


Updated 2018-2021 SFC GCRF strategy

Due to the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on academic research, SFC have given universities the opportunity to revise their 3 year GCRF strategy to reflect any significant changes in how the fund will be used in 2020-21. This will also reflect the significant increases in the fund over the last 3 years. University of Edinburgh SFC GCRF indicative allocation for 2020-2021 now stands at £5.3m up from £1.8m in 2018-19. This large grant has allowed us to deliver a diverse programme of activity to support ODA research at Edinburgh but also create resources for the wider sector across the Scotland and the UK, but primarily our international partners. We intend to continue this in 2020-21 whilst reflecting practical changes due to the pandemic.

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Has this GCRF strategy been approved for submission to SFC by the head of institution?	
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Section A: Official Development Assistance (ODA) and GCRF strategy

The strategy

Your institution's strategy and priority objectives for all development-related research activity funded through all sources for three years from 2018-19.

Our ambition is to deliver impact for society, where it is most needed. We deliver impact for society through the discovery, development and sharing of knowledge. The University of Edinburgh is a global university, and we aim to make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to the world, often through partnerships and exchange and always through engagement. We are committed to engaging in transformational research that tackles our shared grand challenges, where it is most needed. The University has signed the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accord in recognition of our commitment to global development and achieving these SDGs is now a key part of the university's 2030 vision. We recognized in a changed world much of this partnership will now not be able to happen face to face and we will look to invest where possible in the capabilities of networks and LMIC partners to continue that engagement virtually.

We fundamentally recognise the need to work through partnership, informed by partners' needs, to conduct interdisciplinary research and to engage locally informs all our development-related research activity. The University of Edinburgh has invested substantial resources to build collaboration within and outwith the University around topics that engage with the Sustainable Development Goals. We host a range of other interdisciplinary hubs, from area studies centres like our Centre of African Studies (the largest in Europe) to institutes like Edinburgh Infectious Diseases, that draws together 800 academics from across the University around common research interests. We have recently founded the Edinburgh Futures Institute, an ambitious collaboration across our University and through partnerships that seeks to grapple with the biggest societal questions: how will data transform society? What will future economies look like? How do we build capacities to lead and to shape the future global environment, how can governments use data to drive efficient policy formation and delivery?

We host a range of innovative partnerships that deliver research and capacity building that generates development impact at scale. To date, we have had considerable success with GCRF Funding, with almost £60m of awards across the University, which between them address almost every one of UKRI's challenge areas identified in their GCRF strategy. The portfolio includes 5 ESRC GCRF post-doctoral fellowships, 3 NERC GCRF Resilience Foundation Awards and major awards for a MRC Vaccine Network and an EPSRC Engineering and Digital Technology award. Further the University now leads two major ODA compliant, NIHR Global Health Units (combined value circa £16m). An example of which, the TIBA partnership (Tackling Infections to Benefit Africa) is an Africa-led, wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary research programme that explores and draws lessons from the ways that different African health systems tackle infectious diseases. It supports a range of Africa-led projects that aim to inform health policy and system strengthening. The second RESPIRE is a global Health Research Unit focusing on respiratory health in Asia. Our Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health is a major £20m Gates Foundation-funded partnership between the University of Edinburgh and the International Livestock Research Institute in Kenya that seeks to catalyse investments that enable scientists, investors, policy-makers and user communities to co-produce and apply knowledge. Our priority is to ensure their renewals in 2020-2021 to continue and expand their work. Finally our £17m MasterCard Foundation scholarships partnership is training multiple cohorts of STEM scholars to return to Africa and become leaders in science, business, government and the third sector, building capacity at the local level. These are programmes we are proud of, have learnt from, and propose engaging closer with in 2020-21.

The strength of our development research portfolio brings with it vital governance responsibility. Our Edinburgh Research Office is especially committed to supporting development-related research activity, with our International Development Research Hub (IDRH) embedded in the broader research support offer, bringing expertise to project development and organizing a range of activities to ensure our research is transparent, ethical, cutting-edge, locally-embedded and impactful. The Edinburgh Research Office is represented on our college-led research committees to provide strategic direction and oversight to the work of the University as a whole and incorporating ODA research into broader research agendas. We also run a Gender Equality Working Group to ensure this key area is embedded in research across the university.

