



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research Development Frontiers Research Fund 2016-17

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Deadline for proposals: **16.00 (UK time) on 26 January 2017.**

Summary

This call is being launched as part of a decade-long partnership between the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Department for International Development (DFID) to fund world class international development research through their Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research (www.esrc.ac.uk/dfid). Within this overall programme, the Development Frontiers Research Fund aims to fund innovative, strategic and catalytic research with the potential to radically impact on sustainable development concepts or practices, or lead to new thinking and action on poverty reduction.

This second call within the Development Frontiers Research Fund will support innovative, interdisciplinary research that is focused on new ways to tackle the challenges encountered at the intersections between poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility in specific developing country contexts. The countries of focus for this call have each been drawn from one of three regions (the Horn of Africa, West Africa and South/Southeast Asia), and represent a range of different environments, different types of conflict/fragility, and different dimensions, scales and facets of poverty. Proposals are invited for projects with a full economic cost (fEC) value of **between £200,000 and £300,000** and **between 12 and 18 months** in duration. Projects must **finish no later than 31 March 2019**. We expect to award between 14-18 grants, depending on quality of proposals received.

This call is open to proposals from researchers based anywhere in the world. Eligible research organisations from the UK and other developed countries can lead on a maximum of up to two proposals to this call. There is no restriction on the number of proposals that developing country research organisations can lead on. A requirement of this call is that at least one developing country researcher(s) and at least one early career researcher(s) **must be included** in the research team, either as PI and/or Co-I(s).

Please note that this call will be commissioned through a non-standard process, including an anonymous first review stage where the Case for Support and Pathways to Impact statements will be assessed by a panel of experts with no reference to the applicants' identities. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to present their proposal at a 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop on 26-27 April 2017 where anonymity will be lifted. The principal investigator (PI) **must** be able to attend the 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop. Funding decisions will be made by a commissioning panel following the assessment workshop and communicated to applicants in May 2017.

Proposals must be submitted via the Research Council's Joint Electronic Submissions System (Je-S) by **16.00 (UK time) on 26 January 2017**.

Background

Over the last decade the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research (the 'Joint Fund') has worked to fund research projects designed to bring the highest quality social science research to bear on the challenge of reducing poverty amongst the poorest countries and peoples of the world. In its latest phase, ESRC and DFID recognised that they needed to create space within the Joint Fund for innovative, interdisciplinary research that more conventional research funding schemes may not necessarily provide the best support for. Development Frontiers research involves ideas, discoveries or tools that radically

change our understanding of important existing development concepts and/or practices, or which lead to completely new thinking on poverty and poverty reduction. Inherently higher risk, but potentially higher reward, such research might pioneer theoretical or methodological innovation, engage a range of perspectives within and across academic disciplines, and foster creative partnerships between those who might not normally work together, including between academics and practitioners. Emerging evidence on such research suggests it could offer the potential to radically impact on development concepts or practices, or lead to new thinking and action on poverty reduction.

The Development Frontiers Research Fund was therefore set up to provide space for this kind of research. A first call in 2012 funded seven grants, four of which were awarded a second stage of funding. The adoption of the new global development framework in 2015 and the scale of the transformation required to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) has since further reinforced the need for such research. Securing meaningful sustainable development for all will need things to be done differently at all levels – from global frameworks, to national policies, to community-level action. New perspectives and novel solutions are needed. Research has a critical role to play in breaking down existing ways of thinking about sustainability and development, and reformulating them in ways that could prove to be transformative. To achieve this research will require new approaches that cut across and transcend traditional boundaries – geographic, disciplinary, and methodological – as well as strong new alliances that bridge the research/practice divide.

Funding this kind of research also requires a different approach that can balance excellence achieved through rigour and competition with the desire to generate genuine collaboration and space for radical ways to give voices to the poor in forming the direction and outcomes of research. For that reason, in developing this second Development Frontiers call, ESRC and DFID have both refocused the thematic focus and further developed the space for innovation within the commissioning process to create room for cooperation and to enable the kinds of creative partnerships and collaborations that have the potential to transform thinking and lead to innovative solutions to critical challenges to sustainable development.

