University of St Andrews Global Challenges Forum Working in ODA Countries Toolkit

Introduction

The Global Challenges Forum was established at the University of St Andrews in response to the introduction of UKRI provision, through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), of Institutional Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funding. These GCRF proposals had to be within the UKRI GCRF Guidance remit, and therefore it was required that proposals demonstrated [Official Development Assistance](#) (ODA) compliance.

Due to cuts to this funding in March 2021, this avenue of funding is not currently open for new proposals, but the [Global Challenges Forum](#) continues to support researchers working in developing countries which addresses the challenges defined for developing countries in the [Global Goals for Sustainable Development.](#)

Global Challenges considerations (historical for information)

How do I know if the proposed research meets ODA eligibility?

Historically, all GCRF funding needed to be awarded in accordance with the [OECD ODA guidelines](#). To be eligible for GCRF funding, applications needed to meet the ODA eligibility of promoting and specifically targeting the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

A list of these countries is determined by the OECD and is available on http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm[1]

Activities were intended to be challenge-led and align with the GCRF Strategy and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) ODA Statement of Intent which were published at the end of June 2017:

- [UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)](#)
- [Research & Innovation: Official Development Assistance (ODA) Statement of Intent](#)

To demonstrate ODA compliance, it was necessary to answer the following questions:

- Which country/countries on the [DAC list](#)[1] will directly benefit from this proposed research and are countries likely to continue to be ODA eligible for the duration of the research?

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[1] The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) update their list every three years. Countries that have exceeded the high-income threshold for three consecutive years at the time of the review are removed.

- How is your proposed research directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries? Please refer to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of these countries? You may wish to consult the World Bank Group list of pressing development challenges of your proposed partner country/countries: https://www.worldbank.org/en/where-we-work.

Tip: For examples of funded projects, please see [St Andrews Global Challenges projects](#).

The Global Challenges Forum at the University of St Andrews

The [St Andrews Global Challenges Forum](#), led by Prof. Thomas Meagher (Biology), was established as part of the University's 3-year Global Challenges Forum strategy, to the SFC Official Development Assistance (ODA) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). The Forum oversee, guide and support capacity building, sustaining capacity and development-related research activity. The Forum aims 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.

Please contact ris_gcrf@st-andrews.ac.uk if you have any queries.

Project considerations

What are some ways to build legacy in the developing country?

We would recommend that sustainability of either the work or the outcomes or both are incorporated into the project plans. Below are a small number of ways that some legacy can be built, but this is by no means an exhaustive list:

- curriculum development activities at partner institution to extend the legacy of your project;
- dissemination workshops in the country throughout the project with both academic and non-academic participants;
- films;
- websites/blogs to provide regular updates on the research/impact progress;
- community contributions for sustained outreach;
- policy contributions.

What do I need to know about due diligence?

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the main UK Government research funder, requires that for the University to transfer control of research grant funds to overseas partner organisations (OPOs), the University must have a risk-based policy and process in place for undertaking due diligence checks on those organisations. The University's policy requires that the process be undertaken for each OPO in each project, but ONLY IF: the University will transfer research grant funding to the OPO, and the OPO will then control the spending of those funds; and the OPO is in a host country that is NOT in the European Union, and that country is listed as having a score of 69 OR LOWER on the most recent Corruption Perception Index.

At St Andrews, the Due Diligence process has two stages: pre-award and post-award. The St Andrews Principal Investigator (PI) must complete the pre-award check, which aims to undertake as speedy and minimally burdensome a process as possible, for each partner organisation for each project when producing the grant application. The pre-award check asks the PI to provide information we would reasonably expect them to know at the time of composing an application, to aim to avoid excessively and unnecessarily burdening the OPO with requests for information. The outcome of the pre-award check will determine which, if any, post-award due diligence checks on the OPO will be required.

Tip: If no funds are to be transferred to the OPO, you do not need to complete the pre-award from for that partner organisation.