Our priority objective remains, then, to increase our focus on innovative ways to create and support a portfolio of diverse partnerships in developing countries that unlock creativity, build capacity and are truly transformational in the knowledge they generate. These partnerships will ensure that we are strongly positioned to contribute to, and engage with, emerging opportunities across key regions of the world. However with a proportion of research disrupted across the university we will also look to accelerate research into the impact of Covid-19 on low and middle-income countries. However we recognize that higher education budgets will be severely impacted globally and we will look to use our SFC-GCRF allocation in a way that allows University of Edinburgh and our overseas partners to continue to support ODA research at a time when inter-disciplinary, international, complex and expensive research may be in jeopardy.

Summary of the key aspects of your three-year strategic plan for formula GCRF in light of the criteria and objectives for the GCRF outlined in the guidance.

Our three-year strategic plan will build deep strategic partnerships, support cutting-edge research that generates impact and facilitates capacity building. It must also secure routes to sustainability for the partners and countries we work with. Finally, it will highlight and extend the University of Edinburgh's leadership and best practice in development-related research, in order to make its fullest contribution to ensuring the UK *'takes the lead in addressing the problems faced by developing countries, while developing our ability to conduct cutting-edge research'* (UK Strategy for the GCRF).

There are three strands to our strategic plan: 1) The establishment of an international development research support hub; 2) Advancing partnership and thematic development activities; and, 3) Regional strategic development activities. Our original strategy had a specific focus on Africa but due to the increase in partnerships with other regions over the last 2 years we are now looking to extend this to DAC-list countries covered by our Latin America and South Asia regional teams.

Strand 1 will underpin, support and guide all our development research activity through the establishment of a dedicated support hub. As well as specific development funding expertise that we have in place in 2020-2021 we will look to expand professional ODA research partnership support in the areas of contracts, due diligence, safeguarding, ethics, equality, collaborative infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation and ODA compliance. Strand 2 will continue our already-established funds that have supported the development of new research partnerships and emergence of new interdisciplinary research areas and has already shown its importance in underpinning our success with GCRF funding. We will also look to build on the significant investment of £1.4m in quarter 4 of 2019-2020 in Covid-19 research and its impacts in LMIC countries. We have seen some excellent first results and will look to continue this research and deliver impact. Strand 3 will extend our engagement in Africa, whilst developing more partnership for development in Latin America and South Asia. This is highly strategic: it will focus our activity in regions where we feel our research

strengths can make the most significant impact, and it will build on the regions in which some of our largest and most long-term development research activities have been established.

Strand 1 – International Development Research Hub

In the past four years, the scale of the ODA-eligible funding the University has received has greatly increased. With this comes a great responsibility not only to our own academic community but vitally to the partners we work with. To date, the University has a dedicated International Development Research Manager, with support from a dedicated project officer and part-time administrative assistant. They have undertaken considerable efforts to professionalise and enhance policies, procedures and practice, as well as identifying and communicating best practice from across the University. However, given the significantly increased funding over the last 2 years, the complexity of existing development research activity, and the wide-ranging portfolio of activities we deliver under the SFC-GCRF grant, our intention is to extend and enhance our current technical and capacity-building support. The funding for this will be managed within our hub but we are looking to ensure that teams across the university and in partner universities are appropriately resourced to deliver high impact from international development research. This will involve investing legal, contractual, financial, ethical and development expertise in Edinburgh Research Office, school research offices and the academic community in Edinburgh and LMIC countries, as well as the collaborative infrastructure to support it. This will be focused on improving partnership projects, learning from large-scale inter-disciplinary projects and ensuring more equitable partnerships.

The International Development Research Manager and Officer will provide pre- and post-award advice on: research ethics, governance and management structures, gender, risk, monitoring and evaluation, theories of change, and logistical frameworks. Project Start up support will ensure new projects are effectively supported (for example ensuring in-country ethical procedures are followed in addition to our own, log frameworks are developed, risk assessments are captured and maintained and reporting requirements for early stage gate reviews met) until appointments or other capacity is in place for each project.

Both post holders, in the context of their different roles, will contribute to Academic Community Support drawing together data and insights from all our LMIC-focused development research projects collating theme and project profiles; country profiles; visibility of complementary projects; support for sustainability; and support for development of impact case studies. The intention is that this support will ensure each funded project will deliver its greatest impact potential, whether through learning best-practice, connecting with synergistic activities elsewhere, or embedding more thoroughly in appropriate local contexts.

