

UKRI-GCRF Network Plus call for Gender and Intersectionality and for Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development Call specification

Version: 20 February 2019

Summary

ESRC, on behalf of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), are pleased to invite applications for GCRF Network Plus grants. This call will have two thematic areas of focus: **Gender and Intersectionality**, and **Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development**. Applicants can apply to either strand.

Applications for these Network Plus grants should aim to facilitate the development of partnerships between researchers, NGOs, policymakers and practitioners, allowing for integrated and cross-cutting activities. Devolved funding is also permitted within a Network Plus grant, allowing for flexible activities that can respond to emerging priorities.

Funding has been allocated from the [Global Challenges Research Fund](#) (GCRF), which is a £1.5 billion fund to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries. GCRF will address global challenges through disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and will strengthen capability for research and innovation within both the UK and developing countries, providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need. GCRF forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, and funds will be awarded in a manner that fits with [ODA guidelines](#).

The following funding is available and we aim to fund **one** Network plus under each thematic area in this call:

- Gender and Intersectionality Network Plus - proposals of up to £4.75 million (UKRI contribution) and up to 48 months duration.
- Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development Network Plus – proposals of up to £4.75 million (UKRI contribution) and up to 36 months duration.

All proposals will have to make a clear case for how they comply with [ODA guidelines](#). A short [Expression of Interest](#) (EOI) should be completed by those intending to submit to this call by **16:00 UK time on 11 March**.

Full proposals should be submitted via the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S) by the **deadline of 16:00 UK time on 11 April 2019**. Projects should commence by **1 November 2019**.

Background and scope

The [Global Challenges Research Fund \(GCRF\)](#) is a key component in the delivery of the [UK Aid Strategy](#): tackling global challenges in the national interest. The fund aims to ensure that UK research takes a leading role in addressing the problems faced by developing countries through:

- Challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
- Strengthening capacity for research and innovation within both the UK and developing countries
- Providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need.

The Collective Programme under the UKRI GCRF Collective Fund is a series of calls designed to enhance the coherence, strategic focus and overall impact across the six strategic GCRF Challenge portfolios:

- Cities and Sustainable Infrastructure
- Education
- Food Systems
- Global Health
- Resilience to Environmental Shocks and Change
- Security Protracted Conflict, Refugee Crises and Forced Displacement

The programme is being delivered by UKRI and steered by the [GCRF Challenge Leaders](#). Interdisciplinary research excellence is central to the GCRF, and investigators from all disciplines are encouraged to apply for calls within the parameters of each call, regardless of the primary discipline focus. All received proposals will be shared with other constituent parts of UKRI as necessary to assist with processing. This Network Plus call will be managed by ESRC on behalf of all UKRI research councils. ESRC'S [GCRF webpage](#) provides further information about the ESRC's approach to GCRF and details of other current GCRF calls.

Call details

This call will have two thematic areas of focus – Gender and Intersectionality, and Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development. Applicants can apply to either strand.

Gender and Intersectionality

Gender is a cross-cutting consideration that is deeply relevant to international development challenges and scholarship. It is clear that women, men and other gender identities can experience conflict, access to health services, climate change and many other challenges in different ways. This further depends on their ethnicity, age, religion, ability, appearance, marital status, citizenship status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and other types of status and identity within and across the communities with which they identify and are identified by others.

What does this suggest for improving lives and building resilience among such individuals and communities? Analysing GCRF themes within [its six portfolios](#) (Food Systems, Resilience, Security Protracted Conflict, Refugee Crises and Forced Displacement, Cities and

Sustainable Infrastructure, Education, and Global Health) through a gendered and intersectional lens will help to answer these questions.

The successful network plus application funded under this strand of the call will be expected to:

- build an international, intersectoral network through which to promote the gendered and intersectional lens of each GCRF portfolio at local levels of study
- draw out existing gender and intersectionality-focused researchers and civil society partners across portfolios under this Network Plus umbrella for further collaboration across sectors
- particularly encourage researchers, both local and international, who would not otherwise have considered the gendered and intersectional aspects of their work to do so.

