



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

## **ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research Impact and Engagement Scheme 2015 Call for Proposals (invitation only)**

### **Summary**

The ESRC and DFID are committed to encouraging dialogue and collaboration between researchers and research users to maximise the impact of international development research on policy and practice. As part of this, an Impact and Engagement scheme is included within our Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research. This provides grants to support researchers who have been funded through the Joint Fund to undertake supplementary knowledge exchange activities that take advantage of emerging opportunities to support research uptake.

The invitation-only 2015 call is open to principal investigators (PIs) who have held a grant funded within Phase 2 of the Joint Fund, as long as that research grant has completed at the point they submit a proposal to the Impact and Engagement call. Researchers who have not held a grant under this specific phase of the programme, or whose grant has not yet completed, are not eligible to apply. **All uninvited or ineligible applications will be rejected.**

Proposals are invited for grants with a full economic cost value of between £25,000 and £75,000. Proposals outside of this value range will not be accepted. **Normal fEC rules will not apply in this case: exceptionally, the funders will meet 100 per cent of the justified costs applied for.** All activities funded through an Impact and Engagement grant **must** be completed by 31 March 2016.

Up to £400,000 has been allocated to the 2015 call. Proposals can be submitted at any point while the call is open and will be considered on an individual, rolling basis. The aim is to make funding decisions within eight weeks of receiving a proposal, and for grants to be able to commence within six weeks of the funding decision. The call will open on 6 July 2015 and will close when all available funds have been allocated, or no later than 16.00 (UK time) on 18 December 2015.

## Background and scope

The ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research has two central aims: to provide a more robust conceptual and empirical basis for development; and to enhance the quality and impact of social science research that contributes to achieving human development objectives. The research we have funded over the last decade is a rich source of development evidence, but if it is to achieve societal and economic impact it needs to be ‘taken up’ or ‘used’ by people. Activities that facilitate and support the exchange of knowledge between researchers and (potential) research users – including groups or individuals from the public sector, civil society, and business, as well as communities and the general public - are therefore critical to achieving the scheme’s aims. Annex I below sets out more details on how we understand impact and research uptake.

Researchers funded in Phase 2 of the Joint Fund will already have undertaken a range of knowledge exchange activities in support of their original ‘Pathways to Impact’. But the shifting nature of the policy terrain means not all opportunities to support research uptake can be anticipated at the start of a grant; new opportunities may emerge in its later stages or after completion of the core research activities. By supporting supplementary research uptake and knowledge exchange activities that take advantage of emerging or unanticipated opportunities to build on and amplify the grant’s Pathways to Impact, the aim is to maximise the opportunity for research impact on policy and practice.

## Call details

This call will enable researchers funded within Phase 2 of the Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research to flexibly respond to opportunities for knowledge exchange and research uptake arising after the completion of their main grant. Impact and Engagement grants will enable PIs to undertake small to medium-scale short-term activities aimed at maximising the potential for research impact outside of academia. Proposals may relate to an individual research grant or involve collaboration between a number of grants where there are relevant collective opportunities for knowledge exchange and research uptake.

We encourage applicants to think creatively about effective approaches and methods to facilitate knowledge exchange and research uptake building on the experience and lessons learned through their original Pathways to Impact. Applicants must identify their target audience(s) from the outset and proposals must respond to clearly articulated, evidence-based demand and opportunities. Proposed activities may include novel ways to increase interaction with communities of interest and to reach particular user segments and communities (eg young people, marginalised women, rural populations).

Successful applications will typically focus on:

- Supporting researchers to convene, and play a catalytic role in, debates with policy makers, practitioners or other non-academic audiences, including business, civil society and the public sector
- Bringing together researchers and potential research users to gain experience in linking research to practice

- Exploring diverse media platforms, channels and packaging to facilitate public engagement, knowledge exchange and research uptake

Examples of activities which can be funded through this call include:

- Facilitation and organisation of events for non-academic beneficiaries on a local, national and international level (eg policy seminars, public debates, exhibitions and workshops) aimed at stimulating debate and fostering stakeholder and intermediary engagement
- Active participation in events for, and organised by, policy and third sector representatives which could lead to potential economic and social impact(s)
- Development of policy- and practice-relevant outputs to drive debate (using a range of media and targeted at specific audiences), and translation of such publications to other languages
- Employment of specialised staff or acquisition of equipment to undertake engagement and knowledge exchange activities - eg development of interactive and online media, facilitation of virtual activities, development of literature for non-academic beneficiaries.