The Hub will also manage and support funder relationships regarding development research, respond to consultations, support official reporting, and address key agendas on behalf of the University of Edinburgh, around for example, transparency, IATI, safeguarding and research ethics. Where the Hub identifies pathways, best practice and can support colleagues in other HEIs to build similar capacity, both in Scotland and in our partners LMICs, we will actively seek methods of doing so. Finally, the hub will actively seek to align our data with initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data with a view to leading the way in the sector on our data transparency. The IDRH will also actively manage our growing network of fellows from our projects and in particular build our cohort of Global Challenge tenure-track Chancellor's Fellows who are now all in post.

Strand 2 – LMIC Global Research and Partnership Funds will continue to support the development of Edinburgh's global partnership community through fostering links with partners in LMICs and providing seed funding for new research collaborations. These were established in 2017/18 with SFC GCRF funds and will continue to facilitate research that addresses the challenges faced by these countries over the next three years. As we now enter the 4th year of SFC-GCRF funding we will also make available follow-on funding to support these partnerships and networks, but the priority is to encourage teams to bid for and access external ODA and other development funding in order to add value to the SFC-GCRF grant.

The University's Strategic Development Theme "Influencing Globally" sets out our commitment to build interdisciplinary relationships across the University and extend partnerships with a wide variety of actors in LMICs. The purpose of the fund is to:

- facilitate the development or advancement of research partnerships in LMICs, through specific activities, such as a pilot study or information gathering;
- support visit costs either of LMIC partner(s) travelling to Edinburgh or costs for Edinburgh staff travelling to partner countries to build research plans, and align work streams;
- advance interdisciplinary thematic or project activity on research specifically related to international development.

Partners may include (but are not limited to) university research institutes, NGOs, civil society organisations, charities, government organisations. We will continue to offer 1) a small grants scheme that offers up to £10k awards to enable individual academics to make site visits (dependent on current restrictions) to their overseas partners (in either direction) with a view to facilitating both research proposals and long term collaboration; and 2) Research theme development support that offers up to £40k awards to enable research clusters focussed on LMIC research to advance their themes and proposals in a coherent and targeted manner. It is vital that the clusters are formed with the view to being both co-designed and co-led by LMIC partners. We will also look to offer support for activities that are required to help both Edinburgh and partner organisations apply for larger scale external funding, as well as continue to respond quickly to Covid-19 and to any new global emergencies.

In addition, we will provide a **University of Edinburgh Global Challenges Impact Accelerator Account** – We will make this funding available for all University of Edinburgh ODA award holders, based on existing ESRC/BBSRC GCRF IAA models. This will allow us to continue to embed and deepen the sustainability and impact of existing investments, through wide ranging outputs and further connecting outcomes to ensure change.

Strand 3 – Regional strategic development research activities

We are committed to building new, deep and transformational partnerships. Whilst we have funded partnerships in nearly 90 countries globally, we have focused on Africa and have delivered a set of interlocking activities to transform the form, scale and impact of our activity. Covid-19 has led to this original work, much of which was through face-to-face fellowships, to be curtailed this year, so in 2020-2021 we intend to develop new models of research partnership building but also extend our work to ODA eligible countries in Latin America and South Asia. Our regional directors in these regions report real opportunities for partnerships in development research, building on our existing broader research links. In particular Strand 3 will focus on **strategic partnership development** and different modes of **fellowships for capacity building**.

FEC Allocation to ODA Grants

A proportion of the funding will be allocated to help meet the full economic cost of GCRF and Newton funding won from Research Councils on an annual basis of each year of the strategy. This funding has proved popular in encouraging research groups to engage in ODA activity but it has also been essential for many of our overseas partners where we are able to fully fund participation in large scale interdisciplinary bids.

How activity funded through GCRF fits into your broader strategy and priorities for all development related research activity.

The University of Edinburgh research strategy states: *We aim to deliver the highest attainable excellence in research and innovation to transform understanding of humanity, the world we live in and the universe around us. We will discover new knowledge and develop solutions to address the great global challenges.* Interdisciplinarity and internationalisation are core values of our research and GCRF-driven approaches to development research activity can underpin and extend these values. Development research takes place across the gamut of Edinburgh's research areas. Specifically, in development studies are ranked around the world top 20 in the latest QS World University Rankings by Subject. GCRF activity, as well as funding from organisations like DFID, NIHR, the Wellcome Trust and the Gates Foundation, gives us the launchpad to considerably improve the quality, and more importantly the impact of our development research. The activities articulated in this proposal will extend quality and impact of our development research and our global research ambitions more broadly by strengthening our capacity to manage and deliver impact through development research, by developing catalytic partnerships that will drive innovation and impact, as well as providing a greater strategic and impact focus to our work.