As with other challenge-led research funded by GCRF, the proposed network should seek to address a particular set of challenges and identify policy solutions with long-term positive impacts.

Poor nutrition in South Asia, for example, has been found to be correlated with discrimination against women. What might this imply for development policies and programmes in this region, both at the local and at the international cross-cutting level, and how does this affect different ethnic and religious communities with different dietary traditions and constraints?

Women and men can, furthermore, experience conflict and climate change in different ways, especially depending on their status within and across the communities with which they identify and are identified by others. How do conceptions of and pressures on masculinity change in contexts of violence and displacement, for example? Understanding what they are and identifying how to tackle their negative consequences could help to offset the possibility of future conflict.

Understanding the dramatic changes in women's and men's access to physical spaces in societies experiencing rapid urbanisation, coupled with economic growth, as is the case in numerous countries - and the tensions that accompany such changes - could help to design programmes to enhance social and economic dynamics and networks among both sexes. Meanwhile, mental health and physical safety concerns among persecuted LGBTQ+ communities continue to pose grave problems to the quality of life for people across the world. Identifying ways in which to resolve these patterns will help improve the wellbeing, productivity and inclusion of all people, as well as being a matter of basic human rights.

The above examples are intended to give a flavour of the range of areas that might be included and are not an exhaustive list. Proposals should focus on the core issue of gender and intersectionality. Proposals should be intentionally broad, to enable a gendered lens to be applied to a range of areas, and for associated expertise and knowledge to be drawn together for maximum effect.

Networks should be able to show a tangible contribution to scholarship on gender and intersectionality, and how much more effective and efficient development and research programmes can be when taking such factors into consideration. They should be able to:

1. help facilitate dialogue between policymakers – international, regional, and local – and interdisciplinary and cross-border researchers on gender and intersectionality, to mitigate the potential negative effects and enhance the positive results of future programmes and policies
2. consider their impact on social, communal, and political behaviours and attitudes across periods of time that extend far beyond the limitations of funding cycles.

Most importantly, networks funded by this call should seek to help fulfil GCRF's goal of cutting-edge, impactful, and interdisciplinary development research that leaves no-one behind.

Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development

Education is not only a fundamental human right, but also an indispensable tool in the pursuit of sustainable development. Over the past decade, the international education agenda has shifted to recognise education's potential influence over social dynamics and the spheres of security, governance, health and economics. The levels of education of a population can be seen to determine economic growth, democratisation, and act as a catalyst for positive societal change, social justice and peace. Education empowers the most vulnerable, by increasing their chances of getting jobs, staying healthy and participating fully in society – and it boosts their children's chances of leading healthy lives. Many development goals are underpinned by the potential for education to advance skills and understanding. Education is therefore understood to be crucial to driving development across a range of global goals.

Yet it is also increasingly acknowledged that education is not a neutral pursuit and not all kinds of education support sustainable development. For example, education that promotes economic growth alone may also lead to an increase in unsustainable consumption patterns, while exclusive education can oppress sections of the community and feed cycles of poverty. Education delivery is complex, and its relationship with wider development goals can be both positive and negative.

This call therefore seeks Network Plus proposals that examine the role of education in relation to other sustainable development goals, such as achieving healthy lives, eradicating poverty and promoting gender equality. Specifically, proposals should address in what ways education drives development. They should show how a deeper understanding of education's role across the development agenda will significantly influence how education research can be effectively translated into policy and practice to achieve development outcomes.

The successful Network Plus application funded through this call will be expected to:

- bring together relevant disciplines and stakeholders to build a community of practice spanning education research and wider relevant fields
- draw together existing and emerging knowledge
- deliver evidence that policymakers and practitioners need to harness education as a driver for development.

Some examples of research areas that are relevant to other sustainable development goals that might be explored include:

- What is education's role in supporting sustainable development?

- How does education play a role in reducing vulnerability and building community resilience to disaster risks?
- How can education assist in addressing social determinants for improving health?
- How can education contribute to making cities inclusive, safe and resilient?
- How can education empower adolescents for healthy lives?
- How can education enhance inclusive participation for sustainable urbanisation?
- How can education contribute to building peaceful societies?
- What is the inextricably linked relationship between education and poverty?