Proposals which include plans for new research or which request funding for activities that duplicate work within the original grant's communications and engagement plan or 'Pathways to Impact' will **not** be funded. The activities proposed must clearly build on activities already undertaken within the original research grant.

Funding can only be requested for activities related to completed research funded under Phase 2 of the Joint Fund, and not for self-promotion of the applicants or their institutions. While funds can be requested to support evidence-informed debate and discussion, they should **not** be used to support advocacy activities (ie pushing for specific policy changes).

### **Eligibility**

The call is open to PIs funded through Phase 2 of the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research whose main research grant has completed by the point of application to this call. This means that at the point a proposal is submitted to this call, the original research grant must have reached the end of its funding period; end of award reporting and/or final expenditure statement submission may be in progress, but the grant end date must have passed and research activity ended. Uninvited and ineligible applications will not be considered.

Only one proposal can be submitted by each eligible PI. Where a proposal relates to more than one research project funded through Phase 2 of the scheme, all original grants must have completed by the point of submission, one lead PI must be identified, and proposals must confirm the support of all original PIs, usually through their inclusion as co-investigators on the Impact and Engagement proposal.

In exceptional circumstances co-investigators from the original research grant may be considered eligible to submit a proposal to this call, but only where agreement from the original principal investigator and ESRC has been secured. Please contact the ESRC office to discuss this further before submitting the proposal.

### **Funding, eligible costs and grant duration**

Proposals can be made for between £25,000 and £75,000. Exceptionally, as this call does not include any research funding, normal full economic cost (fEC) rules will not apply: the funders will meet 100 per cent of the justified eligible costs applied for. Applicants must ensure they follow the guidance on entering costs in the call-specific document 'Je-S guidance for applicants' which is available to download on the call webpage (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34573/esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research-impact-and-engagement-scheme-2015-call-for-proposalsinvitation-only.aspx>). The total funding available for this call is £400,000. It is anticipated that between six and eight Impact and Engagement Grants will be made, depending on the size and quality of the proposals received.

We encourage proposals that include additional funding or in-kind support from partners within the user community. Where such support has been secured, proposals will need to demonstrate the partner organisation's commitment by including a letter of support.

Eligible costs for an Impact and Engagement Grant could include:

- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment where appropriate and justified
- Estates and indirect costs (at rates provided in the call-specific document 'Je-S guidance for applicants' which is available to download on the call webpage (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34573/esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research-impact-and-engagement-scheme-2015-call-for-proposalsinvitation-only.aspx>)).
- Salary costs, eg for principal investigators, research assistants or knowledge exchange/communication specialists. The project team may vary from the staffing on the original ESRC-DFID grant, with the exception of the principal investigator, who must remain the same unless prior agreement has been given.

Efficiency, cost-effectiveness and value for money should be clearly demonstrated in the application. Funding cannot be requested for miscellaneous expenses or for contingencies.

Proposals may be for one-off activities or longer programmes of work over a period of time; in order to keep grants flexible we are not specifying a minimum or maximum duration. The duration must be appropriate and reasonable to deliver the activities proposed, and all activities **must** be completed before 31 March 2016. No extensions of funding beyond this date will be possible within this call.

### **Assessment process and criteria**

Proposals which meet the eligibility, cost and duration requirements will be assessed by the funders and experts in research uptake against the following criteria:

- Quality and appropriateness of proposed activities:
  - Do the proposed activities respond appropriately to clearly identified need within a specific non-academic audience?
  - Do the proposed activities have the potential to ensure the research is more widely used or reaches new audiences?

