



SFC Announcement

Global Challenges Research Funding: allocations for FY 2019-20

Issue date: 20 August 2019

Reference: SFC/AN/14/2019

Summary: Announcement of Global Challenges Research Fund allocations for Financial Year 2019-20.

FAO: Principals / Finance Directors of Scotland's universities

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Global Challenges Research Fund: allocations for FY 2019-20

Background

1. I am writing to announce the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) allocations for Financial Year (FY) 2019-20.
2. The GCRF is a £1.5 billion fund announced by the UK Government to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries through:
 - Disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.
 - Strengthening capacity for research and innovation within both the UK and developing countries.
 - Providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need.
3. The Scottish Funding Council's strategy for world-leading research includes an ambition to increase the global reputation and standing of our universities, and international connections and collaborations.
4. The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) is allocating £11,825,888 to SFC from the GCRF in FY 2019-20.
5. From FY 2016-17, SFC has offered allocations of GCRF to all Scottish universities in proportion to their Research Excellence Grant (REG). Since then, GCRF has supported more than 400 projects at Scottish institutions, involving over 70 developing countries. This demonstrates the broad range, creativity and outward-looking nature of the Scottish research community. The GCRF allocations for each university can be found in Annex A.

Principles of the GCRF

6. The overarching aim of the GCRF is “to ensure the UK takes the lead in addressing the problems faced by developing countries, whilst developing our ability to deliver cutting-edge research” (UK Strategy for the GCRF). GCRF allocations must be used according to Official Development Assistance (ODA) principles, which state that only research directly and primarily of benefit to the problems of developing countries may be counted as ODA ([Global Challenges Research Fund Guidance](#)).

7. Any benefit to Scotland or the UK from GCRF activity must be a secondary consideration. GCRF activity must also comply with ODA guidelines by working with and supporting development in countries and territories on the [Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\)'s list of ODA recipients](#). Any part of a university's GCRF allocation that is not spent on ODA-compliant activities will be recovered. All spending using GCRF allocations must also be in line with the broader GCRF strategy developed by the delivery partners (UK Strategy for the GCRF).

Strategies

8. SFC invited GCRF strategies in 2018-19 to encourage institutions to take a longer term view of their ODA research activity, setting out how they would prioritise use of the GCRF allocations that SFC expected to receive from DBEIS. The strategies also provide the basis for SFC monitoring how GCRF funds are spent on ODA compliant activity and provide assurance to DBEIS on this matter.
9. SFC assumes institutions will continue to take forward the GCRF strategy they submitted in AY 2018-19. There is no requirement to resubmit strategies unless these have changed. In that case institutions should notify David Beards, Senior Policy Officer, Research and Innovation, email: dbeards@sfc.ac.uk, tel: 0131 313 6520.

Reporting

10. SFC will continue to monitor the use of the GCRF through annual reports. These should provide a breakdown of how GCRF allocations were spent, including information on the types of activity funded, the DAC list countries involved and the impacts and outputs produced. Universities are required to report annually against their GCRF strategies. Reports should cover progress against intentions outlined in institutional strategies, and explain how activities align with the strategy (or why any activities have diverged from the strategy). In June 2019 a template for these reports was issued to institutions alongside the reporting guidance. These can be found in Annexes B1 and B2.
11. Completing the annual monitoring process and reporting on strategies is a condition of grant. If an institution fails to participate successfully in the monitoring process, or if any of its activities are assessed as not being ODA-compliant, SFC reserves the right to recover funding and/or to reduce future GCRF allocations.

Further information

12. Please contact David Beards for further information, tel: 0131 313 6520, email: dbeards@sfc.ac.uk.

13. Universities wishing to accept their GCRF allocation should contact Lucia Ramon Mateo, Funding Policy Officer, email: lramonmateo@sfc.ac.uk, responding to this offer of grant by 30 August 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KWatt". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Karen Watt
Chief Executive