence.
- (d) to use existing QR funding (ca. £400-500k/annum) and GCRF additional QR funding to catalyse objectives (a), (b) and (c).

### **Key aspects of our strategic plan for GCRF QR funding**

The key aspects of our strategic plan are:

- (a) build on the excellent reputation of the NRI to contribute to ODA-complaint research;
- (b) to be challenge led (see previous section), addressed primarily through multi- and interdisciplinary research;
- (c) to use the funds catalytically, with an aspiration of at least a 10 fold return on investment of additional GCRF QR funding;
- (d) to initiate new research activities, as well as supporting achievement of societal impact from current and previous research investments;
- (e) to focus on research excellence through building on current ODA-complaint research, bringing Greenwich research excellence to the ODA-complaint work or through collaboration with external world-leading researchers, and
- (f) to support the capacity building of scientists in DAC-listed countries and University of Greenwich researchers through establishing strategic institutional partnerships (2 per year) that include new collaborations around postgraduate research student supervision.

**How activity funded through QR GCRF fits into your broader strategy and priorities for all development related research activity:** There is a very strong fit between QR GCRF and our broader strategy and priorities because we have chosen to channel this additional funding through the NRI – the centre that carries out more than 90% of the University’s development-related research – and to use this as a mechanism for promoting wider engagement throughout the rest of the University.

**QR GCRF relationship to the UK strategy for the GCRF:** Our proposed use of QR GCRF is entirely aligned with- and supportive of- the UK strategy for the GCRF, which is consistent with NRI’s activity towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As indicated above, our work is challenge-led as is the GCRF and we have a commitment to use the QR funds to focus on research excellence in line with the GCRF strategy. We also have a commitment to long term capacity building of scientists in DAC-listed countries and are implementing a range of funded projects, e.g. the CDAIS project funded by the European Commission to build national research capacity in agricultural research for development.

As can be seen above, we will use the GCRF QR funds to grow capacity in the University of Greenwich amongst our research excellent staff to engage in development focused research using the established strength and recognised excellence of the Natural Resources Institute. This is in line with the GCRF Strategy. Also in line with the strategy, we recognise the importance of being agile and responding to emergencies.

As indicated by the recent prizes awarded for NRI's work and evaluation of impact case studies in REF2014, NRI has a reputation for translating high quality research into societal impact, which is also in line with the GCRF Strategy.

Thematically we can see that there is strong alignment of our proposed challenge areas with the following topics highlighted in the GCRF strategy:

- (a) secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and agriculture;
- (b) sustainable health and well being;
- (c) sustainable livelihoods supported by strong foundations for inclusive economic growth and innovation;
- (d) resilience and action on short-term environmental shocks and long-term environmental change;
- (e) sustainable cities and communities;
- (f) sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources; and
- (g) reduce poverty and inequality, including gender inequalities.

**Alignment with the University's strategy for spending QR:** The University spends ca. £400k - £500k per annum of QR funding on ODA-compliant research. This investment catalyses ca. £10-12 million of external funding through competitive bidding mainly within the NRI.

The University's overall strategy for spending QR funding is to focus on research that is internationally excellent or world-leading quality and that is supportive of achieving the Research and Enterprise Strategy of the University that is summarised in the University's Strategy Plan (<https://www.gre.ac.uk/articles/public-relations/read-our-strategic-plan-2017-22>). The University's overall strategic objective in research is "to enhance science and society through inspiring research and enterprise". An essential element of this plan is to improve our position significantly as a leading UK University by undertaking high quality research that is driven by beneficial impact on society. Specific activities focus on improving the research environment (including training of researchers at all levels from postgraduate research students to professors, increasing the proportion of staff engaged in high quality research, increasing external funding to £30 million/year by 2022 and increasing doctoral completions). This additional investment of ca. £131k/year will be used in ways that are entirely supportive of this Research and Enterprise Strategy which we will further underpin with our current QR investment i.e. it will be used catalytically to support research of the highest quality that has a beneficial impact on the populations of

DAC listed countries. In doing so, this will contribute to the intermediary indicators within the University strategic plan in terms of engagement of staff, generation of high quality outputs, doctoral completions and translation of research into impact. Translation of research into impact is a particular strength of the University e.g. NRI's work is mainly submitted into the Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences UoA and in REF2014 our case studies were evaluated at 90% 4\* and 10% 3\*.