Call details

Defining Development Frontiers research

This call will fund a portfolio of Development Frontiers projects that encourage novel developments of social science-led enquiry, and support research activity that pushes the current boundaries of international development research. The focus of the call is on exploratory, small-scale projects that have demonstrable potential to generate ideas, collaborations and research capacity leading to future larger bids for other calls, whether to ESRC and/or DFID or other funders. Successful proposals must meet the defining characteristics of Development Frontiers research:

- research that is exploratory and novel (not incremental) in nature
- research that is likely to be ahead of the field on emerging issues
- research that is likely to produce new thinking/insights and has the potential to generate results that could radically change accepted thinking
- research whose outcome(s) may be uncertain or which has potential to lead to unexpected insights

- research that involves novel forms of partnership with and between researchers in developing countries and with non-academic partners and potential research users.

Development Frontiers proposals are highly likely to involve collaborations between researchers from different disciplines, both across the social sciences and beyond; partnerships between social science and other disciplines are welcomed. However, it is a requirement of funding that all proposals must be at least 50 per cent social science.

Scientific scope

Research funded through this call will be focused on the intersection of poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility. The need to focus on the intersection between these three issues, rather than addressing each in isolation, is clear within the new global development framework. At the heart of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) are intrinsic links between poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, injustice and inequality. Thus, the over-arching goal is to reduce poverty and improve human welfare, while simultaneously delivering major reductions in carbon emissions and otherwise safeguarding the natural environment. This is echoed by the 2015 UK Aid Strategy, which strengthens the UK's commitment to addressing some of today's biggest global challenges, including promoting prosperity and tackling extreme poverty, strengthening peace, security and governance, building resilience, and improving response to crises. Significantly, the Strategy recognises the need to address the relationship between these challenges. The economic challenges of addressing growth and prosperity – while simultaneously ensuring we tackle extreme poverty, leave no one behind, and deal with environmental sustainability in the face of climate change – are immense.

The challenge is particularly acute in fragile and conflict-affected countries, which have some of the highest rates of extreme poverty and gender inequality: while they are home to a fifth of the total population living in developing countries, they account for a third of those living in extreme poverty, half of the children who are not in primary school, and half of the children who will die before their fifth birthday. These challenges will be further exacerbated in the face of climate change, with those in low- and middle-income countries likely to be disproportionately affected, and women and children particularly vulnerable.

There is some evidence that climate change can serve as a 'threat multiplier', aggravating the stressors and tensions that may lead to violent conflict. More broadly, the concern in this call is with wider questions of the causal relationships (potentially operating in both directions, and potentially either complementary or contradictory) between environmental sustainability and poverty reduction, and the ways that these are affected by, and affect, the drivers of fragility in countries that are either in active conflict or in which the government is unable or unwilling to address poverty and exclusion. In such circumstances poor institutional capacity, weak governance and oppressive political regimes amounting to 'state fragility' present significant obstacles to achieving simultaneous transformations towards poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This call is therefore open to broad definitions of conflict/fragility, provided proposals address issues at the intersection of conflict/fragility with both poverty and environmental sustainability.

While existing research has examined some of these intersections, there remain areas which have not been explored in any depth and to which social science could make a

valuable contribution. Research may wish to explore, for example: the potential impact of climate change on pathways out of poverty in fragile context(s); exploration of the potential synergies and tensions between prosperity and sustainability and how conflict can be both a cause and an effect of this; or examination of the benefits and limitations of local and global interconnectedness in conflict-affected regions and the challenge of ensuring sustainable development for all.

Proposals which are not deemed to be within the scope of the call will be rejected.

Geographic focus

Following consultations on the call scope, a selection of specific low- and middle-income countries from across three regions (the Horn of Africa, West Africa and South/Southeast Asia) have been identified as the geographic focus for this call. These countries and regions have a clear relevance – in different and contrasting ways – to the identified scientific focus for this call: the intersections of poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility. Between them they represent a wide range of:

- different environments (and therefore different susceptibilities to the impacts of climate change and different implications for and of environmental sustainability)
- different types of conflict/fragility (from civil to national conflicts, from people trafficking to domestic violence, and from conflicts drawing on religion to those focussed on other ideologies and interests)
- different dimensions, scales and facets of poverty.

As such they offer not only potential for interesting research in and of itself, but also excellent opportunities for informative and challenging comparisons. They also address existing gaps within the Joint Fund portfolio.