When considering partner risk, you should consider any issues that may damage the University's reputation, including, for example, whether the individual organisation has reported incidents of:

- Human rights violations
- Bribery and corruption
- Tax evasion
- Fraud
- The supressing or falsification of academic research.

The following external indices and guides can help to highlight these issues in the countries where you would like to work. This is particularly important when you are establishing new working relationships:

- [Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice](#).
- [Sanctions, Embargos and Restrictions](#)
- [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) collated by Transparency International
- [OECD Country Risk Classification](#) or
- [World Bank Governance Indicators](#)
- Political Instability Index: [Marsh Political Risk Map](#)

Do I need to obtain ethical approval for my research?

GCRF projects, because of the interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of them, are likely to need ethical approval for some aspects. Please consider carefully ethical implications of all aspects of your project.

Please consult the University Teaching and Research Ethics webpages (https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/) or email utrec@st-andrews.ac.uk for help with ethical considerations of your proposed project. If your research involves animals, their tissues or data, including observational studies, contact your School Ethics Committee or the Home Office Liaison Officer to check whether you will require any approvals or licences for your work. See https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/animals/ for more details.

Expense items to consider in costing your GCRF application

- Visas, for yourself and/or visitors, as applicable – Please note that visas for non-academic visitors from ODA countries can be time consuming, problematic and can fall through at the last minute. Please check and cost travel and/or courier services associated with obtaining visas for all parties, where appropriate.
- If you buy goods and services on behalf of the University from overseas suppliers, then please be aware that additional reverse charge VAT may apply.   Find out more here about Reverse Charge VAT, alternatively should you have a question please contact vatenquiries@st-andrews.ac.uk.
- Applicability of VAT when purchasing and transporting equipment overseas or undertaking projects in hazardous countries. Please check with the VAT team if you think VAT payment may apply for your project.
- Tourist versus business status and any necessary permits for work
- Travel tickets – We recommend that all travel and accommodation which can be booked from St Andrews, using DP&L, be done so as much as possible. As unexpected delays can happen, it is advisable to cost both economy and flexible ticket prices to determine the cost-benefit of the price differences. This is particularly relevant for long-haul flights.
- In-country travel, accommodation, and insurance (if travelling internationally) for partners
- Costs associated with obtaining ethical approval in the host country
- Immunisations
- Malaria tablets
- Essential in-country/organisation resources and equipment
- Excess baggage due to equipment, as applicable
- Import duties for items purchased outside of the ODA country that will either be exported at the end of the project or left in the country.

- Translation of documents and/or translator fees.

Time aspects to consider in planning your application and project

We would urge you to check on procedures and timescales and to plan into your timeline adequate time for:

- Organising visas, for yourself and/or visitors, as applicable. These always take longer than anticipated. Plan well ahead.
- Due diligence
- Any cross-institutional agreements which may need to be put in place – check with RBDC
- Money matters, such as advances for St Andrews staff, transfers and/or making payments. Please consult with FAS if cash advances are required for visitors from ODA-listed countries; mechanisms are in place for these circumstances. Funds for these situations can be fast-tracked, but please **allow a minimum of 10 days**.
- Import licences, if equipment will be taken and left in the ODA-listed country, time needs to be allocated for these to clear customs.

Working with another UK institution
When working collaboratively with another UK HEI on a GCRF project, a project will abide by the decisions of the lead institution. There is no need for peer-review at both institutions. Each institution must pay their associated costs from their institutional GCRF funding.

Please note that UK consultancy is not an allowable (ODA compliant) cost.

How do I know if my proposed non-UK partner institutions can receive funding?

Please check the GOV.UK webpages on Financial sanction targets by regime to check that the country you are hoping to work to check if there are financial sanctions imposed on them by the UK. Contact FAS if you have concerns about the country in which your operations will be based.

NB: For-profit universities in ODA-listed countries are eligible to receive funds under the terms of funding.

Conflicts of Interest

In preparing a GCRF proposal and approaching partners, please note the University of St Andrews' Conflict of Interest Policy.