### **Likely barriers and enablers**

The huge advantage (enabler) that the University has in respect of GCRF funding is the Natural Resources Institute with 125 years of history of collaborative work in DAC-listed countries, extensive network of partners and excellent knowledge of research uptake pathways. The Institute also provides a strong platform for multi and interdisciplinary research. Another strong enabler – and a reflection of the NRI's standing – is the NRI's current £12million per annum portfolio of externally funded projects from major donor agencies and research funders.

The major barrier and threat to ODA-compliant work at NRI in the short term is the uncertainties caused by BREXIT on European Funding. Approximately 30% of NRI's research funding is from the European Commission.

Translation of research into impact is always a challenge and should not be taken for granted. We consider this to be a particular strength of NRI as indicated by the external awards that it has received in recent years. This experience is a strong enabler.

### **Key activities:**

The indicative amount of funding available is ca. £131k. With this, we believe that we can have the greatest catalytic effect by:

- (a) facilitating internationally excellent researchers in the wider university (outside NRI) to engage in ODA-compliant research with the support of experienced NRI staff;
- (b) supporting the promotion of NRI's ODA-compliant international excellent and world-leading research and other ODA-compliant research in the wider university to donor agencies and potential partners in the research uptake pathway with the objectives of generating societal impact and also supporting growth in the volume ODA-compliant research and development work;
- (c) pump priming emerging areas of ODA-complaint research to provide a preliminary evidence base to support future funding applications, including leveraging the ODA-expertise of NRI through collaborations with world-leading researchers external to our institution in order to promote ODA-complaint research excellence;
- (d) build strong partnerships with national partners in DAC-listed countries with the objective of developing strong research collaborations and specifically joint post-graduate research programmes to support researcher training and capacity development on ODA-complaint, development orientated research, and
- (e) retaining flexibility to respond to emergencies and emerging problems or opportunities.

**Country focus:** More than 80% of the University's GCRF focused activity is in sub-Saharan Africa. The principal countries with which we currently collaborate and will continue to collaborate with are: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi. The University's engagement in Africa is however broad as indicated by the diagram below.



Please note it is not intended to work in Morocco with GCRF QR funding.

Outside sub-Saharan Africa, our main focal countries are: India (selected States with DFID funding) and Bangladesh. We have on-going collaborations with China that is mainly focused on knowledge adaptation for sub-Saharan Africa.

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

In terms of process monitoring, it is intended that this investment of GCRF QR funding is catalytic in delivering short and medium term outputs that can be translated into outcomes and impacts. It is therefore important to consider the impact pathway between this investment, the outputs and the intended outcomes and impacts.

Intermediate outcomes include:

(a) growth in the research and enterprise portfolio by a compound 10% per annum in line with the University's Research Strategy. Data on this are already collected. Identifying ODA-compliant work with the NRI portfolio will be straightforward;

- (b) growth in the number of staff engaged in ODA-compliant research, and within this, the number delivering outputs of internationally excellent and world-leading quality (an easy to measure proxy for this would be number of staff submitted and quality of submissions in the Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Science and Development Studies UoAs in REF2021 compared to REF2014);
- (c) growth in the number of post-graduate research students from DAC-listed countries registered in the University of Greenwich, and
- (d) The number of quality of communication products produced.

The overall impact would depend on the extent to which progress is made against the challenges identified in section 1, i.e.

