Secondary Data Analysis Initiative: Global Challenges Research Fund highlight notice

Summary

Funding for this highlight notice is being provided from the Global Challenges Research Fund in order to produce insight on developing countries. The highlight notice is expected to fund around seven SDAI (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/secondary-data-analysis-initiative-sdai-open-call/projects) projects. Funding will be provided for grants of up 18 months with an overall limit of £200,000 (100 per cent full Economic Cost (fEC). In addition to our usual policy, for this call we will exceptionally permit that fully justified costs associated with an international co-investigator's contribution to the project can exceed 30 per cent of the overall cost of the grant (at 100 per cent fEC).

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (www.esrc.ac.uk/gcrf) is a £1.5 billion funding stream to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries. GCRF forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, and will be awarded in a manner that fits with Official ODA guidelines (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm). GCRF will address global challenges through disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and will strengthen capability for research and innovation within both UK and developing countries, providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need.

Background and context

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) aims to harness the UK's scientific expertise to tackle some of the world's most pressing development challenges. It operates across a number of partners, including the Research Councils, National Academies, UK Space Agency and HEFCE. The RCUK GCRF represents the largest portion of this Fund and is a strategic fund spanning all seven Research Councils. The Research Councils have each received directly allocated portions of the GCRF, and ESRC is drawing on its allocation to support this call. In addition to the funds allocated to Councils, there is a large amount of funding that remains unallocated. The Research Councils and other partners are working towards a strategy for this and further details will be announced as soon as possible.

Every discipline within the social sciences has the potential to make a strong contribution to the GCRF agenda, and the ESRC anticipates playing an integral role in developing and delivering the GCRF, working alongside other research councils and partners. Further information about the ESRC's approach to GCRF and details of other current GCRF calls is available on our website (www.esrc.ac.uk/gcrf).

Call details

Proposals have an overall limit of up to £200,000 (100 per cent full Economic Cost (fEC)) and this funding will be allocated through a ring-fenced pot. Proposals will be considered at the November 2016 meeting of the ESRC Grant Assessment Panel and up to seven projects will be funded.

Proposals must benefit one of the countries involved on the DAC (the Development Assistant Committee of the OECD) List of ODA Recipients (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm)

Proposals submitted to this highlight notice **must** meet the ODA criteria (see our ODA guidance at www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf/official-development-assistance-oda) and are required to demonstrate how the proposal meets these criteria (see below). Proposals which do not meet the ODA criteria but meet the remit of the main call will still be considered, in competition with others, as part of that scheme.

As part of our policy on demand management, we will be looking closely at both the volume and quality of applications that institutions submit to this competition.

Call objectives

Given the SDAI's track record of producing impactful research projects and the potential of utilising secondary data analysis in researching developing countries and development issues, the SDAI represents an important mechanism for funding ODA research. The SDAI also represents a key part of ESRC's funding to develop capacity in secondary data analysis and therefore will contribute to the principle of research *as* development outlined by ESRC in its wider objectives for GCRF.

We see this highlight notice as the first such activity to fund the use of secondary data to conduct analysis on developing countries. We are therefore keen for the work funded under this call to help enable future projects.

The aims of this competition are:

- Utilise existing data resources to produce high-quality, impactful research on developing countries
- Improve the capacity and methods for secondary data research in and on developing countries
- Co-produce substantive and innovative data research in readiness for future GCRF calls
- Provide insight into existing data resources which can be used to conduct high quality research on developing countries.

Themes

The highlight encourages focus on the five core areas ESRC has initially identified in its GCRF contribution:

- Building effective institutions in conflict-affected and fragile states
- Migration, mobility and development
- Dynamics of inequalities
- Innovation and inclusive economic growth
- Shocks, security, risks and resilience.

You can find more information about ESRC's approach and detailed descriptions of these core areas at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf/

Please note this list is not restrictive: proposals are also permitted to explore other areas of importance to DAC countries where social science working in conjunction with other disciplines can make a substantial contribution to achieving the aims of GCRF - for example in relation to mental health and wellbeing, gender, urbanisation, education or digital technology for development.

Proposals are permitted which use a range of data types and sources, for example in the consideration of climate change through the use of social and environmental data. All proposals are required to make a clear case for how they comply with Official Development Assistance (ODA) guidelines.

Differences to the Secondary Data Analysis Initiative call

This highlight notice relates to the Secondary Data Analysis Initiative (SDAI) and no other ESRC scheme. Applicants should make clear they are applying to this highlight call within the case for support and should prefix their project title with 'GCRF'.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)
This call is funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund. GCRF forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (www.oecd.org/). ODA-funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm). Funding within this call will be awarded in a manner that fits with Official ODA guidelines (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm).