If you feel there may be a conflict of interest in your project, please contact the Global Challenges Forum at ris_gcrf@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Third-party agreements ('contracts')

It is a requirement to have an agreement in place with each third-party organisation involved in a research project before starting the project. Different types of agreements are required depending on the role of the organisation in the project, e.g. as a collaborator, service provider, supplier or subcontractor.

The agreement must specify the work to be undertaken by the third party and any relevant financial arrangements (including the budget and methods of transferring funds to them). Finalising an agreement requires that any applicable due diligence process has been completed, which may require extra conditions to be added to the agreement and can involve negotiation with the third party.

In situations where due diligence is required and is ongoing, yet there is a need to start transferring funding before the agreement has been finalised, you will need to make a request to RBDC that a 'pre-financing' agreement be put in place; these allow the transfer of a maximum of 20% of the funds, up to a maximum limit of £20,000. Any further transfers would then only be possible once the due diligence process and agreement are completed. See the due diligence policy, paragraph 35, for more details on requesting a 'pre-financing' agreement.

It is important for you to identify the 'right person' at the third party with whom RBDC can liaise regarding the agreements; this is often not the person with whom you are collaborating or who will directly contribute to the research project.

All agreements, including 'pre-financing' agreements, are issued in the English language and governed by Scots law. For the avoidance of doubt by the third party, this does not mean that Scots law governs research activities occurring within the project (for example, regarding the handling of cultural artefacts, or obtaining regulatory approvals etc).

Please contact RBDC as early as possible to assist this process, passing them the details of the 'right people' to contact at the third parties. As things progress, inform RBDC of any changes as soon as you are aware, and speak to them about the possibility of a 'pre-financing' agreement if appropriate.

Where contracts are required with partner organisations, it should be noted that all UKRI research funding is governed by UK laws as stated in their terms and conditions. If you foresee any problems with your ODA partner organisation(s) agreeing to such clauses due to their country laws, please note this, and what the

issue(s) you foresee, in the USTAN Due Diligence Post-Award Questionnaire Declaration.

Field travel: risk assessment and insurance

All fieldwork will require a risk assessment to be covered by the University's insurance. Guidelines and policies for field travel as part of your project are available at: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/riskassessment/

How do I ensure my team and I are safe whilst conducting fieldwork?

You should consider your own physical and psychological safety, as well as that of your research team, when working overseas. Please see the University guidance at: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/ehss/training/.

Please consult the British Government Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice for all members of your team: https://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/advice-all-countries

Safeguarding in International Development Research

Please refer to University research and staff policies, including, "Dignity and respect at work policy" https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/staff-employee-relations-dignity-and-respect/dignity-and-respect-at-work-policy.pdf, "Safeguarding of children, vulnerable adults and prevention of radicalisation policy" https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/staff-employee-relations-protection-of-vulnerable-

groups/safeguarding-of-children-vulnerable-adults-prevention-of-radicalisation-policy.pdf and "Sexual misconduct" https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/personal/sexual-misconduct/. Such policies are non-locational, applying to staff, students and third-party workers doing research anywhere in the world.

Further Safeguarding in International Development Research advice is available from the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR): https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/guidance-on-safeguarding-in-international-development-research/

Ensure you and your team is properly insured for travel and vehicles: https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/money/insurance/travelinsurance/.

aData Protection

Please refer to the University of St Andrews' GDPR guidance. If you are undertaking research involving humans' personal data and thus in scope of GDPR, you will meet the criteria for requiring ethical approval. GDPR compliance will be addressed as part of the ethical review process. Guidance is available here.

Data management should be discussed with the Research Data Management Team in the Library.

Equipment which will be staying in the ODA-listed country/Export control considerations

For advice on this matter, contact exportcontrols@st-andrews.ac.uk

Individual academics and researchers are obliged by law to consider whether they may need a licence from the UK Export Control Organisation (ECO), part of the UK Department of International Trade to 'export' goods, technology, software, designs or other related 'know-how'. Failure to obtain a licence or to comply with its provisions may constitute a criminal offence involving potential fines, legal costs and/or prison sentences of up to 10 years.

