

ICSSR-ESRC Call for Collaborative Research on Urban Transformations in India

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Aim and summary of funding opportunity

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) invite joint applications for collaborative projects between Indian and UK researchers which seek to enhance understanding of urban challenges and issues in India and achieve economic and social understanding of concerned areas in India.

We invite proposals to address one or more of the following topics:

1. Urban planning, governance and management
2. Populations types and their issues (formal and informal populations, migrants etc.)
3. Place and space: challenges and solutions, including health, sanitation and labour issues
4. Small towns, dynamics of change and migration

Further details on these topics can be found below. Proposals are invited for joint UK and Indian projects; each proposal may request £360,000-£540,000 at 100% full economic cost (fEC) from

the ESRC and with INR 25 lakhs for each successful project from ICSSR over 24 months. In accordance with RCUK policy, the ESRC will contribute up to 80% fEC of UK costs, and research organisations will be expected to honour the remaining 20% except where otherwise specified.

The ESRC has allocated up to £1.75 million, with matched resources from ICSSR. It is expected that four to six research projects will be awarded under this call.

UK awards will be funded through the Newton Fund – a five-year programme that aims to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging knowledge economies.

ESRC-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by the ESRC in accordance with its normal research funding guidelines and procedures (www.esrc.ac.uk/rfg). ICSSR-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by the ICSSR in accordance with its normal guidelines. Applicants should liaise closely to ensure that both ESRC and ICSSR-supported elements of the proposal abide by all regulations for both funders.

Proposals should be submitted by **1600 hrs UK time (BST) and 2030 hrs India (+5:30 GMT) time on 1 August 2017.**

Background of the funders

The ESRC is an international leader in the social sciences. It fosters international collaboration with a wide range of partners and, through joint schemes, enables UK social scientists to collaborate on challenging global issues with the very best international researchers from around the world.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), founded in 1969, is an apex social science body fully funded by the Government of India through Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, mandated for promoting social science research. Among its objectives, as per MOA, the ICSSR is mandated "to advise the Government of India on all such matters pertaining to social science research as may be referred to it from time to time, including collaborative arrangements in social science research with foreign agencies"; and "it also assist Indian social scientists to develop research outside India".

The ESRC funding for this initiative is coming from the Newton Fund (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/newton-fund/), which is aimed at developing science and innovation partnerships with emerging knowledge economies. As the fund forms part of the UK's official development assistance (ODA), the partnerships must clearly demonstrate that they will support the development of research collaborations addressing economic development and improvement in welfare and societal changes.

The ICSSR funding for the initiative comes from its programme on international collaboration.

Thematic focus - background

Urbanisation is a fundamental global trend, although one that is marked by complexity and regional variation. The majority of people now live in urban areas, and the urban population in many developing countries is expected to continue to grow at a rapid rate. While prominent global cities receive the vast majority of investment and attention, the majority of urban population growth is taking place in smaller towns and cities in the global south that are

undergoing rapid transformation. As the world continues to urbanise, the challenge will be to provide integrated policies which address issues of sustainable development which urban and rural dwellers face.

Urbanisation within India has been relatively slow compared to other countries in the global south. The share of the population living in officially classified urban settlements has been growing at a rate of just over 1.15 percent a year from 2001-2011. However, this is now set to change. India's urban population is set to increase to 590 million by 2030. It is predicted that India will be home to 68 cities with populations of one million or more, 13 cities with populations of four million, and six megacities with populations of 10 million or more. Of these six megacities both Mumbai and Delhi will be among the five largest cities in the world by 2030.

How India manages this change during the forthcoming years will have major consequences for its society and economy.

Scope of the call

This call has been designed to give researchers in the UK and India an opportunity to conduct research on the most pressing urban research issues in India. As part of the consultation activity that helped shaped this call, the ESRC, ICSSR and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) organised a workshop with academics representing institutions from across the UK and India in March 2016. Participants took part in a range of activities and discussions in order to establish key issues which would benefit from UK-India collaborative research under the Newton Fund.

