A combined Food Systems Approach to Scaling-up Interventions to Address the Double Burden of Malnutrition – Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below should be read in conjunction with the main Call Document, available on the BBSRC website. The questions are based on common queries that arose during engagement events and that have been received by email or phone.

1. Who can apply to this call?

Applications to this call must be led by an eligible Principal Investigator (PI) in the UK. Overseas researchers, including those based in academic and non-profit research institutions in any country on the OECD DAC list of ODA-recipient countries are strongly encouraged to be included on proposals as Co-Investigators. Further information on eligibility can be found in Eligibility Section of the Call document.

2. Who can be a Co-Investigator?

Applications may additionally include (for this call only) eligible Co-Investigators (Co-Is) based in any of the DAC countries. Complete list of the countries from DAC list can be found here.

Overseas Co-Is should hold a position of lecturer level or equivalent status in a university or other recognised higher education institution or other research institution, or other ‘not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity, based in an eligible DAC country. This includes researchers at both national institutions of eligible DAC countries and establishments of international organisations located in those countries.

For this call only, academic researchers from overseas research organisations not based in DAC countries may be Co-Is if they provide expertise not available in the UK or a DAC country. We would not expect high-income country Co-Is to exceed 30% of the total award value. Overseas Co-Is should hold a position of lecturer level or equivalent status, in one of the following:

i. a university;
ii. a recognised higher education institution;
iii. a recognised research institution;
iv. ‘not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity.

The inclusion of resident researchers as Co-Is is strongly encouraged to enable better project co-design and form truly integrated partnerships with clear and complementary roles, and equitable divisions of responsibilities and resources, as well as fostering applicability of results where relevant. The engagement of potential stakeholders and users, such as farmers, policymakers and health agencies in project design and delivery is also encouraged to enable the proposed research to have sustainable impact by delivering nutritional strategies appropriate for potential users of its outcomes, and strengthening capacity for the longer term.
All applicants named on the Je-S form must be registered as users of the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system well in advance of submitting the application. Please note that the Je-S registration process for overseas Co-Investigators could take up to 3 weeks and thus, are advised to register as early as possible.

3. Who can be a Collaborator?

Researchers not eligible to be included as a Co-Investigator (including those based in non-DAC listed countries) may be included as ‘Collaborators’ or ‘Project partners’, as described in section two of the BBSRC Grants Guide. Project Partners or other collaborators may be based in universities or other institutions, or independent researchers. They may also be potential users of research outcomes, including commercial organisations. Collaboration with industry is encouraged where relevant, but must not compromise the ODA compliance of the proposed research by inappropriately restricting use of its outcomes by potential beneficiaries (refer to the ‘Data sharing, open access and intellectual property’ section in the Guidance for Applicants). Neither Project Partners nor other collaborators would receive funding from BBSRC. Project Partner is an individual or organisation that is providing specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the proposed project. On the other hand, Collaborator is providing intellectual input or the provision of materials at no costs. BBSRC Industrial Partnership Awards and Industrial LINK schemes will not operate in this call.

4. Are there mechanisms through which industry partners can join?

Commercial partners can be Project Partners or Collaborators (as described in section two of the BBSRC Grants Guide), but are not eligible to receive funding from BBSRC. Collaboration with industry is encouraged where relevant, provided that arrangements for ownership and exploitation of intellectual property would not conflict with the expectation of alignment with the principles of Global Access (refer to the ‘Data sharing, open access and intellectual property’ section in the Guidance for Applicants).

BBSRC Industrial Partnership Awards and Industrial LINK schemes will not operate in this call.

5. How do you include a sub-contractor?

Where necessary - for example, because of the lack of the required expertise in eligible institutions - aspects of the proposed research may be sub-contracted to an otherwise ineligible organisation, in accordance with paragraphs 2.51 to 2.53 of the BBSRC Grants Guide. Any sub-contracting must be fully justified within your application.

The costs for subcontractors are tied to the country managing the sub-contract. Eg, if a non-UK research partner organisation is managing a sub-contract it will be awarded at 100%. If a UK partner is managing a sub-contract it will be awarded at 80%. The most appropriate country should be chosen to manage the sub-contract based on the overall governance arrangements.
6. **When submitting an application for funding to this call can I include salary costs for an MSc or PhD student?**

No. Funding for any type of studentship and/or student resource, whether in the UK or overseas, may not be requested or included on BBSRC research grant applications. Please refer to paragraph 4.52 of the BBSRC Grants Guide.

7. **Can more than one PDRA be included in a proposal?**

Yes, more than one PDRA can be requested, as long as the total overall costs of the application does not exceed the maximum of £1 million (at 80% full economic costs).