How activity funded through GCRF relates to the UK strategy for the GCRF.¹

Our existing development research strategy has sought to map our existing research strengths onto the three GCRF Challenge Areas – Equitable Access to Sustainable Development; Sustainable Economies and Societies; and, Human Rights, Good Governance and Social Justice. In addition, we have supported thematic and partnership development around themes within these Challenge Areas. All the activities, investments and approaches outlined in this proposal will continue to map onto and enhance our existing areas of focus and thus will be hard-wired into the UK strategy for the GCRF.

This proposal highlights strategies which will build both the capacity of Edinburgh and that of our partners in ODA recipient countries to generate more impactful research that responds to the GCRF Challenge Areas. Additionally, our proposal will provide enhanced strategic leadership and support which will allow us to develop synergy across research activities (whether GCRF-funded or not) and deliver bundles of research that will enhance impact. Through partnerships we will enhance not only our institutional capacity to support the UK strategy for the GCRF, but also that of our partners in all their forms.

How your development-related and GCRF strategies relate to your wider institutional strategy for using REG.

The University supports 31 disciplines spread over three Colleges, and a large number of cross-cutting interdisciplinary themes from energy to One Health. This creates a rich, vibrant and complex

¹ UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund, <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/challenges>

research environment with academics undertaking everything from basic to translational research. The importance of this diverse research environment can clearly be evidenced by some key indicators; in 2016/17 we received £364m of new research awards, 5th highest in the UK, and currently have a success rate of approximately 40%. This success would not be possible without the considered, strategic internal investment of REG in people, capacity building and research infrastructure at the University. We focus our REG on areas where the highest attainable excellence, in the form of a critical mass of 4* research, has been identified. Given the scale of REG, the internal investment is a multifaceted approach, of which the University's deepening approach to development research is an important part. Two examples of this would be the recent creation of the Global Academy for Agriculture and Food Security which was formally launched in March 2018 by Bill Gates and Penny Mordaunt. The Academy's vision is "Sustainable development in global agriculture and rural land-based and aquatic economies" and the research underway is focussed predominantly on the delivery of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals in LMICs. The other example is a significant professional services investment of five new roles in the University's Research Office, reflecting the University's recognition that excellent research must be effectively supported. The new roles focussed specifically on strategic research development, challenge-led funding and data analysis. One of their major ongoing projects has been to ensure the University has the appropriate infrastructure to support GCRF research; it is wide-ranging but has to date included everything from reviewing and enhancing due diligence processes and legal agreements, to building academic capability through a variety of workshops and resources (e.g. developing a theory of change or building ethical and sustainable partnerships). The proposed International Development Research Hub, would not only build on but significantly advance the work already undertaken (extending beyond GCRF to all development research), reflecting not only the University's growing development research portfolio but the particular responsibilities and complexities that are attendant with ODA eligible funding

Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy.

Strand 2 - Funding Schemes – in establishing small scale funding streams we recognise that there is a likelihood that the activities each award supports will be disparate in location and purpose and that impact each project has in itself may be small. However, we have offset this risk through the Partnerships Fund by ensuring that included in each application there is a viable pathway for future funding, thereby ensuring that each project is in fact a vital enabling step towards a larger research agenda. Interestingly, with the 2017/18 fund we have seen much of the activity focussed on establishing deeper LMIC partner relations and identifying the challenges partners would like research to address. Those who have received funds in 2017/18 will then receive individual support in advancing their research agenda as outlined in their application. The IAA is intended to deepen impact and ensure that all possible opportunities have been taken for GCRF awards to ensure sustainability. Due to nearly 50% of all projects in this being delayed in 2019-2020 we expect significant work in this area in 2020-2021. Further, we plan to map the projects within the funding schemes to thematic focus areas (which correspond to the GCRF agenda for change) and by country so that the contribution of the projects can be seen holistically in the context of the wider GCRF research portfolio at the University.

The inability to travel is likely to substantially change the nature of our projects in 2020-2021, but even in the last few months we have seen academics working around this by focusing more on local delivery of activity and investing more in LMIC partners. This has actually produced more equitable partnerships and is something we will look to encourage.

Regional Focus – Originally the decision has been taken to focus much of the SFC GCRF strategic partnership activity on Africa. The drivers for this is multi-faceted but we recognise that this could

be perceived as limiting opportunity to both our own academics and partners in other parts of the world. However, the countries in Africa constitute a very significant proportion of the locations our development research is being undertaken and is currently the least directly supported. In all other regions in the world the University has a physical office, which work closely with local academics, students, policy makers, funders, NGOs and others to support local engagement. It is one of the reasons that the establishment of strategic institutional partnerships in Africa and the engagement events are vitally important. We want to ensure that the relationships we establish through these activities directly inform our strategy and approach in Africa both at an institutional and an academic level.

