Specific requirements and preparation of GCRF bids

An overview of what to watch out for in preparing a GCRF bid, including due diligence and post-award monitoring

Dr Andrew Massoura
Research Grants & Contracts Manager
Specific requirements and preparation of GCRF bids

- ODA Compliance
- GCRF assessment criteria
- Due Diligence
- Costing proposals
- Starting Procedures
- Project Management
Official Development Assistance (ODA)

• The GCRF forms part of the UK's ODA commitment which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

• ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list.

• Administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.
Official Development Assistance (ODA)

- ODA DAC list
Official Development Assistance (ODA)

• The OECD defines ODA compliant research activities as:
  • The main purpose being to promote the economic growth or welfare of developing countries

• Only research directly and primarily relevant to the problems of developing countries may be counted as ODA.
  • This includes research into tropical diseases and developing crops designed for developing country conditions.

• The costs may still be counted as ODA if the research is carried out in a developed country
ODA Compliance

• Focus upon addressing the economic development and welfare of developing countries as primary purpose of the research
  • State which countries are involved

• Define the challenge in the context of the impact upon local populations
  • Issues which are global in nature are not ODA compliant unless your research is linked to a specific aspect in a developing country.

• Define how your research will seek to address the challenge, and the impact that it will have on the economic development and welfare of local populations
  • Show a route to impact, and how solutions will be realised.

• Whilst capacity building is an important part of ODA research, unless the call has been specifically set up as a capacity building programme then capacity building on its own is not enough to justify ODA compliance

• Simply stating that a proposal is ODA compliant, or will lead to economic development and poverty alleviation does not make it so - it is the supporting evidence that you describe which makes it ODA compliant.
ODA Compliance

[Image of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals icons]
ODA Compliance

• All work funded by GCRF is expected to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and therefore you should relate your work back to the UN SDGs.

• Be aware that each SDG has a set of specific targets to be achieved by 2030.
  • Be specific and convey exactly how your work will address particular target(s)
  • Where your work cuts across several SDGs, highlight this
  • Do not make tenuous connections between your work and SDGs to seem as though you are addressing a higher number of them.
    • This is likely to come across as though you do not understand the SDGs properly.

• You should build ODA into the entire philosophy of your proposal – do not restrict it to certain sections.

• Needs to be compliant throughout project - not just at outset
ODA Compliance Statement

• When writing the statement consider the following:

  • Which country/ countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal and are these countries likely to continue to be ODA eligible for the duration of the research?

  • 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?
GCRF assessment criteria

• When drafting the proposal, consider your Research as falling into one or more of these constructs:

• Research **for** Development
  • undertaking research that addresses the challenges for developing countries – here context and pathway to impact will be key

• Research **as** Development
  • building capacity with developing countries to solve their own challenges – here partnerships in country will be key

• Research **on** Development
  • undertaking independent research to critically assess ODA actions, mechanisms and outcomes
GCRF assessment criteria

• Beyond ODA compliance, there are four main criteria for assessing GCRF grant applications:

  • Research excellence
  • Problem and solution focused
  • Partnership and capacity building
  • Likelihood of impact
GCRF assessment criteria

• **Research excellence:**
  • Same standard of research excellence but not constrained by traditional methodologies or disciplinary silos.

• **You should aim to demonstrate:**
  • You are bringing together key knowledge and expertise from different research communities. Show your research will involve a mix of perspectives.

  • Co-creation of research with LMIC partners. Highlight where you have involved LMIC partners who are not researchers (eg. policy makers) in research design and planning for implementation and uptake.

  • You are bringing together groups who may not traditionally work with each other
GCRF assessment criteria

• Problem and Solution Focused:
  • Problems:
    • Emphasise the scale of the problem globally
    • Hone in on why this is a particular problem in your selected LMIC(s)
    • Reference where your projects fits within the UN SDGs. If it cuts across several, highlight this.
  • Show an in-depth understanding of why this is a problem in your selected area(s):
    • Show an understanding of the cultural, social, economic context of the problem
    • Demonstrate awareness of any existing global or local efforts to tackle the problem
    • If applicable, state how the research fits into the LMIC’s policies and strategic objectives
    • If there are aspects of the problem still to understand, address how you will do this within your research
  • Demonstrate that those on the ground (eg. partners & stakeholders) have helped you identify the problems – it must be clear that you haven’t just assumed something is a problem.
GCRF assessment criteria

- Problem and Solution Focused:
  - Solutions:
    - Make sure it does not come across as though you are imposing something you think is a solution.
      - Demonstrate that you have co-created solutions with partners from the LMIC ie. they have been involved in the designing of proposed approaches for seeking the solution
      - Demonstrate there is a local appetite for finding solutions
      - Demonstrate stakeholder engagement ie. show evidence that those who will benefit from the project are committed to uptake of solutions
    - Show that you are aware of potential barriers to uptake of research results in the LMIC.
      - Partners and relevant stakeholder should be able to help with this.
    - Highlight any preliminary data or other evidence that demonstrates the proposed research is feasible in the LMIC. Just assuming could imply a lack of knowledge of in-country issues
    - If you’re targeting a relatively wealthy country on the DACs list, you should make clear how your work will benefit a vulnerable section of the population.
GCRF assessment criteria