We aim to fund a balance of projects covering all three regions, subject to the quality of proposals received. The eligible countries are:

West Africa	Horn of Africa	South/Southeast Asia
Benin	Djibouti	Bangladesh
Burkina Faso	Eritrea	Bhutan
Cape Verde	Ethiopia	Cambodia
Gambia	Somalia	Lao PDR
Guinea	South Sudan	Maldives
Guinea-Bissau	Sudan	Myanmar
Ivory Coast		Nepal
Mali		Pakistan
Mauritania		Philippines
Niger		Timor Leste
Nigeria		
Saint Helena		
Senegal		
Sao Tome and Principe		
Togo		

Projects must explore issues related to the intersections of poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility in one or more of these call focus countries. **Research focused on countries not on this list will not be considered** even if the alternative countries are included as a comparison to eligible call focus countries. We do, however, encourage research that has the potential for broader relevance.

Comparative research across countries and/or regions on this list is encouraged, but it is not a requirement of this call. However, successful projects will be expected to work together to identify synergies and complementarities with other projects funded under the call, both within and between countries and regions.

Structural inequalities

Structural inequalities cut across international development research, and have been a key consideration for all recent calls under the Joint Fund. Whilst not the scientific focus for the Development Frontiers Research Fund, structural inequalities should therefore be considered as a cross-cutting theme within all projects funded under this call.

High and growing levels of inequality are a significant factor in individual and collective ill-being, with research exploring the impacts of vertical and horizontal inequality on conflict, growth and poverty. More and more of the world's poor people are living in middle-income countries, with inequalities between the rich and the poor widening and becoming further entrenched. Intra-group inequalities can also be pronounced. Gender inequality remains a key stumbling block to human development and poverty reduction. Gender gaps persist in part because underlying social norms, institutions and political factors perpetuate structural inequalities in the home, communities, markets and society in ways that affect the ability of women and girls to realise opportunities or meet basic needs. Such inequalities are also experienced by groups such as youth, disabled people, ethnic and religious minorities and people living in remote conditions, who are particularly likely to face multiple deprivations. These deprivations, which include lack of access to education, health, food and nutrition, economic and political opportunities, as well as social stigma and political opposition, make it harder for people to find routes out of poverty and to engage in economic growth processes.

However, development research with a gender dimension that can lead to effective policy is often underdeveloped due to lack of disaggregated data and the failure to include gender dynamics in conceptual models. Failure to identify and explore the distinctive gender dimensions of economic and social policies and institutions - as well as other structural inequality dimensions such as those relating to ethnicity, age, disability and spatial geography - may lead to bias in interventions and processes, or limit impact and value for money. In order to produce knowledge and evidence to inform more effective policies and programmes and to support transformational changes in structural inequalities, applicants must make a genuine effort to integrate adequate analysis of gender and other structural inequalities in their research design, even where this may not be the central focus of the project. We strongly encourage researchers not only to ensure that relevant data - where

feasible - are disaggregated by sex, age and other structural inequalities, but also to analyse the different roles and responsibilities, constraints and opportunities or power differentials between, for example, girls/women and boys/men.

Post-funding collaboration

ESRC and DFID recognise that the best research and innovation with the greatest impact can often be delivered by working with, and benchmarking against, the best researchers and innovators internationally. To this end, both funders wish to develop collaborative activities bringing together successful applicants under this call to share expertise and develop a suite of activities to maximise the value and impact of the collective Development Frontiers research cohort, alongside individual projects.

Additional funding will therefore be made available to foster collaboration between grants which have been funded under this call. **It is a requirement of funding that applicants actively engage with this process.** Successful PIs would therefore be required to come together to form a Development Frontiers Cohort Coordination Group that will foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and research uptake activities between grants to maximise the impact of research funded under this call. Further details on will be provided in due course.

Partnership, research capacity and collaboration

This call is concerned with international cooperation to address issues of global importance. Underpinning the call and all projects funded through it must be a strong research ethic based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices. Solutions to tackle the challenges encountered at the intersections between poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility must be rooted in, and acceptable to, the institutions, communities and societies where they will operate.