The above examples are intended to give a flavour of the range of areas that might be included, and are not an exhaustive list. Proposals should focus on the core overarching question of how education can drive development. Proposals should be intentionally broad, looking at this overarching question through the lens of at least two sustainable development goals (SDGs). Associated expertise and knowledge should be drawn together for maximum effect.

Note that two relevant but separate forthcoming GCRF collective fund calls for proposals are expected: one on education in relation to conflict, and one on education in relation to early child development. Researchers with interests in these areas are eligible for inclusion as part of networks under this Network Plus call, but these topics should not be the primary focus of research activity. A third forthcoming GCRF collective call will seek research projects that focus in more depth on education as a driver of development in specific areas.

Funded proposals will be expected to network to share knowledge and best practice with other projects funded by the funders involved in GCRF calls on education. Costs can be included for this purpose.

To ensure a joined-up approach to funding research in this area, proposals and EOIs received under this call will be shared between the funders involved in GCRF collective fund calls on education (UKRI and DFID).

Expectations of a Network Plus grant

Projects will be commissioned using the ‘Network Plus’ model. This is a flexible mechanism whereby funding will be allocated to the lead research organisation (RO) to support a cross-institutional leadership team and international and non-academic partners. Each Network Plus will facilitate the development of partnerships between academics, NGOs, policymakers and practitioners in both the Global North and South, allowing for integrated and cross-cutting activities. They will be a source of robust evidence that informs debate and feeds into policy and practice. Collaboration with stakeholders will be key in order to co-create evidence and outputs that meet users’ needs, such as briefing papers, thematic reports, ‘rapid response’ evidence, informational events and data visualisation. Through devolved funding, the model allows for a proportion of costs to be allocated to flexible and agile activities that can respond to emerging priorities.

Each Network Plus will undertake three interconnected strands of work:

1. **Scoping, research leadership and partnership development activities** to build sustainable partnerships between UK researchers and international partners in

the region/area in order to identify research needs and opportunities and to co-design and co-develop research agendas to be explored through research and knowledge exchange calls. Eligible activity within this strand could include:

- partnership development and knowledge exchange activity
- seminars and workshops to explore and develop priority challenge areas
- scholar exchanges
- training and skills development programmes
- support and mentoring for early career researchers
- placements for academics at partner organisations to develop joint research programmes
- local asset, landscape or network mapping
- literature / evidence reviews
- exploratory, feasibility and proof of concept projects.

2. **Funding calls for innovative projects / activities** to address the identified challenges and with the capacity to respond to new priorities and crises as they emerge. Eligible activity within this strand could include:

- funding for new collaborative research projects, including 6-18 month pilot projects, exploratory and innovation studies, data exploration, fieldwork and support for projects led by early career researchers (with mentoring where appropriate)
- conferences, workshops and seminars; and fellowships, exchanges and placements.

All projects should be collaborative between the UK and partners in the given areas/regions. Funding for individual projects commissioned through this strand should not exceed £100k (TBC). Any projects exceeding £30k must be commissioned through open, peer-reviewed calls that are referred to the ESRC – who will support dissemination – before they are issued. Members of the core network leadership team will not be permitted to apply for funding through such open calls.

Outputs and outcomes should be clearly articulated and tailored to the activity and challenge area within the case for support. They could include, but are not limited to:

- policy briefings
- journal articles
- conference papers
- websites and digital resources
- training materials
- creative outputs.

All projects commissioned through this route must demonstrate how they are ODA-compliant and meet the overarching aims of the project. Responsibility for the funding of these grants will be devolved to the leadership team and lead RO, subject to reporting on quality assurance and ODA compliance to the ESRC. Inclusion of costs for this strand of activity in Network Plus applications should be set out in the budget section of the Je-S form and in the Justification of Resources attachment.