However we are now in a position to expand this strategic partner development with institutions to Latin America and South Asia. Our Regional Directors in this area are confident of the appetite for work on research for international development and build on the established partnerships Edinburgh has with many of the top institutions in larger ODA countries in these regions eg. Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, India and Pakistan. As with Africa we will develop new models for partnership development with likely travel restrictions still in place.

Institutional Partnerships – establishing equitable, meaningful and sustainable institutional partnerships anywhere in the world is a complex process. At the University, we do not engage in them lightly and when we do establish them, we expect them to develop and grow over the long term. Therefore, we anticipate much of the three years could be spent meeting potential partners and negotiating the programme of activities that will underpin the partnership (e.g. studentships, research, professional education and capacity building). Experience has shown us that not every negotiation will ultimately be successful in leading to a strategic institutional partnership. Given this, whilst we have identified a number of preferred partners we have chosen not to name them in this strategy as we do not wish to risk compromising them if negotiations were unsuccessful. However, despite this complex process, we do anticipate establishing between 3-4 strategic institutional partnerships with the pump-priming innovation fund, the postgraduate research training and travel funds as critical enablers in providing tangible early activities on which to establish the partnership.

Fellowships – the aims of the fellowships schemes (described in more detail below) to generate excellent research, build partners and create impact whilst advancing academic capability for the Fellows. Significant challenges that international Fellowship schemes face is that of sustainability and legacy, following the Fellowship period. However, our intention is to support the Fellows in establishing a strong cohort model that will be sustained upon their return to their home institutions, from which they can continue to benefit as their careers and research progress. We will do this in a number of ways including; by building further our already extensive online community (including opportunities for online learning; our existing MOOCs and other online training reach >3 million learners in all countries but 2), inviting Fellows to attend the Engagement Events and also by introducing the cohort to other Africa-based communities at Edinburgh including MasterCard Foundation Scholars. It is our intention too that the relationships established with Edinburgh academics during the Fellowships will also directly lead to the development of collaborative research programmes. In 2020-2021 we will work closely with our 10 SFC-GCRF funded Global Challenges Chancellor's Fellows to be champions of inter-disciplinarity and international development research across the university.

International Development Research Hub – the Hub's transformative potential for development research governance and policy not only at the University but as a leader within the HEI sector has been recognised within the University; however, establishing a dedicated professional services Hub of this nature would not be possible without direct SFC GCRF investment.

The main Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list developing countries you intend to collaborate with.

Primary focus: Kenya; Uganda; South Africa; Malawi; Ghana; Zambia

Secondary focus: DAC countries in Latin America; South Asia and the rest of Africa (including North Africa)

1. Provide details of the main intended outcomes and impacts of your strategy.

Our main outcomes are categorised below (notwithstanding the intrinsic synergies between many of them):

1. Enhance the quality, scale and number of our GCRF applications (and improve application success rates). We have been successful in securing GCRF funding but the activities outlined in this proposal will ensure that we are thematically better equipped to respond to funding calls and will have stronger partnerships to build collaborative research upon.

2. Establishing impactful research and development in partners' countries. This will be achieved through: improving the scale and scope of future GCRF-funded research activity; developing partnerships that will ensure our research activity is properly contextualised and conceptualised and that our pathways to impact are appropriate, resilient and sustainable; working with partners to help build their innate development research capacity.

3. Developing cohorts of UK-based development research fellows. We will support the development of a broader base of Edinburgh academics who are empowered and equipped to undertake interdisciplinary, impactful development research. We will extend our capacity by providing opportunities to researchers who have not yet worked in development research, by providing opportunities to researchers from a broader range of disciplines, and by providing support to ensure that researchers' activities derive genuine societal impact.

4. Developing cohorts of Africa-based research fellows. We will support the development of an emerging generation of African researchers and future collaborators. We will do this by: helping them to develop their research networks with Edinburgh, other Scottish universities and across Africa; by making our internal research development capacity available to fellows during their time spent in Edinburgh; and, where appropriate, giving fellows completing doctorates at Edinburgh help in developing their careers without diverting their attention from other responsibilities.

