

The University of St Andrews 3-year SFC GCRF strategy summary



Priority areas and expertise building over the next 3 years

Building on from the 2017-18 SFC GCRF funding allocation to St Andrews, we have identified three priority umbrella themes for the next three years:

- Energy and innovation
- Global health and inequality
- Sustainability and environmental change

Sustainable livelihoods, promoting justice and humanitarian action, and secure and sustainable food systems will be embedded within each theme, along with issues of gender equity and rapid urbanization in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities. A block grant of three years enables individual projects to be planned more thoroughly with a view to achieving longer-term goals and ensuring continued sustainability when project funding finishes. This also facilitates making the right contacts in DAC countries, especially where research infrastructure is 'poor', new networks are being established from scratch and/or where language barriers impede progress initially. Longer-term funding also means that attention can be given to knowledge sharing between projects and partners including across individual DAC countries. We continue to prioritise research, network building and strengthening capacity building and knowledge exchange between Scotland and individual DAC countries in these regions.

The aim is to allocate at least 60% of the funding (i.e. £485,941.20) to the three priority areas above (i.e. approximately £162k to each theme). The remaining maximum 40% (up to £324k) will be available for unanticipated rapid response projects. The reserve is intended to resource new or existing projects to allow for agile responses to emergencies and opportunities.

We intend to fund larger projects in increments to ensure that each continues to deliver value for money while supporting on-going projects which continue to deliver positive change. Hence, funds will be competitively distributed on a yearly basis for each theme.

Governance, delivery and monitoring

The Steering Group for the St Andrews Global Challenges Forum will be led by Prof Nina Laurie (School of Sustainable Development and Geography) comprising: VP research; a team of champions for each umbrella theme drawn from the sciences, social sciences and arts and humanities (one of whom will be a senior academic for mentoring purposes) (9 in total); Research and Innovation Services team (2 - to include Research Impact); and 2 members of the Advisory Group on a rotating basis.

The Steering Group will convene bi-monthly and the Director will meet with umbrella theme Team Coordinators monthly.

An Advisory Group will be formed drawn from relevant stakeholders (Scottish Government, DfID, INGOs, commercial partners, the charity sector and relevant international stakeholders). Emphasis will be placed on convening this group using the University of St Andrews extensive contact network working in these sectors.

Together the Steering and Advisory Groups will:

1. Coordinate institutional activity and advise the Principal's Office on matters relating to the UK Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and support the development of ongoing University research strategy;
2. Identify priority research areas for the University to champion and promote, to increase the likelihood of success via future and current GCRF funding streams;
3. Regularly update the University International Committee on GCRF activity and ensure that the GCRF is properly recognised in the new University International Strategy;
4. Agree and implement internal allocation processes for any GCRF institutional priming awards and oversee robust and transparent allocation;
5. Support the University in its engagement with key external stakeholders (including international stakeholders) relating to GCRF relevant research, including business, industry, the government and funding agencies; and
6. Monitor and influence the development of Global Challenges research policy and strategy of key national and international agencies in the interests of the University (in particular RCUK).

University of St Andrews co-funding

In addition, the University aim to support up to 9 PhD Global Challenge studentships (3 per theme) – with an emphasis on international students from DAC countries taking a long-term view towards relationship building in those countries.

The main intended outcomes and impact of the strategy

The University of St Andrews will support projects which make a real difference to the lives of people in ODA countries, particularly in countries on the Least Developed, Low Income and Lower Middle Income DAC list, focusing especially, but not exclusively, on our three priority regions. We will encourage and prepare individuals and UK partner organisations to work closely with ODA partners to ensure that they have a real voice in discussions and are integral to any activities which may lead to solutions.

Our intended outcomes and impacts are aligned with GCRF aims: to improve the economic activity and strength of ODA countries by strengthening capability for research and innovation in developing countries and the UK as well as building structures which will enable agile responses to emergencies and opportunities.

We aim to develop strong and enduring partnerships between the University and developing-country researchers to enhance the research and innovation capacity of both and to deliver substantial impact on improved social welfare, economic development, and environmental sustainability. A measure of success will be that we deliver a programme with a legacy beyond the initial funding investment period.

All projects will collect relevant outcome information, to be held centrally, for monitoring and sharing as appropriate to underpin the development of longer-term relationships and collaborations, with the aim of positioning the University to make maximum use of RCUK Global Challenges funding initiatives over the coming years. This approach will enable our researchers to maximise their effectiveness in continuing to address the development problems facing the Global South.