This call concerns urban transformations at a variety of scales including the city, town, and smaller settlement level. We also welcome projects that bring a comparative approach to a particular topic, issue or factor. This might include research that:

- makes comparisons within a single city
- compares different urban areas within India
- compares an Indian city or group of cities with urban contexts in other South Asian countries
- considers opportunities for shared lessons with other regions of the global south
- encompasses a historical perspective and draws lessons from the past for addressing contemporary issues.

Proposals submitted to this call must:

- involve researchers from the UK and India working together in partnership, and demonstrate the added benefit of collaboration for each party
- meet the ODA requirements (www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/international/ODAguidanceRCUKspecific.pdf) stipulated under the Newton Fund
- offer contributions to the knowledge and understanding of urban transformations under one or more of the priority topics
- demonstrate the ambition and novelty of the research and demonstrate how the outputs of the project will be communicated to relevant stakeholders in academia, industry and government, in both India and the UK

- ensure that knowledge exchange between partners occurs both ways and continues throughout the project in order to build upon and strengthen bilateral relationships between India and the UK.

Research topics

Proposals should clearly identify one or more of the following topics as the focus of the research project.

1. Urban planning, governance and management

Research in this thematic area could consider questions around urban policymaking, the administrative and legal structures within which cities operate, financing of urban development and public services, planning and master planning, service reform and the relationship between ecological factors and policy decisions.

2. Population types and their issues (formal and informal populations, migrants etc.)

Different population types are differently distributed geographically, and interact with parts of the city and each other in different ways. These types include formal and informal populations, recent arrivals and settled populations. Changing boundaries and interfaces between these groups and how they interact with space and infrastructure will affect the face of the city. Research in this thematic area could consider how the variation and relationship between the formal and informal parts of Indian society impact upon the urban environment, in terms of (for example) the economy, employment, housing, education, and migration.

3. Place and space: challenges and solutions, including health, sanitation and labour issues

Research in this thematic area could consider issues of place, space and land use, societal challenges associated with different spaces, and the diversity in problems and solutions, such as health, sanitation, labour and overall well-being. For example, projects could consider the relationship between urban and rural space and communities, varying ecological dilemmas, social and economic implications of land use, and how intervention effectiveness varies with location and situational factors.

Another example can be sanitation; the ecology and material flows of the urban centres – water, waste, energy, food and how these connect with ecological sustainability. Labour issues with regards to mobility, informal and casual labour, insecurity of labour and employment among young people.

4. Small towns, dynamics of change and migration

Small towns and rural areas have intricate and varied relationships with large urban areas. The drivers encouraging migration from rural areas to small towns and cities is complex, but research questions could consider employment factors and the perceived economic and social benefits of moving in either direction. Questions regarding how these moves affect power dynamics, infrastructure, culture and city hierarchies of both cities and towns will also be important.

Although the research agenda can be broadly cast into these top-level themes, we recognise that there will be natural and necessary links between these topics. Proposals, therefore, will not be required to identify with only one of these topics. We would also like to highlight that across these three topics areas we are interested in the wider social dynamics of urban change.

Data collection

We encourage applicants to take innovative approaches to data collection and use, look to fill gaps within existing data, and consider ways in which their data could be preserved and made available to others for secondary analysis. It is part of our data policy that datasets generated from ESRC-funded research, including through data linkage, should be available for re-use and deposited in an appropriate repository where possible.

Please see the ESRC research data policy (www.esrc.ac.uk/datapolicy) for further guidance. This is also applicable to ICSSR.

Research impact

Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the kinds of user engagement, communications and research uptake activities they undertake during and beyond the period of research funding. It is important that applicants appreciate that outreach and engagement activities in themselves do not constitute impact. The development of a clear impact strategy and conceptualisation will be important to ensure that research impact is achieved. When completing the impact summary section of the form, applicants may find it helpful to refer to ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/developing-an-impact-strategy).

Open Access Policy

RCUK have an Open Access policy (www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess). Researchers funded under this call will be expected to comply with the requirements outlined in these policies.

UK institutions are no longer able to apply for Article Processing Charges as part of a research proposal, but instead funds will be provided to research organisations at an institutional level through the RCUK block grant funding mechanism, in order to set up publication funds.

