

Open Research Area Sixth Call 2019

Webinar for potential applicants – Transcript

1. Welcome and participant instructions

Hello and welcome to the Open Research Area (ORA) webinar for applicants.

My name is Emily Hancock, Senior International Manager at ESRC and leading on the secretariat for the ORA 6th call.

And I am Marzena Bien, Research Portfolio Manager at the International Development Team at ESRC, and I manage delivery of the secretariat for the call on behalf of all partners.

The webinar will last no more than one hour. It will consist of a presentation from the ESRC ORA Call Secretariat, followed by an opportunity for general questions and answers – we cannot take any questions relating to individual proposals.

We would ask all participants to please **TURN OFF** your webcam, and also please **TURN OFF** your computer microphone – or mute your telephone – to limit the amount of background noise. If you experience any technical difficulties during the webinar, please email ORAQueries@esrc.ukri.org and we will try to resolve them.

During the webinar please type your questions and share them via the webinar chat window rather than speaking. This is to avoid cross-talking and to make sure we are able to answer as many questions as possible. Please feel free to type your questions throughout the session and post them so everyone can see them. Please make sure that All Panellist and Participants option is selected in the questions box. Please note, we will not have an opportunity to respond to any questions during the presentation.

We will try and answer as many questions as we can. However, if your question isn't answered in the webinar, or is related to your specific proposal, please email [ORA Queries@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:ORAQueries@esrc.ukri.org). We will collate all questions and produce a separate documents and/or amend the FAQs in response to issues raised during and after the webinars.

Slides and transcript from webinar will be sent to all participants shortly, which you are welcome to cascade them to your research teams accordingly.

Recording will be available on request.

2. Agenda

The aim of the webinar is not to repeat information contained within the call specification and guidance documents. We will pull out key information from those, and discuss the practicalities of the application process later on, but our first aim is to outline the reasoning behind some requirements, and why these are important not only for the funders, but also to assessors and panel members.

This webinar is intended to sit alongside the call documents, and we cannot emphasise enough the importance of familiarising yourselves with all the call documents in the process of producing your proposals.

We should have 20 minutes at the end of the Webinar for questions and answers.

3. Call summary

ORA is an international funding scheme that has been running in various forms since 2010.

The main objective of the scheme has been to strengthen international co-operation in the social sciences by funding high quality scientific research projects in any social science discipline. The scheme is thematically open. Research can be fundamental and curiosity-driven. Integrated research projects are expected to create added value to the production of knowledge through international collaboration.

Since 2010 there have been a total of five ORA calls, with a total of 60 proposals funded. Over the past few years the scheme has increased in popularity. The success rate across all the call is approximately 10%.

The current round is the sixth ORA call.

For this round it involves:

- the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR; France)
- the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG; Germany)
- the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC; UK) – who are also doing the call secretariat
- the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC; Canada) – new and not participated before.

This time the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO; Netherlands) is not taking part.

The call will support innovative and interdisciplinary research that is focused primarily on any areas of the social sciences within participating partners own countries. However, the disciplinary coverage varies according to the involvement of the national agencies.

*Applicants who are uncertain of whether their proposal would be eligible should contact the relevant national agencies for clarification.

The call will provide funding for integrated projects by researchers coming from at least three of the four subscribing countries – in any combination of three or more countries. It is a requirement of the call that at least three countries are involved.

So there's four countries, I just listed, France, Germany, UK and Canada, you need to have at least three of those four countries involved in a proposal.

There is again a special opportunity for cooperation with projects in Japan. With the aim to strengthen cooperation between researchers in Japan and ORA partners, the Japan

Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) as the national funding organization of Japan renews the funding scheme to support projects which are associated with ORA. For details please see the following website for the [Japanese call](#).

****Note – Japan does not count towards the minimum requirement of three countries to be involved.**

4. Eligibility criteria – Applicants

The main points here to note are that:

- The Main Applicants (MA) and his/hers organisations must be registered in Je-S
- Please do allow sufficient time to complete registrations
- Other eligible applicant/project/team members and cooperation partners must be listed in the Full list of project participants attachment that can be downloaded from the website
- Projects applicants (so MA, PIs, Cols) can only be involved in ONE proposal, in any capacity in the current round. If any individual appears as project participant in two applications, both applications will be declared ineligible and rejected by the call Secretariat.

