

## British Academy: Sustainable Development Programme (2016)

### Guidance Notes

#### Summary

1. The [British Academy](#) is launching a new, competitive research funding call, the Sustainable Development Programme, as part of the £1.5 billion [Global Challenges Research Fund](#). The British Academy's Sustainable Development Programme will fund excellent, policy oriented UK research, aimed at addressing the UN's [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and advancing the [UK's Aid Strategy](#). This interdisciplinary research programme will fund the evidence that will inform the policies and interventions that will improve people's lives in fragile, conflict-affected states, or in developing countries by:
  - a. funding grants that deliver research excellence with development impact, aimed at reducing poverty and advancing socio-economic development
  - b. strengthening the evidence base on what works in addressing sustainable development goals, including what works in different contexts, the interactions and interdependencies between different interventions
  - c. providing the evidence and insights needed to enable policymakers to design and implement effective interventions in developing countries.
2. This call for proposals provides an opportunity for UK researchers to undertake projects to deliver research excellence with development impact. Research will be problem focused and will be interdisciplinary, bringing together relevant disciplines to tackle the problem for maximum impact. It is envisaged that small teams, with different disciplinary backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences and using a broad range of different methodological approaches, will apply for funding. Approximately 15 research projects of up to 16 months in duration will be funded, with the maximum funding for each project at £360,000.

#### Sustainable Development Programme: Aims and Context

3. The UK Government is committed to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030. Yet our current understanding of what works is limited. The UK needs excellent problem focused research, to fill the evidence gaps and keep pace with the way in which poverty and inequality are evolving. There is a need for more evidence on what works in different contexts, to enable the UK to develop effective interventions. To address these needs, the Sustainable Development Programme will focus on three thematic areas:
  - a. Sustainable Governance
  - b. Sustainable Growth
  - c. Sustainable Human Development
4. The Sustainable Development Programme also aims to address the four principles of the UK's Aid Strategy, namely:
  - a. Strengthening global peace, security and governance

- b. Strengthening resilience and response to crises
- c. Promoting global prosperity
- d. Tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable

### Research Themes and Focus

5. To ensure critical mass, the research questions will be clustered around three thematic areas:
  - a. **Sustainable Governance**, including:
    - i. Inclusive, accessible, accountable societies
    - ii. Justice, governance and institutions (including regional, national and international)
    - iii. Resilience to crises and effective response – protracted and urgent
    - iv. Corruption
    - v. Conflict, violence, extremism and fragile states
    - vi. Migration and displacement – host, transiting and country of origin
    - vii. Civil service reform
    - viii. Human Rights
  - b. **Sustainable Growth**, including:
    - i. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth and innovation
    - ii. Productive employment (especially creating jobs and economic empowerment for youth and women) and rewarding work for all
    - iii. Business, productivity, skills and competitiveness
    - iv. Safe and sustainable cities (Urban planning, housing and living, infrastructure transport and population, migration, stabilising rural populations, effect of urbanisation and increasing populations on health and disease, reduced environmental impact, population growth and ageing populations)
    - v. Sustainable consumption and production patterns
  - c. **Sustainable Human Development**, including:
    - i. Inclusive and Equitable Education
    - ii. Gender equality and discrimination
    - iii. Health education
    - iv. Building young people's skills for the workplace
    - v. Youth bulging and demographic dividends

### Research Excellence

6. There will be an open, competitive call for proposals, which must fall within the decided themes and demonstrate how the research will meet the Sustainable Development Programme's objectives. Proposals received in the first stage will be assessed by relevant assessors who will draw up a shortlist. Those shortlisted will be invited to submit a Full Proposal, focused around particular themes/topics. All research funded will have to demonstrate its potential to deliver the evidence that policymakers need to tackle Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of the UK's Aid Strategy.

## ODA Eligibility Criteria

7. The primary purpose of the Sustainable Development Programme is the “economic development and welfare of developing countries”. Only research that has a primary objective which is directly and primarily relevant to the problems of [developing countries](#) may be counted as [ODA](#). We will require applicants to demonstrate that the proposal is ODA eligible. ODA eligibility is an essential criterion – projects will only be deemed eligible for funding if they can demonstrate that they satisfy ODA eligibility criteria.
8. The British Academy, with the other Global Challenges Research Fund delivery partners, have provided an [additional ODA guidance](#) document for applicants.

## Research Methodology and Communication

9. Successful projects will be likely to employ a variety of research methods, and to include a collaborative group of researchers across relevant cross-disciplinary fields. In all cases it is for the applicant to demonstrate the feasibility of their proposed research methodology.
10. All proposals must include relevant plans for the appropriate communication and dissemination of findings. Research outputs will include peer reviewed work for academic publication, as well as more targeted briefings for policymakers. This will include, but are not necessarily limited to; publications in quality peer-reviewed open access journals; production of reports, policy briefs and other written outputs such as fact sheets, evidence summaries or online blogs specifically targeted to a relevant policymaker or other non-academic audience, and oral presentations at conferences and meetings with relevant stakeholders.
11. All projects will be expected to send representatives to take part in three events at the British Academy in London during the course of the award, including one induction meeting when the projects formally begin, an interim meeting after twelve months, and a final meeting to discuss future directions and outcomes.