To comply with ODA requirements, all proposals must make clear how their primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries on the DAC list. Proposals may relate to any country or countries on the DAC list; there are no priority countries. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how they meet ODA requirements throughout their "Case for Support" and "Pathways to Impact". In addition, each proposal must also include a mandatory attachment which explicitly demonstrates how it meets key ODA requirements. The 'ODA compliance statement' must answer the following three questions in order:

1. Which country / countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal?

2. How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
3. 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?

This attachment should be included as an "other" type attachment and be titled ODA compliance statement. The response to each question must be clearly labelled with the relevant question number. No word limits are set for responses to individual questions, but the ODA compliance statement as a whole must not exceed one side of A4. ESRC reserves the right to reject applications that do not respond to all three questions.

In answering these questions, applicants must refer to the current OECD DAC list (www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm). Any country that appears on the DAC list of ODA recipients is eligible; there are no priority countries or groups of countries for this call. Research which includes consideration of countries not on this list is eligible for this call, but only where the primary purpose and benefit of the research is to promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list. Research relevant to single or multiple countries on the DAC list is eligible for funding under this call.

Further general advice for applicants on how to meet ODA requirements is provided by the ESRC (www.esrc.ac.uk/gcrf) and in the Frequently Asked Questions.

Any queries about the ODA eligibility of projects should be raised with sdai@esrc.ac.uk before submitting a proposal. Initial ODA compliance assessment will take place within ESRC, though final decisions may include input from commissioning panels as well as external sources of ODA expertise.

Data
Due to the research focus on developing countries, where there is limited data available, there is **no** requirement to use ESRC-funded data resources or infrastructure. Some resources and data types generated from the workshop on this topic which could potentially be useful in investigating these countries will be available on the ESRC website at www.esrc.ac.uk/sdai in due course.

The use of any secondary data resource is acceptable provided applicants are able to justify the data's ability to provide answers to the research questions posed in the proposal. In order for this case to be judged as part of an assessment of the proposal's viability, applicants are required to include an additional technical attachment which considers the quality of the data in relation to the proposed analysis. This should be included as an "other" type attachment, be clearly labelled and be a maximum of four sides of A4. This attachment should focus on the following considerations:

- *Data access: project and future use*

  Ensure that rights to access planned data have been fully obtained **prior** to the application and are discussed in this attachment, including projects that may be conducted through an established procedure (for example the Administrative Data Research Network). Evidence of this should be should be included in proposals via a letter of support where access is potentially difficult (see the SDAI open call guidance on this). Applicants should ensure the proposed analysis complies with the

licence obtained and that issues such as copyright are addressed and discussed in the application. Finally applicants should outline in the attachment what information can be shared beyond the project in order to comply with ESRC's Research Data Policy (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/research-data-policy/) to allow future reuse and replication. Contact the UK Data Service (www.ukdataservice.ac.uk) for advice on this if required.

- *Data files*

  It is important to fully document all data that might be enhanced or prepared for analysis as part of proposals. All data files that are used should be listed in the attachment together with their key attributes. This includes aspects of the data relating to formatting, labelling and coding. Where possible, data files should comply with recognised formats (see for example www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/format/recommended-formats). For numeric data files this includes ensuring that all variables are well labelled, consistent and are self-explanatory. Value labels for codes should also be documented, pointing to external coding frames where appropriate. Missing values and weights should be treated consistently and fully labelled. For qualitative data, audio files should be fully transcribed using a standardised template with speakers indicated and basic header information. These aspects of the data should be outlined in the attachment rather than including any of this documentation in proposals.
  Any treatment to the data such as data derivations, harmonisation or anonymisation should be fully described in the attachment.

- *Documentation*

  Data should be documented as fully as possible to enable its reuse and replication. Applicants should consider the origins and provenance of the data, as well as details of the research design and data collection methodology. Useful documents relating to the dataset include questionnaires, topic guides and other data collection templates, interviewer instructions, code books and any other materials relating to data collection / generation, and these should be referenced in proposals where available. Full details about data access should be noted, including all licensing or privacy restrictions. Licenses, consent form protocols and information sheets should also be referenced where available. Finally a ReadMe file for the whole data collection is useful and should be discussed in the proposal if available.