Research proposals **must** include strong partnerships involving one or more researcher(s) from developing countries, as well as between senior and more junior staff. Developing country contributors must be included as principal or co-investigators in all research proposals; they can also additionally be involved in other capacities as appropriate. Partnerships may build on existing relationships or represent new collaborative relationships. The configuration of partnerships and collaborations should be driven by the research and impact objectives underpinning the proposal.

In addition, we also particularly encourage appropriate inclusion and involvement of non-academic stakeholders – including potential research users and intermediary organisations with a mandate to communicate research who are listed in the proposal – in both the early design and on-going conduct of research projects. The nature of this involvement and types of partners and partnerships will be dependent on the specific context of the research.

ESRC and DFID are not seeking to fund capacity-building *per se* through this call, as both organisations fund capacity-building activities through other mechanisms. However, capacity building activities are encouraged and at a minimum we expect successful proposals to demonstrate a strong understanding of the local research context and ensure the research

project does not undermine local research capacity. Examples of building capacity could include: opportunities for those with relevant skills to orient their research towards global issues; support and mentoring for more junior team members; staff exchanges, particularly between developing and developed country partners; and co-design of research and implementation with developing country partner staff.

The call does not provide support for stand-alone or associated doctoral students.

Pathways to Impact

ESRC and DFID expect that the researchers they fund will have identified at proposal stage, as far as is possible, the potential impacts of their research on policy and practice, and that researchers will actively consider how these opportunities for impact can be maximised and developed. However, we recognise that the nature of Development Frontiers research makes this challenging, and that pathways to impact may be less predictable or obvious than for conventional research projects. Applicants are therefore encouraged to trace the potential pathways towards impact, recognising that this may look quite different to what they are used to. In the development of their Pathways to Impact statement, applicants should be innovative in the kinds of engagement, communications and research uptake activities they plan to undertake during and beyond the life course of the grant. Whilst research impact is a key assessment criterion, assessors will therefore be instructed to recognise the challenges of defining pathways to impact in Development Frontiers research, and will assess proposals based on the strength of a project's potential for impact as demonstrated by their Pathways to Impact statement.

It is recommended that a minimum of 10 per cent of the overall budget should be dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the impact strategy. Applicants may find it helpful to refer to the ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy:

www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/developing-a-communications-and-impact-strategy/.

Every project in this call is expected to **engage with key stakeholders** in the country or countries where the majority of the research is taking place at the earliest opportunity, in order to set out the aims of the project and fully ground it in the local context. This will facilitate the co-production of knowledge and will also allow researchers to 'reality-check' their plans.

Research ethics

Applicants must ensure that the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard. Proposals must clearly state how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised. All proposals must comply with the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics that can be found at

www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ .

Open Access Policy

RCUK and DFID have both published policies on open access to publications and data¹. Researchers funded under this call will be expected to comply with the requirements outlined in these policies. Should the policies differ from one another, researchers are expected to comply with the more stringent policy. Funding will be available for all associated legitimate and proportionate costs, but the route to funding will depend on the researchers' institutional affiliation. UK institutions are no longer able to apply for Article Processing Charges (APCs) as part of a research proposal; rather, funds are provided to research organisations at an institutional level as block grants in order to set up publication funds. ESRC and DFID will work to ensure that those researchers who are not covered by the RCUK block grant mechanism are not disadvantaged. If APCs cannot be covered by block grants (ie if there is no UK researcher on the proposal), applicants should include the APC costs and justify these fully in their proposals. If unsure, applicants should seek advice from the programme secretariat as to whether publication costs should be requested (see 'Contact details' below).

Environmental impact of research programmes

Applicants are advised that they should pay attention to the environmental implications of their research. They should take reasonable steps to minimise or offset the carbon footprint of all travel supported by the call, although this cannot be paid for with ESRC-DFID funds. Where the project has control, documents, reports and paper outputs should be printed on paper made from sustainably managed forests and/or recycled paper.

What can applicants apply for?

Applicants are invited to submit proposals with a full economic cost (fEC) value of between **£200,000 and £300,000**. Proposals with a fEC value outside this range will not be accepted under this call. The fEC value refers to the total cost of the project and is not the actual contribution paid by the ESRC and DFID. The funders' contribution for justified directly incurred costs for UK applicants will usually be 80 per cent. For non-UK institutions, the call will support 100 per cent of the justified directly incurred costs of the research. Indirect costs may also be charged on staff salary and other staff-related costs (ie statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions). Indirect costs may not be charged on non-staff related direct costs, eg equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences, etc. The following rates for eligible indirect costs should be applied:

- for applicants from developing countries², the overhead rate is 50 per cent
- for applicants from developed countries, the overhead rate is 20 per cent.