## Research Ethics

12. Applicants must ensure the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard and must ensure that any potential ethical issues have been considered and explain how these will be addressed. The British Academy requires the research it funds to be conducted in an ethical manner.
13. The host institution is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to the research project are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body.
14. Ethical approval to undertake the research must be granted by the relevant authority before any work requiring approval begins. Wherever necessary, appropriate consent should be obtained from or on behalf of participants or others affected by the research.
15. Applicants will be asked to indicate whether their proposed research raises any special ethical issues, and whether their application has been approved by the institution's Research Ethics Committee or other relevant authority.

## **Risk Management**

16. Researchers funded under the Sustainable Development Programme may choose to undertake fieldwork in the course of the research project. Depending on the country/region concerned, there is a risk that the researchers will be in an area of civil unrest, violence/crime.
17. Research groups will be required to indicate if (and where) they intend to undertake research in the field. For countries/regions considered by the UK government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a host nation of medium or high risk, the application will also require researchers to demonstrate that the PI (and the PI's host institution) understand the risk management implications and can monitor and manage the risks effectively. This aspect will be explicitly covered in the approval of any application by the appropriate authorities at the PI's host institution, to confirm that the duty of care responsibility rests with the host institution.

## **Scope of the Sustainable Development Programme**

18. The Sustainable Development Programme is open to researchers based at UK institutions. Principal Investigators must be prepared to commit to travelling to London to take part in at least three events organised by the British Academy during the course of the awards – an induction event, a mid-term event and a final networking event.
19. Projects supported under this call are expected to have a clear and significant role for relevant stakeholders in the countries that are the subject of the bids. The British Academy actively encourages collaboration with relevant non-academic stakeholders.

## **Eligibility to be the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, or participant on a project**

20. Each research group will be led by a named Principal Investigator (PI). The PI is expected to be the person acting as the lead investigator on the project, directing the research and the management of the project, including responsibility for the overall project reporting requirements.
21. An individual cannot be the PI on more than one British Academy: Sustainable Development Programme bid.
22. The PI will be expected to commit a minimum amount of time to the project during the course of an award equivalent to at least four hours per week.
23. The PI must have a minimum of at least three years postdoctoral (or equivalent) research experience, and should hold an established role in a publicly funded UK university or research institute. The PI's position must last at least the duration of the grant funded by the British Academy.
24. Collaboration between researchers is encouraged, and applications may include named Co-Investigators (Co-I) who will also be actively assisting in the direction and management of at least parts of the project. They may be expected to be in a position to take over the leadership of the project in the event that the PI is unable to continue in the role.

25. Co-Investigators must also have at least three years postdoctoral (or other relevant) experience.
26. No individual may be a Co-I on more than two projects (nor may a PI be additionally a Co-I on more than one other project).
27. Projects may also include any number of specified 'other participants', who may, for example, be relevant stakeholders participating in networking or dissemination events, academic or policy advisers etc.
28. There is no provision for any paid researcher under the Sustainable Development Programme to be a doctoral or other postgraduate student.

### **Duration, Value, and Payment of Funding**

29. Projects must be up to 16 months in duration, with a value of £360,000. The grant would be paid in four instalments. The first instalment will be paid immediately on acceptance of the award, with subsequent instalments paid at regular intervals. Interim and Final Reports will be expected as part of the award.
30. Projects will be funded from 1 December 2016 to 31 March 2018.
31. Funding may be used to support:
  - a. the time of the Principal Investigator (PI)
  - b. Co-Investigators involved in directing the project
  - c. postdoctoral research assistance
  - d. travel and related expenses
  - e. networking costs, including travel to London to attend three events organised by the British Academy
  - f. university costs in hosting and supporting the research team, with award-holders expected to base the division of spend on the Full Economic Costing basis at 100%.
32. All grants will be paid to the employing institution of the PI, and not to the individual researchers involved. Institutions must be officially recognised by the British Academy prior to a proposal being submitted.

### **Selection principles**

33. All eligible proposals submitted in response to this call will be assessed by relevant British Academy peer reviewers, who will be asked to assess applications against the following criteria:
  - a. The quality, significance and originality of the proposal. Research excellence is an essential assessment criterion;

- b. Evidence that the project is ODA eligible. Only projects that demonstrate they satisfy ODA eligibility criteria will be eligible for funding.
- c. How clearly the project demonstrates that it will address the Sustainable Development Goals. All research funded will have to demonstrate its potential to engage relevant experts to discuss the research findings, delivering the evidence that policymakers need to address the SDGs.
- d. How clearly the project group demonstrates that it will ensure that the research is 'problem orientated', addressing the real needs of relevant policymakers and other users and tackle a high priority problem
- e. Evidence of how the project will bring together relevant cross-disciplinary expertise to address the problem identified, and also how the project will involve researchers from appropriate target countries
- f. The ability of the PI and Co-Is to deliver this kind of research project within budget and on time, based on their demonstrable track record to date
- g. The feasibility of the proposal in terms of appropriate and robust methodology; and appropriate timing and plan of action
- h. The feasibility of appropriate plans to manage the project and disseminate findings to relevant audiences
- i. Value for money

#### **Code of Practice**

- 34. The British Academy has a [Code of Practice](#), setting out the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality governing the treatment of all applications for research support. The Code of Practice also covers Data Protection, the British Academy's ethics policy and the appeals procedure.

#### **Contact Details and Further Information**

- 35. Please contact [GCRF@britac.ac.uk](mailto:GCRF@britac.ac.uk) or call 020 7969 5220 for further information.