  Further guidance on data quality issues can be found at www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data/preparing-data/data-files, http://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/reshare-review-procedures/#UKDS and http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/view/subjects/03=5F.html

Any new datasets generated through these projects (for example through data linkage) should be deposited with the UK Data Service in line with ESRC's data policy. Projects funded under this scheme are required to help enable future data analysis projects focussed on developing countries. In order to retain this knowledge projects are required to document how they have made use of the data and how they have prepared datasets to be archived (if applicable). These documents are to be shared with the UK Data Service by the completion of projects. Please see

https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/?sf=Case%20studies&df=CaseStudyTypeFacet_Research for examples of the reuse case studies required and www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data/stories for the depositor stories. Project websites are not sustainable repositories for materials relating to the datasets to be analysed, therefore a metadata record should be added to ReShare (http://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/), the UK Data Services' portal for ESRC-funded data activity.

This call encourages proposals using innovative and/or established data sources, subject to applicants being able to justify the use of these data in terms of quality. The primary assessment criterion for proposals will be their significance and relevance to addressing the challenges faced by developing countries through cutting-edge research. There is no expectation of proposals using certain kinds of data, or steers or ring-fences to proposals using certain data types. The call is open to the use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Proposals which make use of the ESRC-funded resources which are required as part of the open SDAI call (listed in Appendix 1 of the main SDAI specification) will be considered more generally against this call if they aren't funded under the highlight notice.

However, proposals which only utilise resources outside of those listed for the main specification can only be considered against the highlight notice and not against the main call, regardless of quality level.

As with the main call, proposals which seek to utilise resources through the Administrative Data Research Network or Business and Local Government Data Research Centres should outline the case for accessing data through these infrastructures, regardless of whether a proposal is being submitted against the highlight notice. Please see the call specification and Je-S guidance for the main call for further information.

Costs

The primary purpose of research funded under this call is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries. We expect researchers funded under this call to have identified the potential impacts of their research on relevant policy and practice, and to actively consider how this can be maximised and developed in ways which are realistic and appropriate to the particular context.

Proposals are required to devote at least 10 per cent of the budget to in-country impact and partnership activities and these activities must be clearly marked in proposal's Justifications for Resources attachment. Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the kinds of user engagement, knowledge exchange, communications and research uptake activities they plan to undertake. Please note that outreach and engagement activities in themselves do not constitute impact. The development of a clear impact strategy will be important to ensure 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/).

For this call it is recommended that each project holds a seminar or workshop with key stakeholders in the country or countries where the majority of the research is taking place, to set out the aims of the project and fully ground it in the local context. Applicants should

include brief details of their planned stakeholder workshop in the Impact summary. Further details must be provided in the Pathways to Impact attachment (see below). If this kind of activity is not considered appropriate for your project, we expect you to set out the reasons why.

The Pathways to Impact attachment should be used to explain what will be undertaken by the applicant to ensure that opportunities for users to benefit from their research, and thus for achieving economic and societal impact, are maximised. It is important that the pathways to impact are realistic and appropriate to the particular developing country or countries which the research is intended to benefit.

Ethics

The proposal's ethical statements are required to discuss the ethics of conducting secondary data analysis research on the targeted countries and of analysing the proposed datasets as well as how any ethical concerns will be addressed (see www.esrc.ac.uk/researchethics for guidance on this).

Partnerships and impact activities

For this call we strongly encourage proposals which involve partnerships and collaborative relationships, particularly with developing country partners. Partnerships may build on existing relationships or represent new collaborative relationships. The configuration of partnerships and collaborations should be driven by the research and impact objectives underpinning the proposal. The principal requirement is for substantive, targeted and high-quality collaborations or partnerships, demonstrated through clear leadership roles, and balance and proportionality in partners' roles and responsibilities. All partnerships, including international ones, should be based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices.

Neither UK nor international collaboration in proposals are limited to co-investigators; non-academic stakeholders, including potential research users and intermediary organisations with a mandate to communicate research, may also be involved in proposals. The exploitation of new knowledge does not just occur at the end of a research project, but is rather embedded throughout the research process itself, so we expect such stakeholders to be included and involved in both the early design and on-going conduct of research projects.

Partnerships are particularly important for this call in relation to understanding the make-up of the datasets in developing countries which requires a high-level of familiarity with the culture and procedures of the country. Therefore there is a strong need for applicants to have in-country knowledge or partners who would have this depth of understanding.

We see this as a first activity relating to secondary data on developing countries and are keen for the work funded under this call to help enable future projects. Projects in this area are encouraged to build solid partnerships to help support future data analysis both in terms of the requirement for in-country knowledge in drawing accurate conclusions from the data and in enabling access to data for analysis.