The key concerns relate to exporting:

1. technologies, material, equipment or know-how that could be used in nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons or ballistic missiles other explosive devices or their means of delivery (weapons of mass destruction, for short)
2. items that have been specially designed or modified for military use and their components
3. dual-use items – those that can be used for civil or military purposes – which meet certain specified technical standards and some of their components

If you are taking equipment with you to a country which you intend to leave with partners in the ODA-listed country, please check you have any import / export licences you may need.

For laptops and other small electronic items, it may suffice to have a letter from the collaborators saying that you are bringing in the equipment for sole use in a joint, collaborative project and it will be depreciated over the terms/length of the project and left in country on completion.

Equipment should not be set up by the University as University property. Software licences should be purchased and installed as stand alone, so they can be registered with the final user. Ensure that purchase orders state that this is for GCRF work.

Tips from colleagues:
To ensure equipment purchased for ODA partners which will remain with them, such as laptops, does not include University security software and encryption, please state clearly that the work is for GCRF purposes on the purchase order and correspondence with IT Services.
Check with your in-country partner about export/import regulations, costs and timescales in the ODA country.

Importing natural materials or samples

Please contact researchintegrity@st-andrews.ac.uk if you intend to remove any natural materials or samples containing genetic material from their country of origin for subsequent use in genetic research outside the country of origin.

Project management considerations

Our experience to date is that most projects experience some delays due to various reasons, often outside the control of the research team. Ensure you build in sufficient time for your proposed activities, including commuting times to reach your destination whenever travel is involved.

Changing the scope or budget of a project

If your project needs to change for any reason, please contact the Research Impact team at ris_gcrf@st-andrews.ac.uk as soon as possible.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment should be written for the project and this should be followed throughout.

Employing overseas workers

On a GCRF project it may be necessary to employ or contract local people to conduct project work for whom the University of St Andrews has a moral and legal duty of care.

The nature of this duty will depend upon the type of contract between the employer and the employee, and PIs must seek advice from RBDC and Human Resources before entering into any agreements.

Towards the end of the project, PIs must consider several procedures when terminating employment contracts:

- local redundancy regulations and employee consultation on TUPE regulation and the University of St Andrews policies;
- the notice period agreed in the original contract;
- any repatriating processes as applicable;
- other factors, including:
    - The time and support the employee will need to complete work, settle bills, close bank accounts and relocate their family.
    - Whether the University of St Andrews needs to provide any transitory arrangements for repatriation, such as temporary accommodation, schooling and housing.

In-country receipts

As many ODA-listed countries function on a cash economy, receipts may be hard to get for services or small items. It is advisable to bring or buy a receipt book (generally can be purchased from a local paper shop) to write these out yourself so they can be signed by the merchant.

Please be aware that you will need to submit the receipts through the usual University system, so ensure you have all the information you will need.

ODA visitors to the UK

We ask that you let ris_gcrf@st-andrews.ac.uk know when visitors from ODA countries will be at St Andrews, in case there is the opportunity for further networking for them. Please let us know as far in advance as possible.

CAPOD courses

All CAPOD courses are available for ODA visitors, please speak to CAPOD colleagues about relevant available training. This is a great opportunity for ODA visitors in terms of their career development and for capacity building for the ODA country. Please ensure you include such 'capacity building' elements in your initial proposal.

Cash advances for visitors from ODA-listed countries

Cash advances are available for ODA visitors to the UK. Please ask your FAS contact for a 'Global Challenges Cash Advance Request'. Request must be made as soon as possible by the PI and receipts must be collected by the visitors and submitted at the end of their trip by the PI.

Tips from colleagues:
Cash advances are now available for ODA visitors. They will still need to retain receipts, and these will need to be processed in the usual way.