This is a really important point because in ORA 5, we had some applicants that were involved in multiple proposals, project applicants can only be involved in one proposal. If Both of these applications will be declared ineligible and rejected by the call secretary.

5. Eligibility criteria – Duration and budget

Two main points to raise here are:

- Projects outside the min 24 and max 36 months would not be able to be submitted via Je-S. Je-S is UKRI system for submitting proposals.
- Regarding the breakdown of the possible budgets this means that each collaborator treat their own budget as if it was a separate but linked entity. To make it clear, as stated in the call documentation, 'per project' does not mean that all collaborators have to share the maximum budget of the host institution rather no one partner can spend beyond their national maximum budget allocated for this call per proposal.

And regarding the breakdown of the possible budgets please refer to the slide and call documentation for further details on limits for different national funding agencies.

6. Eligibility criteria – Additional Guidelines

Apart from technical requirements there are a number of factors that are important in developing proposals for this call. We strongly recommend that you consider all of these elements in developing your Outline and Full proposal – not only because it helps to ensure you are meeting the call requirements but also because these issues are frequently raised by assessors and panel members when making funding decisions.

First and foremost, you need to ensure that your proposal is within the remit and focusses on the research relevant to social sciences and it is eligible within the national requirements of all partners – **proposals outside of the remit of this call i.e. partners' national requirements will be rejected.**

All elements of a good proposal are covered in the call specification and other guidance documents, and we strongly suggest you make maximum use of all sources of support in developing your proposal.

Regarding resubmissions please note that:

- Except ESRC, all partners allow resubmissions of previously successful non-/ORA proposals.
- This is a really important point as ESRC has a different approach to other partners, ESRC does not allow resubmissions.
- An unsuccessful previous or proposal or an unsuccessful known or a proposal if it's been through any form of assessment, then that will count as a resubmission and it will not be eligible. However, other partners do allow resubmissions.
- All partners do not allow double submissions i.e. if you have submitted a proposals to non-ORA call which is still waiting for a decision you cannot submit the same proposal to ORA's current call.

7. Japanese Cooperation partners

As mentioned before, the call presents an exciting opportunity to associate ORA projects with partners in Japan.

The main points here to make are that:

- Japanese proposals will be evaluated separately by Japanese partners and funding decisions will be made independently.
- A separate attachment called Summary of Japanese Project must be submitted at Outline and Full Stages
- The Japanese call will be open for submission between 20th January and 19th February 2020.

8. How to apply

ESRC is the coordinating agency for this round. All proposals for this call will be submitted through the ESRC's Joint Electronic Submissions system (Je-S). For detailed guidance on how to submit proposals please refer to the ORA Six Call Je-S Guidance for Applicants.

This call will follow a two-stage procedure consisting of an outline proposal and a full proposal. Applicants who are successful at outline will automatically progress to full stage. Unlike the previous round, applicants will be invited to **submit outline and full proposals at the same time**, rather than waiting for the results of the outline stage.

As mentioned before this is not a standard call – **so we strongly advise all applicants that you must fully familiarise yourself with the full guidance documentation.**

Specifically we would like to bring to your attention the following:

- The Main Applicant and hers/his organisation must be registered in Je-S. Other applicants will not have to but their details must be provided in the Full List of Project Participants separate attachments. Registration in Je-S will be required for all ESRC successful applicants.