Applicants should note ESRC's policy on the inclusion of international co-investigators on proposals (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals). In addition to our usual policy, for this call we will exceptionally

permit the fully justified costs associated with an international co-investigator's contribution to the project to exceed 30 per cent of the overall cost of the grant (at 100 per cent fEC). No upper limits will be applied, though all costs will need to be fully justified. Justification of costs incurred by non-UK organisations must be clearly identified within proposals "Justification of Resources" in line with the Resource summary section.

Capacity building
An important aspect of GCRF is capacity development, and we strongly encourage all proposals to this call to identify research capacity-building activities as part of, and not separate to, the stated research approach. The focus should be on the quality and impact of the research, 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 implementation with developing country partner staff
- Studentships based in the UK (eligibility requirements below)/ Note that studentships are not eligible under this call.

Further information on capacity-building in relation to GCRF is available on the ESRC website (www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf/capacity-development/).

Note that studentships are not permitted as part of this call. However the inclusion of an early career researcher as either principal or co-investigator, as detailed in the specification of the SDAI open call is required for the highlight notice. We strongly advise that this early career researcher should be based in a developing country, where possible.

Other
Proposal summary sections should clearly capture how the context, aims and objectives, and potential application and benefits of the research are directly and primarily relevant to the problems of developing countries

The proposal's Case for Support must make a clear link between the aims and objectives and the scope and theme of the call, including the primary focus on promoting the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries.

For this call it is an essential requirement to add the names of the country/ countries involved in the research as a free-text keyword as well as to add the phrase 'GCRF'.

Eligibility
For this call, normal ESRC eligibility rules apply. This means principal investigators on proposals to this call must be based at a UK institution eligible for Research Council funding (www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/). Co-investigators can be based anywhere in the world. Further information on eligibility is provided within the ESRC Research Funding Guide (www.esrc.ac.uk/rfg); guidance on the inclusion of international co-investigators is

also available www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/).

All other SDAI scheme requirements as detailed in the open call documentation are required in this highlight. Please see www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/secondary-data-analysis-initiative-call/.

Application process

This highlight notice applies to the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) meeting in November 2016. Around seven projects will be funded for this highlight at this meeting (dependent on quality of proposals). As proposals for this highlight are required to be processed at these specific GAP meetings, the deadline for the receipt of proposals under the highlight is **15 July 2016**.

Proposals submitted for the highlight notice received after this date will not be considered for the funding available as part of the highlight, but may still be considered (in open competition) for SDAI funding as part of the main call if its remit is met (see information above and in the SDAI open call specification at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/secondary-data-analysis-initiative-call/).

Proposals funded through the highlight notice should start on 31 January 2017 (for a period of up to 18 months).

Assessment

In addition to the assessment criteria of the SDAI scheme, the primary assessment criterion for proposals to the highlight will be their significance and relevance to addressing the challenges faced by developing countries through cutting-edge research. There are no priority countries or themes. There is also no expectation of funding proposals which are analysing certain kinds of data, though primary data collection is prohibited. Proposals submitted to the highlight notice will be considered at the GAP meeting alongside other proposals submitted to the SDAI call; however additional GAP members with expertise specifically relevant to the highlight notice may be brought into the meeting at the discretion of the ESRC and GAP Chair. For proposals to be funded under the highlight notice they must first meet the overall quality threshold of the SDAI scheme. Proposals will then be ranked on the basis of their quality, and the top-ranked proposals relevant to the highlight will be awarded funding through the ring-fenced pot. Proposals relevant to the highlight which are below this but above the overall quality threshold are still eligible to be considered for funding under the main scheme, if they meet its remit and where funding allows.

Successful grants

Successful grants will be managed by the ESRC, and will therefore be subject to ESRC's terms and conditions of grants which are published in the ESRC Research Funding Guide (www.esrc.ac.uk/rfg). Successful grants will also be expected to engage with other investments funded under the SDAI. Further information will be provided to successful applicants.

Contacts

For enquires relating to the ODA please complete the Remit Query Form (https://fs3.formsite.com/esrcforms/form60/index.html) for advice.

For questions relating to ESRC's application processes please see the research grant FAQs: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/research-grants/. For specific questions relating to the remit of the SDAI please refer to the SDAI FAQs or contact sdai@esrc.ac.uk.

Enquiries relating to the Je-S application procedure should be addressed to:

- Je-S Helpdesk
  Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk
  Telephone: 01793 444164