3. The co-ordination, networking and synthesis of research funded as a part of the Network Plus grant, including:

- Fostering links with other research relevant (including across disciplines and internationally) to the areas/regions
- support for collective knowledge exchange and pathways to impact activities;
- intellectual leadership and support for the development and implementation of a strategic agenda for future research and dissemination
- fostering the sharing of data, insights and experience across disciplines and between project teams
- taking a lead in supporting reflection, learning, synthesis, evaluation and impact assessment across the portfolio of activities
- stimulating/editing collective research outputs; and developing legacy plans.

The distribution of funding across the three strands is at the discretion of the applicants. Successful applicants will be required to submit regular monitoring reports and updates to the ESRC, for example to ensure that research projects commissioned under the grant are ODA-compliant.

The Network Plus model is considered to be the most appropriate mechanism for this call on the basis that:

- Embedding the networking/partnership-building activity at the outset of the awards will facilitate the development of the interdisciplinary, international communities required to realise the aims of both strands within this call
- In turn, this will enable the co-development and co-design of an in-country research agenda with the capacity to commission projects aligned with specific development challenges
- It provides an open funding mechanism that can draw on relevant expertise which may be distributed across a wide range of UK and overseas research and partner organisations
- The flexibility afforded by the model will accommodate activity that can be launched quickly and with agility to address new research agendas, challenges and crises as they emerge.

Leadership

The successful Network Plus grant(s) will be led by a strong, interdisciplinary team who can articulate a clear shared vision for the network and the community of relevant stakeholders. They will engage beyond usual stakeholders, supporting interdisciplinary approaches in novel ways. The leadership team should have a breadth of expertise that is commensurate with the complexity of this space; this may require a new grouping of researchers and stakeholders, drawing on strong, existing leadership across related areas.

The leadership team will have demonstrable experience of working with a range of partners, and of supporting novel approaches to current and emerging issues. Given the challenges of undertaking engaged or co-produced activities, they will need to be unbiased and independent, and able to act as figureheads representing the aims of these Network Plus areas.

The leadership team must contribute a significant proportion of their time to the overall leadership and co-ordination of their Network Plus grant. The proposal should outline a clear management structure for the Network Plus, detailing how the network will be managed day to day. We encourage the Network Plus to include an academic network co-ordinator as part of the leadership team. The Network Plus will also be expected to participate in collaborative activities organised by the ESRC or other research councils.

The PI and their RO will be ultimately responsible for the administration of the grant and collaboration arrangements, but they should also work on this with a team of Co-Is (the number should be appropriate for the size of the network) which should reflect the interdisciplinary and sector relevance of the Network Plus. The proposal should clearly explain the division of roles between the PI and the rest of the leadership team. The Network Plus should convene an inclusive advisory committee to support and advise the leadership throughout their project, with consideration to equality and diversity issues.

Research ethics

All GCRF projects must be underpinned by a strong research ethic based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices. Solutions to any development challenge(s) must be rooted in, and acceptable to, the institutions, communities and societies where they will operate.

Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass areas where regulation and approval processes exist as well as areas where they do not. Applicants must ensure that the proposed research will be carried out to a high ethical standard and 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 research commences and all risks are minimised. More guidance can be found in the [ESRC Framework for Research Ethics](#).

Capacity-building

An important aspect of GCRF is capacity development, and UKRI strongly encourages all proposals to this call to identify research capacity-building activities as part of, and not separate to, the stated approach to the Network Plus. The focus should be on the quality and impact of the activity of the Network Plus, and how increasing capacity contributes to this. Examples of building capacity include:

- opportunities for those with relevant skills who have not previously worked on development-relevant research projects to orient their research towards global issues
- support and mentoring for more junior team members
- co-design of research and related activity, and implementation with developing country partner staff.

Please note that studentships are not eligible under this call. Further information on [capacity-building in relation to GCRF](#) is available on the ESRC website.

Equitable partnerships

Partnerships are a key pillar of the GCRF strategy. UKRI developed the following statement of expectation for research partnerships in consultation with researchers from East Africa: “Partnerships should be transparent and based on mutual respect. Partnerships should aim to have clearly articulated equitable distribution of resources, responsibilities, efforts and

benefits. Partnerships should recognise different inputs, different interests and different desired outcomes and should ensure the ethical sharing and use of data which is responsive to the identified needs of society.”