- Please allow sufficient time for registration and submission of the Outline and Full proposals- a useful table is included in the call specification. Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected.
- - Please allow at least **five business days** for processing the Je-S registration of the Main Applicant as the registration requests are handled manually by Je-S staff.
 - Recommend submitting Outline proposals **10 days** prior to the call closing deadline. Depending on your Research Organisation, there may be additional steps in place which you and your Research Office will need to consider upon submission.
 - The ES number is generated by the system as soon as the Outline Je-S form has been submitted. Electronic acknowledgement will be sent to the Main Applicant (if self-registered) or submitting organisation (if a proposal has been submitted via the Submitter Pool at applicant's research organisation). If the latter, we strongly advise applicants to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the proposal has been successfully submitted to the Je-S team.
 - We strongly recommend you create your Stage 2 Full proposal as soon as the outline has been submitted and you receive the Outline ERSC reference number but no later than **five working days** prior to the submission deadline.
 - Alternatively, aim to submit both the Outline and Full proposals no later than five days prior to the deadline
- Select the correct calls in Je-S for your proposals.
- Please take an extra care when completing your application form to ensure that you adhere to the specific requirements. Proposals which do not adhere to the guidelines may be rejected.

9. Your proposal in Je-S

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.**

Generally, the Outline and Full proposals in Je-S should be identical if you use 'copy and paste' option from Outline to Full proposal. However, before submission you will be able to edit Full proposal if you wish.

When preparing your proposals you can save and then return to earlier sections should you wish to amend it/revise content. **Once submitted - the Je-S proposals cannot be edited.**

Importantly, please note that no changes to Outline and Full proposals are permitted once they are submitted to the ESRC and at any stage of the commissioning process!

10. Mandatory attachments

You must also submit all mandatory attachments, as detailed in the call documents. Any attachments deemed inappropriate will be removed from your application. Your proposal may be rejected if any mandatory attachments are missing.

You must adhere to the length of attachments – your proposal will not progress to the next stage if any attachments exceed these limits:

For example word limits for the Case of support is 4 pages for Outline and then 10 for Full proposals

- Please note that any Case for Support which exceeds pages limit will be **automatically rejected without exception**.
- Whilst all other page limits are strict, in the case of the other attachments we can allow you to amend the formatting if you accidentally go over the page limit and/or do not meet our formatting guidelines. However, in this process you would not be allowed to make any changes other than formatting, and any amendments would need to be received by the designated deadline. No changes whatsoever can be made to the Case for Support.

Within this, all documents **must adhere to** our formatting rules:

- Minimum font size 11, preferably in Times New Roman or Arial
- Minimum 2cm margins on all sides
- If we are in any doubt about whether your documents meet these requirements, we will need to contact you to verify that these criteria have been adhered to.

11. Decision-making process

- Differs from previous ORA call commissioning processes
- Coming back to the commissioning process - there will be two main phases of assessment:
 - Outline stage
 - Full stage
- Once the call has closed the ESRC Call Secretariat and partners 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, will be assessed by an expert international Outline panel.
Note that Outline Panel will assess Outline proposals only.
- Cases of Support is the most important document at both stages, although final funding decisions will be made based on all the documents and information that has been submitted.
- In your **Case for Support** we strongly encourage you to elaborate on your aims and objectives, the relevant policy background to the research project, the methodologies to be used and the rationale behind their selection, the outputs that you anticipate having and the impacts that may be felt from these.
- The Outline panel will meet in 2-3 December in Bonn, Germany to decide which proposals will be shortlisted. Decisions will be communicated to applicants shortly after the meeting.
Shortlisted proposals will automatically move to the full stage and will undergo a written peer review and then they will be discussed by the Commissioning Panel in June 2020.

Note that Commissioning Panel will assess Full proposals and accompanied attachments. In addition, panel members will also be looking at the Case for Support from Outline stage.

- After recipient of all reviewers comments Main Applicants, on behalf of all project applicants, will be given an opportunity to provide a written response to reviewers comments – **you will have only 5 working days** and this is optional.
- Proposals will be discussed and funding recommendations will be made by the commissioning panel of experts

Feedback to applicants will be provided - the anonymous reviews of the external referees and a consensus report of the expert panel.