Eligibility

ESRC-eligible applicants

UK applicants must meet the ESRC eligibility and remit criteria outlined in the ESRC Research Funding Guide (www.esrc.ac.uk/rfg).

The Newton Fund requires that the funding be awarded in a manner that fits with Official Development Assistance (ODA) requirements. All proposals under this call must therefore be compliant with these guidelines. See www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/newton

ICSSR-eligible applicants

Applicants must be employed in a research or academic position in a recognised research or academic institution – either publicly funded university/college recognised by the UGC or a public

funded research institute or ICSSR research institute. They must also hold a PhD or equivalent qualification.

How to apply to ESRC

Proposals are invited for joint UK and Indian projects; each proposal may request £360,000 - £540,000 at 100% full economic cost (fEC) from the ESRC and INR 25 lakhs for each successful project from ICSSR over 24 months duration.

It is expected that the ESRC funding will be used to support the UK component of the partnership and that ICSSR funding will support the Indian component. Each proposal should have a UK principal investigator who will submit the proposal to the ESRC and an Indian principal investigator who will submit an identical proposal to ICSSR. Both proposals should feature an identical case for support written in English.

The ESRC Je-S will not open until early July. Full guidance will be available from the ESRC website at that time. Proposals must be submitted by **1600 hrs UK time (BST) and 2030 hrs India (+5:30 GMT) time on 1 August 2017**. Any proposal received after this deadline will not be considered for funding, and proposals must be submitted to **both** funders in order to be considered.

Proposals should be submitted to ESRC through the UK Research Councils' grant submission system Je-S (see accompanying guidance) and to the In-charge, International Collaboration Division, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi – 110 067 Email IDs: adinchargeics@gmail.com; madhukar806@gmail.com

Proposals submitted to ICSSR and ESRC should include all supporting documents as requested below and in the accompanying Je-S guidance from ESRC.

- Case for support (six pages max)
- Justification of resources (two pages for the resources requested from ESRC and two pages for the resources requested from ICSSR)
- Pathways to Impact (two pages max)
- CV (two pages max for each named researcher)
- List of publications cited in proposal (one page max)
- Management Plan (two pages max)
- Letters of support (only if applicable)
- Data Management Plan (three pages max)

Please read the accompanying Je-S Guidance to ensure that all the required attachments are provided and that they are the correct page length. We reserve the right to reject applications that do not include the required attachments or include attachments not specified in the guidance.

Assessment of proposals

Once a proposal has been received by the ICSSR and ESRC, it will be considered according to eligibility and adherence to the criteria of this call by **both** funding agencies and then sent to expert peer reviewers for comment. Applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to peer review comments, and proposals will be considered by an independent expert commissioning

panel which will make final recommendations for funding. Funding recommendations from the panel will be subject to approval by each of the national funding agencies.

There will be one review process and a single decision on each proposal, however please note that proposals will only be funded if both funding agencies are in agreement. It is anticipated that final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in February 2018 with successful projects commencing on May 2018.

Assessment criteria

Proposals will be assessed by a panel established between ICSSR and ESRC. The criteria for the selection of proposals will include:

- Meeting the requirements of the Newton Fund in relation to ODA requirements
- Assessment of the relevance to the call topics
- The originality and potential contribution to new knowledge or practice
- The appropriateness of the research design, work plan and research team
- Assessment of the India-UK collaboration
- The costings and value for money of the research
- Appropriate consideration of ethical issues
- Dissemination and communication plans and the potential impact.

Timeline

- Call for proposals announced – 22 May 2017
- Je-S will open early July 2017
- **Closing date for proposals – 1 August 2017**
- ICSSR and ESRC joint panel – January 2018
- Decisions announced – February 2018
- Grants commence – 1 May 2018

National contacts

ESRC

Any enquiries related to this call should be directed to:

- Sean Nolan
Email: urban@esrc.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)1793 413174

Je-S helpdesk

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

ICSSR

- Mr. M. P. Madhukar, Assistant Director, In-charge ICS Division,
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