• Partnerships and Capacity Building:
  • Partnerships:
    • A collaborative feel should come across throughout your entire proposal:
      • Make sure it comes across that partners will be involved in every step, from research design through to dissemination of results
      • Avoid top-down language or anything with imperialistic tones
    • Be specific about the role and contribution of the partners.
    • If you’ve worked together before, highlight any past successes (do you have a track record of delivering?)
    • If the partnerships are new, explain how they came about, why you are working together, and how you will build the relationship
GCRF assessment criteria

• Partnerships and Capacity Building:
  • Capacity Building:
    • Think about where you can realistically add value.
    • Emphasis on not just the research but also the admin and management being ‘shared’ between partners.
  • Technical and skills development:
    • Include relevant bespoke training to develop capacity at all career levels
    • Make sure any proposed skills development has the primary aim of improving LMICs ability to undertake research on the identified challenges.
    • Where appropriate, provide opportunities for colleagues from LMICs to train in UK labs or present findings in international conferences.
    • Select the most appropriate colleagues to travel to the LMIC eg. if you are exchanging experimental techniques, it may be more appropriate to send someone with technical expertise, and not the PI.
    • Do not just address technical skills development – is there a need for professional, soft and transferable skills development? (eg. leadership skills).
    • Consider training opportunities for UK researchers by LMIC researchers
GCRF assessment criteria

• **Likelihood of impact:**
  • Knowledge exchange & dissemination
    • Who do you need your findings to reach and how to do this
    • Highlight how you will make findings accessible

• **Ensuring solution uptake**
  • Demonstrate that you are involving partners who can deliver impact.
  • Highlight where PIs/CoIs/partners can demonstrate good track record of delivering impact.

• **Sustainability and translation of results**
  • Explain the extent to which research within the LMIC might be sustainable beyond the lifetime of the research grant, and what approaches will drive this.
  • Demonstrate how you will ensure these partnerships will endure beyond the life of the project.

• **Monitoring & evaluation**
  • It is important to demonstrate the efforts you will take to monitor and evaluate your project, throughout its lifetime, to ensure you are on-track to deliver proposed impact.
GCRF assessment criteria

• Some examples of the type of impact you may be aiming to have are below:

  • **Developmental impact**: societal, economic and environmental impact
  
  • **Policy impact**: influence on key policy processes and evidence-informed decisions
  
  • **Capacity development**: strengthened capacity to produce, communicate and use research in LMICs
  
  • **Collaborative impact**: development of long-lasting, innovative and interdisciplinary collaborations that can advance global development
  
  • **Practice-level impact**: influence on development practice and development practitioners
  
  • **Knowledge as a global public good**: open access to research and data to benefit wider society
  
  • **Conceptual impact**: influence on how people think about development issues
## GCRF assessment criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Challenge areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equitable access to sustainable development</td>
<td>1. secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. sustainable health and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. inclusive and equitable quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. clean air, water and sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. affordable, reliable, sustainable energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable economies and societies</td>
<td>6. sustainable livelihoods supported by strong foundations for inclusive economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>growth and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. resilience and action on short-term environmental shocks and long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environmental change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. sustainable cities and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, good governance and social</td>
<td>10. understand and respond effectively to forced displacement and multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justice</td>
<td>refugee crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. reduce conflict and promote peace, justice and humanitarian action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. reduce poverty and inequality, including gender inequalities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Due Diligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance and Control</th>
<th>Ability to Deliver</th>
<th>Financial Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Past performance</td>
<td>Financial viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud, bribery, corruption, money laundering and slavery</td>
<td>Staff capacity and capability (number, track record)</td>
<td>Financial Management eg experience of finance team and segregation of duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal controls</td>
<td>Infrastructure and programme management for research</td>
<td>Strength of audit, internal and external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk management</td>
<td>Monitoring and management</td>
<td>Value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Policies, procedures and systems – inc IT systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance Processes</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>Separate bank accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research governance</td>
<td>Data management</td>
<td>Income from other sources – diversity of income streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific misconduct</td>
<td>Openness and Publications transparency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Governance**: Past performance
- **Fraud, bribery, corruption, money laundering and slavery**: Staff capacity and capability (number, track record)
- **Financial Management**: Financial viability
- **Risk management**: Monitoring and management
- **Ethics**: Training
- **Assurance Processes**: Equality and Diversity
- **Research governance**: Data management
- **Scientific misconduct**: Openness and Publications transparency
Costing proposals

- How are the costs requested by overseas partners determined?
  - Based on prescribed rates set within policies and procedures?
  - How are these evidenced?

- Reimbursement rates
  - Varies by call but in general:
    - UK – Funders usual rules – UKRI – 80% fEC
    - Overseas – Typically 100% of direct costs and sometime an overhead (20-30%)

- Eligible costs
  - Always need to check as some calls won’t fund PhD Students or Equipment
  - Admin costs usually mandatory not just advisory, especially for large projects
  - Travel costs – you will need a lot.
Starting procedure

• Sometimes less flexibility – fixed start dates

• Short turnaround for recruitment of staff

• Due Diligence

• Collaboration Agreement usually required from start
Project management

• Stage gate reviews

• Additional project requirements
  • Project risk register
  • Financial management plan
  • Work plan for each work stream
  • Governance and project management organisation plan
  • Monitoring and evaluation plan
Summary

• ODA Compliance

• GCRF assessment criteria
  • Research excellence
  • Problem and solution focused
  • Partnership and capacity building
  • Likelihood of impact

• Post-award management
  • Starting procedures
  • Project management requirements