¹ For more information please see www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/ and www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-research-open-and-enhanced-access-policy.

² See the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>. For the purposes of this call 'developing countries' includes Least Developed Countries, Other Low Income Countries, Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories, and Upper Middle Income Countries and Territories.

Further information is provided in the document '**Costs incurred by non-UK institutions and partners**' available at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-development-frontiers-research-fund-call-2/>. All applicants **must** refer to this document before completing the Je-S application form. ESRC will ask for adequate evidence of the costing basis for all direct and indirect costs. If a grant is recommended for funding, budgets may be reduced if considered excessive. All applicants are strongly advised to consult their institutional finance/research offices regarding the financial aspects of their proposal in good time before the call deadline. All costs should be broken down and fully justified. If applicants or their host organisations have any doubts about the costing basis of their proposals they should contact the call secretariat.

The duration of grants should be between **12 and 18 months**, and all projects must complete by 31 March 2019.

Eligibility to apply to the call

Principal investigators (PIs) and co-investigators (Co-Is)

The proposal must be headed by one principal investigator (PI). The call is open to researchers based in recognised higher education institutions, research organisations or organisations with a credible research capacity to undertake high-quality research (see below) anywhere in the world. This refers to institutions which possess an existing in-house capacity to host a grant and to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the national or international research base, and is able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research projects.

Applicants that are not based in a higher education institute (for example work for an NGO or other third sector organisation) should consider whether their organisation is best placed to host a grant and can meet the stringent expectations of RCUK eligibility. It is essential that institutions with minimal research capacity collaborate with a credible research organisation who would host the project.

All grants will be made to the institution hosting the PI, and that institution will be subject to standard terms and conditions for ESRC grants, with regard to the disbursement of funds to co-investigators (Co-Is) at other institutions, and with additional call reporting requirements. Further information on eligibility is provided within the ESRC Research Funding Guidance: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/

Under the call rules an individual is permitted to be involved in multiple bids to this call, but cannot be the PI on more than one proposal. No applicant (PI or Co-I) can exceed a total time commitment of 37.5 hours per week across current proposals and/or ongoing ESRC grants.

A requirement of this call is that both developing country researcher(s) and early career researcher(s) **must be included** in the research team, either as PI and/or Co-I(s). These are not mutually exclusive categories; an early career researcher based in a developing country would cover both requirements. General guidance on the inclusion of international co-investigators is available at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/.

For the purpose of this call the ESRC and DFID consider an early career researcher as someone with a maximum of six years academic research experience following the submission of their PhD, or be of equivalent professional standing (please note that RCUK eligible independent research organisations (IROs) will be considered as equivalent experience to universities and employment at such bodies will count towards the maximum six years research experience). This period is measured from the submission date of the PhD thesis to the date on which the proposal was submitted. Career breaks will be excluded from the six-year period. A clear statement should be included in the Case for Support explaining how they meet these criteria.

Important note: In addition to the formal Due Diligence checks explained below, all applicants and their organisations must register to use the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system before submitting a proposal. Je-S will be used to receive and process all proposals under this call. The section 'How to apply' below contains full information and guidance on this registration process. All applicants intending to submit a proposal are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with this section and the 'Je-S guidance for applicants' on the call webpage: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-development-frontiers-research-fund-call-2/>

Recognised research institutions (Due Diligence checks)

Most non-UK institutions will not be recognised to hold UK Research Council grants. Lead institutions which are not currently recognised to hold UK Research Council grants will have to complete Research Council Due Diligence checks before any grant can be confirmed. No grant can commence until full RCUK eligibility has been granted following this process. Proposals which are not from a credible research organisation will be rejected by the ESRC office.

Research Council recognition of institutions eligible to hold grants is a longer and more involved process that will be undertaken once a proposal has been recommended for funding. This must be completed before a grant can be issued to the grant holder's institution. Please bear this in mind when determining the length and start date of your proposal, as all grants must complete by 31 March 2019.