- Do the proposed activities build appropriately on activities conducted within the original research grant?
- Are appropriate plans included to capture and demonstrate the impact of the proposed activities?
- Project management and delivery:
  - Are the project management plans and configuration of roles and responsibilities reasonable, appropriate and credible for the proposed activities?
  - Are the credentials of the project team appropriate to deliver the activities?
  - Are any partnerships with user organisations appropriate and credible?
- Value for money:
  - Are the requested resources reasonable to deliver the specific activities?

## How to apply

Proposals **must** be submitted through the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jes2webloginsite/login.aspx>). All proposals must be submitted in English, costed in pounds sterling (£) and made on the official Je-S proposal.

The proposal has two elements: an online form requesting key information; and a series of mandatory attachments which are to be completed offline and uploaded as (PDF) attachments in the Je-S form. The key attachments required include the Case for Support, Justification of Resources, CVs for all named individuals, and information from the End of Award/ Key findings report for the original grant (or a suitable substitute where this report is pending).

These requirements are fully explained in the call-specific 'Je-S guidance for applicants' document which is available to download on the call webpage (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34573/esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research-impact-and-engagement-scheme-2015-call-for-proposalsinvitation-only.aspx>). Applicants must ensure they have read and complied with the guidance set out in that document.

## Call timetable

The call will open on 6 July 2015. Proposals may be submitted at any point from that date and will be considered on an individual, rolling basis. To support a rapid decision turnaround, applicants are asked to notify the ESRC by email of their intention to submit a proposal to this call at least two weeks before their intended submission date: [dfid@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:dfid@esrc.ac.uk)

The call will close to proposals either at 16.00 (UK time) on 18 December 2015 or when all available funds have been allocated, whichever is soonest. Eligible PIs will be kept informed of the likely call close date by email.

Given the responsive nature of this scheme, we aim to communicate funding decisions within eight weeks of a proposal being submitted. We aim for grants to be able to

commence within six weeks of the funding decision. All grants must complete by 31 March 2016.

## Contact details

All queries or comments about this scheme should be addressed to the scheme secretariat at [dfid@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:dfid@esrc.ac.uk). Enquiries may also be addressed to:

- Caroline Curtis  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1793 413078

The Je-S Helpdesk may be contacted by email ([jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk)) or telephone (+44 (0)1793 444164) and is staffed Monday to Friday 9.00 to 17.00 (excluding public and other holidays).

## Annex I: Definitions of ‘impact’ and ‘research uptake’

**Research impact** is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. It embraces all the diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations, including:

- Fostering global economic performance
- Increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output

Research impact can involve academic impact, economic and societal impact, or both.

**Economic and societal impact** is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. This can be categorised as:

- Instrumental: influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour
- Conceptual: contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates
- Capacity-building: technical and personal skill development

**Academic impact** is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

If research is to have an impact it needs to be ‘taken up’ or ‘used’ by people. **Research uptake** includes all the activities that facilitate and contribute to the use of research evidence by policymakers, practitioners and other development actors.

Research uptake activities aim to:

- Support the supply of research by ensuring research questions are relevant through engagement with potential users, communicating research effectively, synthesising and repackaging research for different audiences etc. Activities in this area typically start with a focus on a particular research project or body of research and consider how it can be communicated.
- Support the demand for research by building capacity and commitment of research users to access, evaluate, synthesise and use research evidence. Activities in this area typically start with a focus on a particular decision or decision-making process and consider how it can be informed by a range of research evidence.

Research uptake activities are carried out by:

- Researchers from the full range of academic disciplines, whether funded by ESRC, DFID or otherwise
- Intermediaries, including those individuals and organisations who aim to synthesise, repackage and disseminate research information and to support research uptake in other ways (eg by promoting research generally or through capacity-building activities)

- Research users including policymakers (and those who support them); development practitioners (eg public implementing bodies and non-governmental organisations) and the general public

For further information please refer to the RCUK's Pathways to Impact guidance (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/ke/impacts>), the ESRC Impact Toolkit (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/index.aspx>) and DFID's Research Uptake guidance ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/200088/Research\\_uptake\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200088/Research_uptake_guidance.pdf)). See also the Joint Fund's Guiding principles on uptake, impact and communication of research (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/international-funding/esrc-dfid/impact/index.aspx>).