Funding

ESRC invites Network Plus proposals of:

- Gender and Intersectionality - up to £4.75 million (UKRI contribution) and up to 48 months duration
- Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development – up to £4.75 million (UKRI contribution) and up to 36 months duration.

We expect that duration of overall cost of applications will be determined by the nature of their activities. Please see Je-S Guidance for more information regarding costs and eligibility.

Funding of international co-investigators

GCRF calls will follow standard ESRC policies in that the ESRC will fund 100% of the justified costs for international co-investigators from research organisations of comparable standing with UKRI-recognised UK research organisations. ESRC’s policy on the [inclusion of international co-investigators](#) will apply, with the exception that for the GCRF Collective Fund Programme calls **there is no cap on costs** associated with international co-investigators’ contribution relative to the total project cost; i.e. no upper limit will be applied. This applies to all international co-investigators from all countries, whether on the [DAC list](#) or not, but all costs need to be fully justified, and principal investigators must be based at an eligible UK research organisation.

We strongly encourage international co-investigators from countries not on the DAC list to make a significant contribution to their own research costs. Please see FAQ document for more information on non-UK non-DAC list organisation costs. If a co-investigator is from a country flagged as likely to graduate from the DAC list during the course of the project, this should be treated as a country NOT on the DAC list.

The overhead rate for DAC list country co-investigators is up to 20% of the total direct costs (e.g. staff costs, T&S, conferences) incurred by that organisation. Please note that only DAC list country co-investigators are eligible for 20% of international directly related costs as overheads/indirect costs and that this does not apply to non-DAC list country co-investigators. If a co-investigator is from a country flagged as likely to graduate from the DAC list during the course of the project this should be treated as a country NOT on the DAC list.

Further guidance is provided in the call-specific Je-S guidance.

ODA compliance statement

To comply with ODA requirements, proposals must make clear how their primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries. There are no priority countries; proposals may relate to any country or countries on the DAC list except those which are flagged as likely to graduate from the list during the course of the proposed project. If a country is flagged as likely to graduate it cannot be the primary focus of a proposal, although it can be included as an additional case study or comparison.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate how they meet ODA requirements throughout their 'Case for Support' and 'Pathways to Impact' submission. In addition, all proposals must include a mandatory 'Non-UK Components' attachment addressing the following three questions:

- Which country/countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal?
- How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
- How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list?

Further guidance on how to submit the ODA compliance statement as an attachment is provided in the call-specific Je-S Guidance. General advice on ODA and links to other useful sources of information are provided on the [ESRC website](#) and the [UKRI guidance on ODA in relation to GCRF](#).

Initial ODA compliance assessment will take place within the ESRC, though final decisions may include input from commissioning panels as well as external sources of ODA expertise.

ODA transparency and reporting

As part of the government's commitment to ODA transparency and in line with DfID ODA reporting requirements, UKRI is responsible for publishing information about UKRI ODA grants including project titles and summaries via the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) registry and via DFID's national statistics.

The purpose of publishing information via the IATI registry is to make information about ODA easily accessible to governments, stakeholders and other relevant groups in beneficiary countries. All UKRI funded projects from this programme will be published in this way. Please therefore write your project title and summary in such a way that they are meaningful and accessible to non-specialist audiences, following publication.

We would be grateful if you would ensure that the project title and summary are written in plain English and avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, puns and plays on words. Please also make clear in your project title and summary how your project is ODA-compliant, for example by identifying the development challenge(s) being addressed, the aims of the project and the beneficiary countries.

Eligibility

Lead research organisation – proposals are invited from ROs [eligible for UKRI funding](#) across the UK. Proposals may be submitted by individuals who are not established members of the proposed host institution. In these circumstances, by submitting the proposal the RO confirms that it guarantees to provide facilities for the applicant as if an established member of staff for the duration of the grant. The lead organisation will be responsible for the overall management of the award including control, disbursement and assurance of funds, including financial reporting of funds going overseas.