12. Final steps for successful applicants

- Just a little bit of information on what will happen if you're successful, to give you a sense of the timescale and what will be required (so you can anticipate and prepare accordingly)
- Final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in September/October 2020.
- All successful proposals will undergo thorough **costings checks**, so it's really important that your Justification of Resources is thorough and accurate – this will reduce any delays to the contracting process, and also help us to ascertain whether costs are eligible without needing to come back to you too many times
 - We will go through the costings line by line, though, and if we have any queries we will contact you to discuss
 - Costs which cannot be fully justified will be reduced or cut, and we also reserve the right to ring-fence costs to ensure that they are only used for particular activities
- DFG Specific: All recommended for funding proposals will have to be considered by the German's Funding Committee and this could cause potential delays in communicating final funding decisions.
- Finally, in exceptional circumstances you may receive a recommendation to be funded from the Commissioning Panel which is subject to **a condition**, and your award is therefore not guaranteed unless you are able to meet this condition. If you do not provide a response which the panel find satisfactory your project will not be funded. We will, however, provide whatever guidance we can to help you to meet this condition.
- All successful applicants will be required to complete a joint final report on their project after the grant ends (template and further information will be provided).

13. Assessment criteria

- Assessors will consider whether applications are of world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically sound), fit the criteria for ORA scheme and whether the research has the potential to have a real impact.
- Assessors will be asked to comment on the following criteria when assessing proposals, and therefore you are strongly advised to consider all these criteria when preparing their proposals with a specific variation between Outline and Full proposals as presented on slide.

- We strongly advise to consider all of the assessment criteria when preparing your proposals with a specific variation between an outline and full stages as presented on a slide. The research excellent is always the main criteria.

I 4. National additional requirements

***In the next slides we will provide some partners' specific hints and tips potential applicants must be aware of in preparations for their proposals.**

There are different national requirements for all ORA partners which applicants should consider and adhere to when making preparations for your proposal.

More generally, please make sure you follow all partners' specific requirements and in any doubts please do get in touch with the national contacts and see further clarifications.

More specifically, we would like to re-iterate that:

- French and German applicants are required to also submit separate proposals via the countries national submission systems and the deadline for both is **Wednesday 18th September 2019 at 5.00pm local time**
- In addition, French and German applicants will be required to use, generated via Je-S, ES/number and enter to the Je-S proposals for identification purposes
- French applicants are specifically asked to provide a) acronyms for titles of their proposals as well as b) enter financial information to their national system and generate PDF which could be uploaded onto Je-S as the French National Financial Form. So technically speaking French applicants must submit their proposals into the French system before they start working on their Je-S proposal which have timing implication and it would be advisable they start working on their proposals as soon as possible.

The following three slides are particularly important for researchers affiliated with SSHRC-eligible Canadian postsecondary institutions. The three SSHRC slides include links that you can use at a later time.

The full call specifications and other important guidance documents can be found on the [ESRC website](#). These documents should be the starting point for any Canadian applicant. The next step is to consult the SSHRC website for specific eligibility criteria, terms and conditions for participation, and additional guidance for Canadian applicants.

The way the information is structured on SSHRC website is as follows:

- A landing page that brings everything together (all relevant links and an overview of ORA scheme). From the landing page you can access three essential documents:
 1. The National Addendum that includes specific guidance for the Canadian applicants, policies and regulations and eligibility requirements
 2. The National Financial Form (the same form that is also available on ESRC website) – this form will look very familiar to you as it is the same as the one used for almost all SSHRC funding opportunities – this form will have to be submitted with the Je-S Full proposal to ESRC.
 3. And the Terms and Conditions for Applying. This form includes the list of Canadian participants; it must be completed and signed by the applicant, and signed and submitted by the research office at the applicant's institution. This form cannot be submitted by the applicants themselves.

Proposals will be funded based on the funding request outlined in the SSHRC National Financial Form, which must be submitted as an attachment to the ORA 6 Full proposal. This Form contains an itemized budget in Canadian dollars.

All applicants must comply with the regulations set out in the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide, when designing their budget.

All relevant documents for this funding opportunity are available on ESRC's website in English. The Je-S system is in English only, too. However, all competition materials are available in French upon request, and SSHRC-eligible applicants can submit their proposals through the Je-S system in English or French. It is very important that applicants who wish to write their proposal in French contact SSHRC in advance.

