The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

Announced by the UK government in the spending review of autumn 2015, the GCRF is a 5 year, £1.5bn challenge-led fund to support research that addresses the problems faced by developing countries, whilst also enhancing the UK’s capability to deliver world-class research. The GCRF will be administered by a range of UK funding bodies, with the Research Councils as the main delivery partners. The majority of schemes will involve multiple funders, and will actively encourage an interdisciplinary approach. Though each scheme will be led by a designated funder, this does not necessarily preclude involvement from those working outside of that funder’s usual research remit.

It is important to note that the GCRF forms part of the UK’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, and funding will be awarded in a manner compliant with official ODA guidelines. Applicants will have to demonstrate that research is ‘directly and primarily relevant to the problems of developing countries’ (though this does not mean that there can’t be associated benefits to the UK). Activities do not need to be undertaken in the developing countries to which the research relates. However, engaging partners who are based in developing countries (or who have at least worked in developing countries) would be likely to strengthen proposals. Given the scheme’s focus on Official Development Assistance, impact will be a key consideration and, as with other Research Council research grant applications, applicants should consider requesting funding to support research uptake, as well as to monitor and evaluate the impact of research.

In general the GCRF will not be prescriptive over which ODA-eligible countries or territories should be the focus of particular schemes, and there is no requirement for applicants to obtain matched funding.

Current and forthcoming funding opportunities

June 2016 deadlines:
- Infection Foundation Awards: Global infections – Vision and Strategy – led by MRC
- Non-communicable Disease (NCDs) Foundation Awards: Global Health Science – Beyond Infections – led by MRC
- Foundation Awards for Global Agricultural and Food Systems Research – led by BBSRC
- Towards a Sustainable Earth: The environment-human landscape (Tender for Synthesis Report) – led by NERC

July 2016 deadlines:
- Secondary Data Analysis Initiative highlight notice – led by ESRC
- ESRC-AHRC call for proposals on Forced displacement – led by ESRC
- Tackling antimicrobial resistance: behaviour within and beyond the Healthcare Setting – led by ESRC
- Translating Cultures and Care for the Future Research Innovation Awards on International Development – led by AHRC
- PaCCS: Inter-Disciplinary Research Innovation Awards on Conflict and International Development – led by AHRC

August/September/tba 2016 deadlines:
- Strategic Networks call 2016 – led by ESRC
- Building Resilience to Natural Hazards – led by NERC
- Centres competition 2016: Foundations of inclusive growth – led by ESRC
- Postdoctoral Fellowships – led by ESRC

For more information, visit the RES webpages or contact a Research Development Manager

University of Reading, June 2016