More details on the Due Diligence checks are available in the 'Costs incurred by non-UK institutions and partners' on the call webpage: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-development-frontiers-research-fund-call-2/>

Number of proposals per research organisation

Eligible research organisations from the UK and other developed countries are permitted to lead on up to two proposals. There is no restriction on the number of proposals that developing country research organisations can lead on. Proposals from research organisations in developed countries should be pre-selected by the research organisation following their internal selection process; it is entirely the responsibility of the research organisation to manage and monitor this process. In the event that more than two proposals are received from a developed country research organisation, the ESRC reserves the right not to process any proposals from that research organisation until the organisation has rectified the situation. This may result in all proposals from that research organisation

being rejected if there are significant delays. There is also no limit on the number of proposals on which any research organisation is a contributor or collaborator.

Other collaborators and consultants

In addition to PIs and CoIs, it is possible to name other specific collaborators and consultants in the proposal, for instance public, private or NGO sector experts who could provide invaluable stakeholder inputs and advice to the project. These must be fully costed on the proposal and their role on the project must be made clear.

If consultants are included on a proposal clear justification must be provided to explain why a consultancy is the most appropriate way to staff this aspect of the project.

Funding exclusions

Proposals which duplicate work previously funded through other joint ESRC and DFID mechanisms will not be funded under this call. Details of the successful awards from previous calls are available on the ESRC website: www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/international-development/esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research/poverty-projects/

The ESRC does not allow the resubmission of any previously unsuccessful proposal, unless explicitly invited to resubmit. Please see ESRC's policy on resubmissions on the ESRC website, including definitions of what constitutes a resubmission: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/resubmissions-policy/

The call will not fund contract research or consultancy work where the results and physical outputs are to some extent already pre-defined and known. The call will also not fund project/intervention or process evaluations.

Decision-making process

There will be two phases to the decision making process:

Phase 1 – Office checks and shortlisting panel

Once the call has closed the secretariat will conduct office checks on all proposals. Proposals not deemed to be within the scope of the call or which do not meet the core eligibility criteria will be rejected. For proposals that are deemed eligible, the anonymous, Case for Support and the Pathways to Impact statements will be assessed by an expert shortlisting panel against the selection criteria detailed below. It is therefore essential that the applicant(s) are not identifiable through these documents. Where either of these documents disclose or infer the identity of the applicant(s) they will be returned for amendment.

The panel will then decide which proposals will be shortlisted. Decisions will be communicated to applicants in March 2017.

Phase 2 – 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop and commissioning panel

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop which will be run over two days on 26-27 April 2017. At this workshop each shortlisted applicant will be asked to present their proposal, which will be assessed by other shortlisted applicants and members of the expert commissioning panel. Final funding recommendations will then be made by the commissioning panel, who will have full access to all proposal documents; anonymity of applicants will therefore be lifted at this stage. Proposals where the PI is unable to attend the 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop will not be considered and therefore should not be submitted. The PI may be accompanied by up to two members of the project team for their pitch; however, no individual is permitted to take part in more than one pitch at the Pitch-to-Peers assessment workshop.

Final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in May 2017.

Assessment criteria

Assessors will consider whether applications are of world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically sound), fit the criteria for Development Frontiers research, and whether the research has the potential to have a real impact on poverty reduction. Assessors will be asked to comment on the following criteria when assessing proposals, and therefore applicants are advised to consider all these criteria when preparing their proposals:

Research innovation

- Does the proposed research involve pioneering theoretical and methodological innovation, and/or engage a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, and/or foster creative partnerships between those who might not normally work together, including between academics and practitioners?
- Does the proposed research have the potential to radically change accepted thinking or practice? Does it push boundaries of international development research in ways which will stimulate new or novel forms of enquiry or practice?
- Where the research is potentially higher risk, is it likely to yield higher rewards?

Research quality

- Is there a clear understanding of the problem/issue to be addressed through this research, and is a strong case made for its relevance to the challenges encountered at the intersections between poverty, environmental sustainability and conflict/fragility?
- Is the proposed research approach of high quality and seeking to address this problem/issue through innovative, strategic and catalytic research?
- Is the proposed research focussed exclusively on a country or countries on the list of call focus countries?
- Is there a clear and rigorous articulation of appropriate research methods and data analysis?
- Does the proposal integrate adequate and appropriate analysis of gender and other structural inequalities?
- Have ethical issues been appropriately addressed in the proposal?