The deadline hour is different from what Canadian researchers are used to. Please make sure you submit your applications no later than **11 a.m. Eastern time on the deadline day.**

Here is the role equivalency between ORA 6 and SSHRC. As mentioned, Canadian applicants need to submit a list of participants in the Terms and Conditions for Applying document. This list will include what you normally include in other SSHRC applications: applicant, co-applicants and collaborators. These roles have specific eligibility rules at SSHRC, rules that are briefly mentioned on the slide, and fully described in the National Addendum.

The ORA 6 Canadian PI is considered to be the SSHRC applicant. ORA 6 co-investigators are SSHRC co-applicants and ORA 6 team members are SSHRC collaborators. ORA 6 cooperation partners can be either SSHRC co-applicants or collaborators. For example, if you have a participant from Australia, this person will be listed as a cooperation partner in your ORA 6 application. In your SSHRC Terms and Conditions for applying document, you can list this person as either co-applicant (if from an Australian postsecondary institution) or collaborator, depending on the role this person plays in your project.

The last thing we want to mention for the Canadian participants **is very important, especially for researchers coming from humanities.** ORA scheme has been designed in 2009 by four European agencies to support research **in social sciences.** SSHRC joined ORA for the first time this year and, in the current competition, **Canadian researchers from humanities are encouraged to apply; however, they need to collaborate with social scientists from Europe. Moreover, while a Canadian subproject in an application may be entirely in humanities, the overall ORA project of the application must be at least 50% in social sciences.**

Social sciences and humanities projects are eligible at SSHRC; however, if your Canadian subproject is tilted towards humanities, we suggest that you encourage your collaborators (the PIs from European countries) to contact their national agencies to determine eligibility with them.

15. Timetable, deadlines and decisions

- Deadline for applications is 4pm UK time on Wednesday 11 September 2019
- Allow time for Je-S registrations and processing – don't leave it until the last minute, as there are a number of stages your proposal will need to go through after you submit it (as mentioned earlier)
- We will then go through an intensive period of office checking, ensuring that your proposal meets partners' national core requirements and returning any documents to

PIs which need formatting amendments and so forth – **you will only have 3 working days to return reformatted documentation**. Some proposals may be rejected at this stage, if they do not meet the core requirements.

- Outline proposal form and accompanied attachment will then be sent out to assessors – experience international academics members of the Outline Panel
- Outline Stage Panel shortlisting decisions will be communicated in January and PIs of:
 - successful proposals will receive an email confirmation
 - unsuccessful proposals will be rejected.
- Shortlisted proposals will automatically be progressed to the full stage and will be undergoing further checks, before they will be sent out to a written peer review
- The Commissioning Panel will meet following the written peer review and based on the recommendations at that meeting we aim to communicate the final decisions to all applicants in September/October 2020 (depending on partners timescales to confirm funding's). Please be aware that we will communicate this decision to you as soon as we are able to via email.
- The proposals can start:
 - At the earliest in October 2020
 - At the latest in March 2021.

16. Do get in touch

- Please note details for national contacts
- ORA Call Secretariat
- Je-S Helpdesk.

17. Questions

- Thank you for your attention, this is the end of the presentation. We will now look at the questions received and try to answer some of the general relevance
- Please keep your microphones switched off, and type your questions via the webinar platform - please share with **all Panellists and Participants**
- If you have a specific queries, please get in touch with the ESRC Call Secretariat as soon as possible ORAQueries@esrc.ukri.org
- Please contact us via email in the first instance, as a specific individual may not be able to answer their phone/email at any given time/day whereas the mailboxes are constantly monitored by a team of trained staff. It is also generally easier to understand queries and therefore provide the most suitable and detailed response via email.
- Just as a reminder we will share the slides and transcript shortly. Recording will be available on request.
- We will also welcome all participants' feedback on this webinar session and we will shortly be sending out a short survey to complete. We are thanking in advance for your time and comments/suggestions on how a similar activity could be improved in the future.