5. Benefits for Scottish global impact and partnerships. Developing deeper partnerships, supporting the development of African and UK researchers, offering opportunities for partners to spend time in Edinburgh, and building capacity to research internationally, all feed into supporting Scotland's broader HEI sector. In addition, the package of activities we are proposing, and the countries we will focus on, will extend existing Scottish overseas activity, and offer opportunity for Scotland to have a larger global impact (through research, education, and other opportunities).

6. Substantial development impact in Africa and elsewhere in the world. Ultimately our aim is to deliver substantial development through our research and training, in Africa and elsewhere in the world. We will ensure this happens by supporting our researchers to secure appropriate resources, work with strategic partners, and build strong, sustainable pathways to impact. The development hub will track progress and ensure activities are aligned and focused, and ensure we deliver the biggest possible impact in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Management of GCRF

2. How will your HEI monitor and evaluate its progress and compliance in ODA and GCRF activity, including assessing geographical distribution of activity, outputs, outcomes and economic and social impacts?

Please describe the policies, procedures and approach you have in place to measure progress, evaluate outcomes, identify lessons learned, and ensure ODA compliance.

The International Development Research Hub will provide the primary locus for the management of funds on behalf of the University, as such they will co-ordinate and/or deliver the governance outlined below.

Given the scale of the SFC GCRF Funding we intend to establish a dedicated Advisory Group, who will meet twice a year (and by exception) to oversee the strategy and delivery of the funds. Our experience in the field shows that there is often a need to apply a level of pragmatism and flexibility to the work timetable outlined at proposal stage. Given the complexity and breadth of activities, we propose here, we want to ensure that any changes required are transparent, agreed and do not compromise the outcomes and impacts identified.

Further governance support will be provided by the GCRF Steering Committee who meet quarterly and include a number of our most senior academics with experience of development research. Their role will be to ensure the effective alignment of ODA research activities across the University, including the SFC GCRF funding, to ensure that all are outcome focussed and sustainable.

A formal monitoring and evaluation framework will be established for the SFC GCRF Programme as a whole to ensure that every aspect of spend is transparent, ODA compliant and aligned to the country that activity is undertaken in. The framework will be outcome led and will include the broad headings of: outcome, indicator, activity, means of verification, ODA compliant, country, owner, reporting. In doing this we will have a high-level method of capturing and evaluating the programme.

Sitting underneath this framework will be detailed proposals about each of the strands of activity that have been identified as part of the overarching three-year strategy for SFC GCRF. Each proposal will include detail about country, partners, activity, expected outcomes, impact, costings, ethics, timelines and measures of success. These proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Group and their contents shape the monitoring and evaluation framework employed.

To ensure ODA compliance, each proposal will be expected to include an ODA statement directly modelled on the ODA attachment used by the Research Councils. During 17/18 we have required this for the existing SFC GCRF funded LMIC Global Research and Partnership Fund and found it to be invaluable, to the extent that a number of applications have actually been refused on the basis that they were not ODA compliant, which in itself is an indicator of a strong process for assessment.

All of this will run in complement with our standard grants financial reporting system, allowing us greater transparency in tracking activity, outcome, country and spend than we have had at whole

University-level before. Overall, our ambition is to progress towards meeting the international standards of data transparency identified in the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development or the Data International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) across our entire development research portfolio however, we recognise this is a mid to long term goal. We hope by establishing process and principles through the SFC GCRF work, supported by the Hub, we will be able to make significant progress towards achieving this ambition.

All activity, be it research or capacity building, will be expected to reflect the highest standards of integrity and therefore each activity will undertake a formal process of ethical review (enhanced to include due diligence, duty of care, and risk). Under GCRF the expectation is generally that review for activity undertaken in the UK will be reviewed by the institution and where in a partner country a process of review will be undertaken in-country. This has now become embedded in our development research procedures and will be applied to the SFC GCRF activity. Where appropriate the internal escalation process is to the University's Ethical Research and Integrity Group.

Link: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/research/research-integrity/reirg>

In addition to the annual reporting cycle to SFC, we will introduce a formal review and reporting cycle that will align to meetings of the Advisory Group and facilitate ongoing evaluation of the programme, building on the M and E framework. It will be used to identify best practice and learnings from the activities, map partnerships and activity in LMICs and capture impacts that will then be used to inform not only the SFC GCRF programme at the University but communicated and/or actioned as part of our wider development research agenda. Given the weight of activity that will be undertaken in Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana and South Africa, country case studies will be written in the final year of the funding to ensure activities, learnings and impacts are fully captured.