Co-investigators may be based anywhere in the world, but, additionally for GCRF calls, the international co-investigator's research organisation must submit a 'Letter of Support'. (Further information is provided within the Je-S guidance.) This is to ensure comparability of

standing between international organisations and UKRI-recognised UK research organisations and to ensure commitment to the project. Further information regarding eligibility can be found in the ESRC's [Research Funding Guide](#) and [International Co-Investigator Policy](#), although please note that the 30% cap does not apply to this GCRF call. The ESRC does not allow the resubmission of previously unsuccessful proposals to any schemes, unless the applicant has been explicitly invited to do so.

Due diligence

As part of UKRI funding assurance, non-UK research organisations may be requested to complete a UKRI Overseas Due Diligence Questionnaire. Please be aware that research organisations may be contacted by UKRI at any point during the review process. This is in order to expedite our assurance process. If UKRI does contact any non-UK research partner organisation named on an application, the lead organisation will be informed.

For organisations hosting non-UK co-investigators, due diligence checks are for UKRI's assurance purposes only and do not replace the due diligence requirements of the lead organisation. However, when obtaining information from non-UK research organisations UKRI will request permission to share the provided information with the lead organisation. The lead organisation can then use this information for their own due diligence processes should they wish.

Safeguarding

UKRI condemns all forms of harm and abuse, including bullying and harassment. We take a zero-tolerance approach to harm and abuse to any individual employed through or associated with our programmes in all contexts; whether in humanitarian or fragile and conflict-affected settings, in other field contexts, or within the international or UK research and development community which we fund. We expect institutions to promote the highest standards in organisational culture, and have in place the systems and procedures required to prevent and tackle all incidents of harm and abuse. Applications must detail how they will identify and manage safeguarding risks and what policies and procedures will be in place to enable reporting and investigation of allegations when they arise.

Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to report research outcomes on Researchfish in line with standard UKRI Terms and Conditions. In addition to the standard outcomes all award holders will need to complete sections under the 'GCRF Collective Fund' outcomes.

Assessment criteria

Applications to this call will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

Capacity-building and international partnerships

- Assessment will consider the degree and quality of engagement with appropriate developing country partners (including researchers, practitioners and policymakers) and whether they have played a leading role in challenge identification and the design and implementation of the proposed approach.
- The proposal should identify an appropriate range of relevant partners, demonstrating how these partnerships are beneficial to the award, ethical, equitable and sustainable

beyond the initial award. For example, is their engagement meaningful, substantive and clear? How motivated are they by the potential benefit of the research for them?

- The applicant should clearly articulate to what extent the award will develop new or enhanced research capacity for addressing international development challenges in the relevant partner countries. For example, is the proposal informed by evidence of previous impact research? Does the application involve new approaches or use established methods more innovatively?

Impact

- Assessment will consider the clarity and significance of the impact from the proposed activities. Does the proposed award identify realistic pathways with the potential to deliver a breadth of highly significant and measurable impacts?
- Have the applicants taken into consideration relevant developing country contexts and demonstrated local appetite and capacity to implement solutions? Is there potential for the partnerships, resources, capacity and capability developed through the network to be sustained and strengthened beyond the end of the award?
- What are the benefits for the researchers and non-academics taking part? Will the project inform future research, establish or strengthen relationships with partners, or increase impact from research already undertaken?

Management capability and strength of the proposed network

- Reviewers and panel members will assess the applicant's capacity to manage the project by considering whether they have demonstrated the appropriate skills and experience to deliver the proposed vision and effectively manage the proposed network.
- Is there a demonstrable expertise across the relevant areas of the call and beyond? Is there an appropriate balance of leadership and management between the network membership, including an appropriate balance between developed and developing country partners?
- Does the proposed network have the potential to act as an exemplar of research excellence and innovation in the field, to define and drive forward the agenda for the role of interdisciplinary research in international development?

Quality and coherence of the proposed activities

- Assessment will consider the quality and coherence of the proposed activities and determine whether they meet the requirements of the GCRF, particularly in relation to ODA compliance.
- Are the proposed activities appropriate to the identified impact opportunity? Are the aims of the project realistic/achievable? Is there a clear explanation for the scale, timing and resources requested?
- Does the proposal demonstrate flexibility to adapt over the lifetime of the award and respond with agility to arising opportunities? Does the proposal outline an appropriate framework for monitoring and evaluation, and identify a robust set of deliverables, indicators and measures for success?