8. **Can we recruit an international PDRA, i.e. could we hire them through our overseas Co-Is and charge to the grant accordingly, or would they need to be hired through the UK PI and seconded?**

Regarding research staff associated with the proposal, they should only be employed by an eligible institution named in the application and be based at that institution. Assuming that the Co-Is are eligible (‘holding a position of lecturer level or equivalent status in a university or other recognised higher education institution or other research institution, or other ’not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity, based in an eligible DAC listed country), then the PDRA should be employed by them.

9. **Can we include research staff (graduate research or fieldwork assistants) that are based in the partner country, as salaried staff members in the project team?**

Regarding research staff associated with the proposal, they should only be employed by an eligible institution (in the UK or DAC listed country) named in the application and be based at that institution. Overseas Co-Is should hold a position of lecturer level or equivalent status in a university or other recognised higher education institution or other research institution, or other ’not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity, based in an eligible DAC listed country. This includes researchers at both national institutions of eligible DAC listed countries and establishments of international organisations located in those countries. It does not include establishments of international organisations which are located elsewhere.

The following costs may be requested for overseas Co-Investigators (Please refer to the Guidance for Applicants for further information):

- Costs for overseas Co-Investigators and any locally employed staff, i.e. percentage contribution of actual salary representing the proportion of each person's time to be spent working on the grant. These costs must be entered as Exceptions under the Other Directly Incurred costs on Je-S at 100% fEC;
- Travel and subsistence for overseas Co-Investigators. These costs must be entered as Exceptions under the Travel and Subsistence costs on Je-S at 100% fEC;
- Costs charged by the overseas organisation and associated with the research, for example consumables and small items of equipment costing less than £10,000, field work, etc. These costs must be entered as Exceptions under the Other Directly Incurred costs on Je-S at 100% fEC;
- A contribution towards Indirect and Estates costs at the overseas organisation. This should be calculated as 20% of the overseas research organisation's Directly Incurred costs. This total should be entered as an Exception under the Other Directly Incurred costs on Je-S.

The following will **not** be funded under this call in either the UK or DAC partner countries:
- any types of studentships;
- items of equipment costing more than £10,000 or other capital expenditure.

10. **Can proposals build on previous or existing investments?**

   Yes, proposals for this call are strongly encouraged to build on previous or existing investments.

11. **Do the existing interventions to be scaled up as part of the proposed work have to be ODA-funded?**

   No. The primary aim of this opportunity is to invite applications for new, innovative research that builds upon and scales up previous or existing investments or strategies in Food Systems. These previous or existing projects do not have to be funded by GCRF/ODA type funding.

12. **What does “scaling up” mean?**

   While scaling-up could refer to physical scaling-up, e.g. expanding the number of participants or regions, scaling-up can also refer to inclusion of new elements, such as bringing together nutrition –specific and - sensitive interventions/approaches; interventions that address both under- & over –nutrition (i.e. double burden); or bringing in different actors/disciplines to make interventions/approaches more multidisciplinary/. We might refer to this as a structural scaling-up, or upgrade of existing interventions.

13. **Is co-funding expected from developing countries?**

   No, co-funding is not expected from developing countries.

14. **Is there a requirement for multiple developing countries to be included?**

   There is no requirement for multiple developing countries to be involved. It is important for the proposed research to identify and address an appropriate development challenge in the chosen country(ies).

15. **Are you defining an interdisciplinary project by whether it spans across more than one Research Council remit?**

   No, the project does not need to span across the remits of the research councils (BBSRC, MRC & ESRC), i.e. span across the biological, biomedical and social sciences. As long as your proposal includes partners with a range of expertise/skills, it should fit the scope of the call.
16. Is there a limit to the number of disciplines that can be represented in a proposal?

No. We expect that the disciplinary spread of researchers is appropriate to the aims of the partnership, and a clearly articulated justification is included in the application.

17. I’m not from a BBSRC discipline, can I still apply?

Yes. This is a UKRI GCRF Collective Programme funding call, and researchers from across all disciplines are eligible to apply. Projects must sit within the scope of the call which is aimed at supporting interdisciplinary, international research partnerships which seek to bring a food systems approach to address the double burden of malnutrition in country(ies) on the OECD DAC list of ODA-recipient countries. Please see the Call document for further details on the scope of the call.

18. Can overseas Co-Investigator be part of two or more applications or is the overseas Co-Investigator only allowed to participate in one application?

It is possible for an overseas Co-I to be involved in more than one application. You would need to be mindful to ensure that the time allocated for each project is feasible should all the projects be successful.

19. Is there a limit on how many proposals an applicant can be involved in?

There are no stipulations about the number of proposals an applicant can be involved in, but we usually advise that applicants are not involved in more than one proposal as a PI. Applicants can also be Co-I(s) or collaborators on other proposals, but time commitment should be considered if you are going to be involved in a number of them.