Section B: Use of GCRF 2018-19 allocation and future formula GCRF priorities

3. Please complete the table in Annex A2 detailing the expected spending and activities for GCRF in the academic year 2018-19. This should show how all expected GCRF will be committed to ODA-compliant activities.
4. Please add here any explanatory notes on how you have completed the table in Annex A2 that will demonstrate ODA compliance.

In completing the table in Annex A2 we have been guided by three key principles: outcomes, effectiveness, and flexibility. All three are interrelated.

In profiling activities we are guided by the question: How can we increase the impact of our development research in, with and for ODA recipient nations? To our minds there are three ways in which we can do this: 1) Increase the volume of our development research; 2) Increase the quality of our research; 3) Enhance the impact of our research? In order to do this we need to build the community and capacity of engaged researchers within the University of Edinburgh, and build the community and capacity of our partners in ODA recipient nations. All activities are aligned towards

this – whether providing technical and operational support, enabling collaboration to develop, or building capacity in Edinburgh and with partners.

The creation of an international development research hub will allow us not only to increase our effectiveness through specialist technical support, programme delivery and curation of expertise and experience; it will also allow us to continuously monitor our effectiveness, within funded projects, across funded projects, and in terms of developmental impact. This ability to evaluate our own progress and that of our partners will allow us to increase our flexibility and responsiveness; to reflect on what can be done better, where we should focus, and how we should work.

In 2018-19 we are ringfencing approximately 15% of our SFC GCRF allocation to strategic activity (10% to research theme and partnership development and 5% to the hub). Beyond 2018-19 as we focus on much more strategic and explicit capacity development with a select number of African partners we will look to enhance this commitment. For 2018-19 the priority is establishing our capacity and continuing existing activity. Beyond 2018-19 we will look to consolidate and focus. This fits into our ethos of careful commitment of resources and activities for the common good.

5. What are your priorities for GCRF activity in 2019-20? Please describe how the profile of activity will adjust to increases or decreases to expected GCRF funding.

In 2018-19 our priority is to continue to build the breadth of relationships with partners and colleagues in ODA recipient nations and develop the University of Edinburgh's capacity around key GCRF research themes and concerns. Hence, we will continue our investments in **Strand 1 (an international development research hub)** and **Strand 2 (LMIC Research and Partnership Fund)**. While we anticipate that the commitment to the hub to remain static over the three-year period covered we will reflect on the performance and scale of the LMIC Research and Partnership Fund in 2019-20 and look to divert resources (as well as potentially increase our commitment) towards **Strand 3 activities – the development of African Strategic Development Research activities**. In essence 2019-20 and 2020-21 will **consolidate** our activities around more strategic activity in Africa, while **continuing** appropriate levels of support for the more ad hoc and lower level activity supported in 2018-19. Strand 3 activities are described below:

Strand 3 – African strategic development research activities

We are particularly committed to building new, deep and transformational partnerships in Africa and propose a set of interlocking activities to transform the form, scale and impact of our activity in Africa. These are outlined later in the document as the bulk of them will be delivered in 2019-2020 and 2020-21.

It is a continent where the University of Edinburgh has long and deep engagement and where some of our most exciting partnerships are being developed. Africa's development lies at the heart of many global grand challenges and near future population transitions – 60 per cent of its population of 1.2 billion people are under the age of 25, and by 2050 half of global youth will be located there – means that Africa lies at the crux of global development. Ambitious, creative partnerships delivering research and learning in Africa can build a shared understanding of the drivers of change, and

develop sustainable, appropriate interventions. Thus, our three-year strategic plan is primarily, although not exclusively, focused on select countries in Africa.

Our plan will deploy a range of ODA-compliant activities and funding models to support the development of cutting-edge research, build capacity in developing countries, and extend the development impact of our research. Our plan focuses on building capacity at three levels: **individuals, inter-disciplines** and **institutions**. We draw upon experiences gained through some of our most innovative and impactful partnerships in shaping this plan. Our focal countries map onto both our institutional African strategy and where we feel we can deliver significant development research impact. These countries are **Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana** and **South Africa**. Malawi and Zambia are Scottish Government priority countries, and while South Africa is classified as middle income, the legacies of Apartheid mean it has the highest rates of youth unemployment and inequality in Africa. That, coupled with its strong universities and economic importance to the rest of Africa, make it an important strategic partner for the key ambition to leave no one behind and achieve lasting impact.