Research impact

- Has a clear and appropriate plan been articulated on how the project will maximise and develop research impact and uptake through and within the project?
- Does the project have real potential for impact on poverty reduction?
- Have plans been included for engagement with key in-country stakeholders?

Partnerships and Research Capacity Development

- Is there evidence of genuine, appropriate and productive collaborations across disciplinary boundaries, with developing country researchers, and with non-academic stakeholders? Does the research team include both developing country and early career researcher(s) as PI and/or CoIs?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of partners and collaborators appropriate and balanced?
- Have all the research partners been fully involved in the design, management and execution of the research, and do they have a clear and meaningful role in future activities?
- Is there an understanding of the local research context, and have steps been taken to ensure the research programme builds, or at the very least does not undermine, local research capacity?
- Have sufficient resources and time been allocated to ensure strong working partnerships across disciplines, organisations and geographic contexts?

Project management and value for money

- Are the project management plans and configuration of roles and responsibilities reasonable, appropriate and credible for the given project?
- Are the credentials of the investigators and host institutions appropriate to deliver the project?
- Does the budget appear reasonable for the proposed package of work?
- Is appropriate funding allocated for research uptake activities and research dissemination?

Important Note: These criteria will be only be considered by the commissioning panel once anonymity has been lifted at the 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop.

How to apply

The call will be open between 11 October 2016 and 16.00 (UK time) on 26 January 2017. **Proposals submitted after 16.00 (UK time) on 26 January 2017 will not be accepted.** Electronic acknowledgement will be sent to the PI and submitting organisation.

All proposals must be submitted in English, costed in pounds sterling (£) and made on the official ESRC application form using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Jes2WebLoginSite/login.aspx. Proposals can **only** be accepted by electronic submission through the Je-S system. When selecting the 'Proposal Call' on the Je-

S system applicants must ensure that they select the correct call: **'ESRC-DFID Development Frontiers Call 2 2016-17'**.

The proposal has two elements: an online form requesting key information; and a series of mandatory attachments, including the Case for Support, Pathways to Impact, Justification of Resources and CVs for all named individuals, which are to be completed offline and uploaded as (preferably PDF) attachments in Je-S. Generic guidance on the completion of the structured boxes and sections of the form is available from the Je-S Help screens, which can be found at the top right hand corner of each Je-S screen.

Applicants must ensure that they have read and complied with the call-specific guidance set out in the 'Je-S Guidance for Applicants' (which is available at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-development-frontiers-research-fund-call-2/>), as well as the call criteria set out in this specification document. In the event that call-specific guidance differs from generic Je-S advice, the call-specific guidance should always be followed. Care and attention must be given to completing the proposal correctly and complying with all technical requirements. Proposals that are not completed correctly may be rejected by the ESRC office.

In order to use the Je-S system, PIs and the host organisation need to register on the system. Registration of both the PI's organisation and their own details must be completed before the proposal can be formally submitted to the ESRC. The final submission process is the responsibility of the host institution and the ESRC cannot accept responsibility for any delays which may occur. It is recommended that applicants submit in good time before the call deadline, and allow sufficient time for their organisation to complete final checks of the proposal and the final submission process. We strongly advise applicants to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the proposal has been submitted successfully to the ESRC. If you are applying from a self-registered account, this will not apply.

Timetable

- Call for proposals open on Je-S - 11 October 2016
- Deadline for submitting proposals - 16.00 (UK time) on 26 January 2017
- Shortlisting decisions to applicants - March 2017
- 'Pitch-to-Peers' assessment workshop - 26-27 April 2017
- Final decisions to applicants - May 2017
- Grants commence - from 1 September 2017
- Final grant completion date - by 31 March 2019.

Contact details

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S system should be addressed to the Je-S Helpdesk:

- Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0)1793 444164
Monday to Friday 9.00 to 17.00 (excluding public and other holidays).

Any other queries relating to this call should be addressed to the call secretariat:

- Email: frontiers@esrc.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 1793 413137

Call webpage: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-development-frontiers-research-fund-call-2/>