20. Is there a limit on the number of applications from each institution for this call?

There is not a limit on the number of applications from each institution for this call.

21. Can more than one UK organisation be involved in the proposal?

Yes, but they will need to meet the BBSRC eligibility criteria which is detailed section 3 of the BBSRC Grants Guide.

22. Are CGIAR centres eligible to apply to the call?

Researchers from CGIAR centres in DAC listed countries are eligible as Co-Investigators. Overseas Co-Is should hold a position of lecturer level or equivalent status in a university or other recognised higher education institution or other research institution, or other ‘not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity, based in an eligible DAC country (see list of eligible countries in Downloads section). This includes researchers at both national institutions of eligible DAC countries and establishments of international organisations located in those countries.

Where the GGIAR is not based in a DAC-listed country the following applies: For this call only, academic researchers from overseas research organisations not based in DAC countries may be Co-Is if they provide expertise not available in the UK or a DAC country. We would not expect high-income country Co-I costs to exceed 30% of the
total award value. Overseas Co-Is should hold a position of lecturer level or equivalent status, in one of the following:
   i a university;
   ii a recognised higher education institution;
   iii a recognised research institution;
   iv a ‘not-for-profit’ organisation with a credible and relevant research capacity.

23. How can I get in touch with UK researchers who might be interested to work together on this call?

To connect with relevant UK partners you could use the following:
   a) search the ‘Gateway to Research’ website using key words where details of all of the UKRI-funded grants are published (along with details of the project and people involved);
   b) contact relevant PIs who have recently been funded through the UK’s Global Challenges Research Fund – e.g. Growing Research Capability (details of the awarded grants can be seen here); Global Research Hubs (details of the awarded grants can be seen here); the BBSRC Foundation Awards for Global Agriculture and Food Systems Research (details of the awarded grants can be seen here); and the BBSRC GCRF recent Food & nutrition research for health in the developing world: Bioavailability and nutrient content call.

24. If I decide to apply as PI on one application and Co-I or collaborator on another, would the panel be less likely to fund both bids thus putting one at a potential disadvantage?

No, the panel consider each proposal separately and follow the assessment criteria such as scientific excellence, fit to the scope of the call, etc.

25. Will partnerships involving particular countries be prioritised?

No. Partnerships can be built with any country or countries on the OECD DAC list of ODA-recipient countries.

However, if a country is due to graduate from the list, it cannot be the sole focus of the project although it can still be included as a case study or comparator. Detailed list of the countries and the ‘Graduation status’ can be found here.

26. Will particular topics be prioritised?

No. Applicants are welcome to submit a proposal on any topic within the scope of the call. All proposals will be considered equally against the assessment criteria, regardless of focus.

27. What is meant by ‘equitable partnerships’?

Equitable partnerships are those which encompass reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange with clear benefit for all collaborators. Partnerships should be transparent and based on mutual respect. Partnerships should aim to have clearly articulated equitable distribution of resources, responsibilities, efforts and benefits. Partnerships should recognise different inputs, different interests and different desired outcomes and should ensure the ethical sharing and use of data which is responsive to the identified needs of society.
28. What is the assessment process for applications?

When a proposal is received, BBSRC will conduct an eligibility check to ensure it can proceed in the assessment process. This will also include checking whether a proposal is ODA-compliant, so it is important to clearly articulate a proposal’s compliance in the ODA Compliance Statement as well as throughout the Case for Support and Pathways to Impact.

Eligible applications will first be assessed through external peer review process and then will go forward to be assessed at a single interdisciplinary panel with a range of expertise relating to the context of the call. All proposals will be assessed against the same criteria, and the panel will produce a ranked list of fundable awards, which the Research Councils will use to determine which projects to fund.

As the panel membership will comprise a wide range of expertise, not everyone reading your application will be an expert in your area, so ensure that your proposal is written in a way that is accessible to non-experts.

32. When should successful projects start and how long can they last?

Projects must start by mid-February 2020, and can last up to 3 years.

33. Is there a webinar organised for this call?

The recorded webinar and a complementary presentation are available on the call webpage on the BBSRC website.

34. What is Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system?

Je-S is used by AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC and STFC (formerly CCLRC and PPARC), as well as the Technology Strategy Board (TSB), Energy Technologies Institute (ETI) and National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), to provide their communities with electronic grant services.

All applicants named on the Je-S form must be registered as users of the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system well in advance of submitting the application. Please note that the Je-S registration process for overseas Co-Investigators could take up to 3 weeks and thus, are advised to register as early as possible.

35. Can I request an extension of time to submit a proposal?

No, applications received after the submission deadline will not be accepted. Please submit early to your research office to allow them sufficient time to submit the application.