The individual components of our plan are outlined below:

1. Identifying and developing strategic institutional partnerships. We will strengthen and support a small number of university partners (following mutual negotiation, likely to equate to three or four institutional partnerships). These partners will be developed via a pump-priming innovation fund drawn (drawn from our experience of collaborative-pump priming delivered through the ESRC/South African NRF-funded Security at the Margins joint institute). In addition, we intend to develop at least one joint post-graduate research training activity with each partner and support two-way travel for research collaboration.

2. Sustainable Development Goal Engagement Events. We will deliver a series of engagement events, modelled on the RCUK's own Global Engagement Meetings. This will help to advance the strategic partnerships outlined above. They will provide a vital forum for our partners to tell us their priorities for change through a mix of plenaries, workshops and networking so we can, through joint research and capacity building, identify how we can most work together most effectively to contribute to the delivery of their priorities and generating real change. RCUK GCRF Events: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/gcrf-global-engagement-events/>

3. Catalyst Fellowships. We will support a series of incoming and outgoing, short-term visits with colleagues working in or with our African focal countries that will allow our outstanding early career researchers and senior academics to develop new collaborations, build capacity and complete research outputs. These fellowships – typically of 1-4 weeks duration - draw from approaches developed through ERASMUS+ funding and are a key mechanism to ensure that our development of future GCRF (and other) research proposals are truly locally-embedded and collaborative. These fellowships are open to academics at all career stages, the criterion for selection are academic excellence, collaborative synergy and potential impact

Future Profile of Activity:

It is of course difficult to anticipate GCRF funding levels beyond 2018-19 but our research activity is increasing and we hope that the investments in enhanced support for our researchers will further accelerate our activity. Nevertheless, we plan to increase the funding we commit to these activities in subsequent years to reflect the greater scale and ambition of activity. In 2018-19 we are committing roughly 15% of our SFC GCRF allocation to ODA compliant GCRF-related capacity building and strategic activity. We expect this to increase significantly in future years, conditional on a review of effectiveness and assessment of opportunity and likely impact.

6. What are your priorities for GCRF activity in 2020-21? Please describe how the profile of activity will adjust to increases or decreases to expected GCRF funding.

Despite the huge disruption to research activity of Covid-19 in 2020-2021 we intend to continue with the core 3 strands of our original strategy. There will be adjustments outlined in this document and a cautious approach to resuming international travel, which is under constant review at a university level. In addition to delivering on the key outcomes in this strategy, that remain unchanged, our work in 2020-2021 will reflect the changed circumstances and the increased indicative allocations we have received.

1. Completion of activity postponed due to Covid-19

Due to the profiling of our activity during 2019-2020 a significant number of projects in our strand 2 had to be postponed. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, and in discussion with SFC, we chose to allow projects to suspend a portion or all of their work and then we reallocated this funding to our rapid response call for Covid-19 research into issues facing LMICs. The increase in indicative allocation for 2020-2021 has given us the confidence to fund these delayed projects, if the situation allows. This will be in addition to the allocation of funding along similar lines to 2019 for new projects.

2. Chancellor's Fellows

These 10 appointments have now all been made and we will build this cohort of world class researchers as was originally envisaged. They will be fully supported this year by SFC-GCRF funding. The cohort will support the globalisation of work within institutes and centres and will receive dedicated support from our international development research hub to give them every opportunity of funding and research success.

3. Building institutional expertise and support for associated service

Given the significantly increased funding over the last 2 years, the complexity of existing development research activity, and the wide-ranging portfolio of activities we deliver under the SFC-GCRF grant, our intention is to extend and enhance our current central technical and capacity-building support. This will involve investing legal, contractual, financial, ethical and development expertise in Edinburgh Research Office, school research offices and the academic community in both Edinburgh and LMIC countries. This will significantly enhance the ability of our researchers and LMIC partners to deliver impactful development research.

4. New project funding under strand 2 Funding Schemes

We will look to prioritise projects looking to establish partnerships remotely or ensure that take into account risks on whether international business related travel will resume and also those. We will also look to support previous award holders to apply for future large scale ODA funding or building impact. We will continue to offer theme development grants in emerging areas including Covid-19 research.

5. Fully funding the cost of ODA funded research

Our recent discussions with LMIC partners and with University of Edinburgh schools and colleges has highlighted the need to fully fund research in the next financial year. This will be an exceptionally challenging environment for all research and we have concern that complex, interdisciplinary and

international research may not be as attractive. We therefore intend to ensure that projects we support under the SFC-GCRF grant are fully funded but that we will continue to offer support for shortfalls in the full economic costs that many ODA funders impose. This will ensure sustainability of research and equitable partnerships in the long-term.