Managing Third Party Expenditure

SFC GCRF terms and conditions state that award holding institutions are responsible for activities carried out by third parties, and where possible research teams should encourage partners to submit evidence of any expenditure for audit purposes.

However, in some cases, particularly in developing countries, this evidence may not exist or cannot be generated. In such cases the research team is advised to check what record of financial transaction is possible before entering into agreements with local suppliers and where possible obtain receipts, invoices or similar.

Changing the Scope or Budget of Active Projects

Any changes that affect budget line changes or the scope or aims of your project should be highlighted to the RIS_GCRF Team (ris_gcrf@st-andrews.ac.uk) in the first instance to obtain approval for proposed changes.

Managing the Finances

The University is responsible for the activities of any Third Party employed on a GCRF project, so Research Services and PIs should take account of the following guidance.

Paying Overseas Partners

We recommend that you have agreed the method by which overseas or non-standard partners will receive funding from the project at the start, research services teams have guidance on the procedures that are acceptable, finance have also established new guidance for the adding of external payees.

Please see the University's guidance on Foreign Payments.
Expense claims must comply with the University expense policy.

Laws in other countries

Where contracts are required with partner organisations, it should be noted that all UKRI research funding is governed by UK laws as stated in their terms and conditions. If you foresee any problems with your ODA partner organisation(s)

agreeing to such clauses due to their country laws, please note this, and what the issue(s) you foresee, in the USTAN Due Diligence Post-Award Questionnaire Declaration.

 For the avoidance of doubt by the third party, this does not mean that Scots law governs research activities occurring within the project (for example, regarding the handling of cultural artefacts, or obtaining regulatory approvals etc).

PIs are reminded that they should make themselves familiar with the laws of the country they will be visiting. Criminal activity undertaken by individuals or by the University of St Andrews is subject to the laws of the visited country. Please be aware that criminal prosecutions or civil actions may be brought in that jurisdiction as well as in the UK.

Reporting

PURE

An impact narrative must be maintained in the Pure profile of all PIs. Pure should be populated with information on any events and evidence for impact by the PIs, as the project progresses, and also after the funding has ended.

Post-award reporting

Once a GCRF project is completed, there are continuing obligations for the PI and research support teams to report financial expenditure on time, while monitoring and reporting the future outputs, impact and other outcomes resulting from the research. For SFC ODA GCRF funding, PIs will be required to provide yearly reports on use of funds, per a template which will be sent to you.

Final expenditure statements

All SFC GCRF awards, are required to submit a final statement of all expenditure incurred on the project, which FAS will generate. All expenditure must contain a verifiable audit trail which includes receipts and purchase confirmations where possible. PIs must remember that partner expenses are St Andrews' responsibility and where possible and feasible evidence of partner expenditure should be available for audit. Please speak to FAS if you have any queries.

Researchfish

UKRI, which includes the SFC GCRF funding, require PIs to complete an annual return of outputs and impacts on Researchfish, their online outcomes submission system. GCRF projects funded directly by UKRI funders will have a similar requirement during the lifetime of the award and for 5 years after completion.

Acknowledging funding and tracking research impact

Research teams and partners should acknowledge the source of funding (SFC and GCRF), where possible, in all publications, media statements and in conference papers even after the project has concluded. Logos are available from: https://impact.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/sfc-oda-global-challenges-gcrf-fy-2019-20/

PIs should give thought to the tracking of ongoing research impact arising from GCRF projects and the mechanism that could be put in place with various partners and local contractors to measure this. This information may be repurposed for academic publication, reporting purposes, departmental publicity and, potentially, for Research Excellence Framework Impact Case Studies. Please contact the Research Impact Team if you have any queries.

Tips from colleagues:
Reporting: It is helpful to keep a running note and to take photos throughout – ensure you have the permission of the subjects or their guardians, in the case of minors – and keep a record of events and challenges. This will make reporting easier.
Budget accounting: you may wish to use your own Excel files to keep track of line budgets for internal management.