Value for money and sustainability

- Assessment will consider whether the proposed network plus is good value for money, i.e. the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcome. This will include 'economy' considerations (the cost of inputs such as meeting room hire, procuring

- services), 'efficiency' measures (such as the number of participants that benefit) and 'outcome' measures (such as the extent to which a positive change has taken place).
- Is the scale of impacts reasonable for the amount of funding requested and staff time included? Are activity costs reasonable? Is the impact generating potential of the project, the likely contribution to the utilisation of knowledge, and the wider societal benefits commensurate with the requested resources?
 - Is there a clear plan for maintaining the project and/or its outputs beyond the period of the award?

Applications will undergo peer review before being considered by a specially convened panel of academic and non-academic experts at a meeting in September 2019. The panel will be asked to assess the proposals against the fit to the call and the assessment criteria above. The panel will then make formal recommendations to the funders. There will then be an interview panel for the shortlisted projects, date to be confirmed. The funders may wish to apply some conditions on grants, and there may be subsequent negotiations on the details of the support offered. Funding decisions are expected to be announced in September 2019 and awards are expected to commence on 1 November 2019.

Note the Expressions of Interest will not be assessed.

Expressions of interest

We request that those considering applying for a Network Plus grant submit an expression of interest (EOI), using the [short online form](#). The deadline for submitting an EOI is 11 March 2019. Although it is not a requirement to submit an EOI we strongly encourage this.

Application process

The closing date for proposals is **16:00 UK time on 11 April 2019**. No proposal received after this deadline will be considered for funding.

All proposals must be made through the [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#); only those proposals submitted through the Je-S system will be accepted for processing. Proposals must be costed and approved by the relevant institutional authority at the research organisation before submission.

In order to use the Je-S system, principal investigators, co-investigators and their organisations need to register on the system a minimum of one week before the call closing date. Registration of both the principal investigator's organisation and their own details must be completed before the proposal can be formally submitted to the ESRC.

Care and attention must be given to completing the online form correctly. Proposals that are not completed correctly may be rejected by the ESRC office.

The ESRC may require applicants to amend parts of proposals, such as the length of attachments or the inclusion of missing mandatory attachments, as a condition of accepting the proposal for processing.

All applicants are strongly advised to follow the Je-S guidance for this call and consult the ESRC's [Research Funding Guide](#), which sets out the rules and regulations governing its funding.

What we will do with your information

UK Research and Innovation understands the importance of protecting personal information and is committed to complying with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). It is committed to fostering a culture of transparency and accountability by demonstrating compliance with the principles set out in the regulation.

GDPR sets out the rules for how organisations must process personal data and sensitive personal data about living individuals. It gives individuals the right to find out what personal data is held about them by organisations and to request to see, correct or erase personal data held.

UK Research and Innovation needs to collect and process personal data about the people (including employees and individuals) it interacts with to carry out its business effectively. UK Research and Innovation is committed to ensuring that employees are appropriately trained and supported to achieve compliance with GDPR. For more details see [UKRI's full GDPR policy](#).

Please be aware that by submission of a proposal or EOI, the applicants and organisations involved will be giving consent to the sharing of data between the funders involved in this activity (the Research Councils that are part of UKRI and DFID).

Commissioning timetable

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Call for proposals opens | 15 January 2019 |
| • Town Hall event | 7 February 2019 |
| • Closing date for EOIs | 11 March 2019 |
| • Closing date for proposals | 16:00 on 11 April 2019 |
| • Commissioning panel meeting | early September 2019 |
| • Interview panel | mid-September 2019 |
| • Decisions announced | late September 2019 |
| • Grants start | 1 November 2019 |

Contacts

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed to:
gcrfnetworkplus@esrc.ukri.org

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

- Je-S Helpdesk
Email: jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org
Telephone: +44 01793 444164

The Helpdesk is staffed Monday–Thursday 08:30–17:00, Friday 08:30–16:30 UK time (excluding public and other holidays).