- (a) ensuring food security and improving nutrition;
- (b) reducing food losses and adding to crops;
- (c) supporting sustainable agricultural intensification;
- (d) addressing plant, animal and human health with a specific focus on vector borne diseases;
- (e) adapting agricultural and natural resource systems to climate change;
- (f) innovating in land governance and rural finance;
- (g) ensuring sustainable trade and responsible business;
- (g) addressing gender and diversity, and,
- (i) capacity strengthening for high quality research agricultural development

Each of these challenge areas is an NRI Programme, with a designated Programme Leader. NRI projects are clustered into these Programmes. Most projects have monitoring and evaluation activities. NRI takes a particular interest in these programmes in developing its impact case studies for REF2021. The University has purchased impact tracking software and we would expect Programme Leaders to monitor impact from funded projects and elsewhere to keep track on programme level impact.

### **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.

It is proposed that these additional GCRF funds are managed by the University's Greenwich Research and Enterprise Directorate in collaboration with the Natural Resources Institute.

The funds will be projectised within the University's excellence-driven competitive funding allocation systems, with an identified Principal Investigator for each of the activities.

Each project/activity will have an agreed work plan that will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of experienced senior staff who have previously worked on ODA-compliant work and have considerable experience of work in DAC listed countries. Extreme care will be taken to ensure the ODA-compliance of each and every piece of work.

NRI has a very strong monitoring, evaluation and learning team who will ensure that the procedures put into place allow use to collect, analyse and learn lessons, measure project outputs, evaluate outcomes, identify lessons learned and ensure ODA-compliance.

All QR funded activities are currently reported on twice a year (in April and at the end of August) and this would be the same process for these funds. Our reporting templates will be modified to ensure data are collected on geographical distribution, outputs and economics and social impacts. Systems will be put in place to track investment into other funded activities bearing in mind that it is proposed to use the QR funds to catalyse other activities.

NRI has in place an ISO9001 quality management system for research management that will underpin the effective and efficient use of this funds and ensure ODA-compliance.

## **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.

Funds will only be spent on ODA-complaint work, and we will use the NRI Research Management Systems to ensure that this is the case.

Since all of the work will be internally contracted through competitive processes or through development of a detailed work programme that is reviewed by an expert committee, only work that is ODA-compliant focused on DAC-list countries will be funded. This will be rigorously checked through the reporting processes.



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.

Building on our world-leading and award-winning development-orientated work, our planned priorities are:

- (a) catalysing ODA-complaint work in DAC countries in parts of the University outside of NRI identified through a competitive process (ca. £26k);
- (b) supporting achievement of societal impact in DAC-listed countries through communication of high quality research outcomes (ca. £45k)
- (c) pump priming new ODA-complaint activity areas in DAC listed countries. In this year focus on the challenge areas of: “ensuring food security and improving nutrition” and “adapting agricultural and natural resource systems to climate change” (£40k);
- (d) developing collaborative arrangements with partners institutions (2 per year) to support research proposal development and also joint development of post-graduate research degree programmes supporting research training (ca. £20k). Most likely in Nigeria and Malawi in 2018/2019, and,
- (e) adopting a flexible approach so that funds could be diverted from the above to address emergency situations that could be addressed by research.

With less funding we would preserve activity (b) because we see it as structurally important to generating impact and additional external funding and scale back on other activities.

With more funding we would scale up funding to each of the areas listed above, but specifically put more funding into areas (c) and (d) to make them much more meaningful.

With significantly more funding we would look to fund significant new initiatives around mostly likely the relationships between (A) agriculture and nutrition and/or (B) climate change and agriculture, because through the world-leading expertise of NRI, that with some investment, could attract significant additional international external resources to make a lasting difference in DAC listed countries. This comes under priority (C) above.

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 approach that we have proposed is catalytic and so we see the broad categories of funding the same this year as the previous year. The nature of the projects under (6a) would be different and determined through competition.

For activity (c) we would focus on and indicatively would address the challenges of “reducing food losses and adding to crops” and “addressing plant, animal and human health with a specific focus on vector borne diseases”

We would focus on two new partnerships for activity (d).

With less or more money, we would behave in the same way as indicated in question 6.

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.

Our answer is the same as question 7 because of the catalytic nature of the activities.

The challenges to be addressed in activity (c) would be: “innovating in land governance and rural finance” and “sustainable business and equitable trade”.

With less or more money, we would behave in the same way as indicated in question 6.