

## Information pack for: **BBSRC Global Challenges Research Fund Strategic Training Awards for Research Skills (GCRF-STARS)**

### Introduction

The BBSRC Global Challenges Research Fund Strategic Training Awards for Research Skills (GCRF-STARS) programme aims to build a portfolio of sustainable and timely training resources to up-skill and develop researchers and graduate students, in research priority areas, in the UK and developing countries within the research skills required to help tackle global challenges.

### Timetable

Call opens: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Call closes: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Panel assessment: December

Announcement of awards: January 2020

Project start date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Project end date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

### Case for support

**Detailed guidance on the completion of the application can be found in the Je-S Help Text (available in the downloads section)**

The Case for Support should include justification for support of the proposed training activities. Applicants should provide the following information:

- Aims and objectives of the training activities proposed
- Evidence of the skills need:
  - What evidence exists of the need to support this capability?
  - In what ways might this research skill be considered 'a global challenge' and why?
  - What further information might be sought in preparation for the delivery of training?
- A clear justification for the need for additional support outside standard BBSRC or other funding (including Training Partnerships and research grants)
- A clear description and justification of the chosen delivery method, including:
  - Research skills to be delivered
  - Anticipated numbers and experience level of participants
  - Duration and number of activities
  - Who will benefit and in what ways will they be different at the end of the training / activity period
- A clear description of how the developing country partner will be involved in the development and/or delivery of the training activities

- A description of any plans for establishment of an advisory group to oversee activities, especially where multiple cohorts are planned
- A description of the ownership of teaching materials from collaborative partnerships at the conclusion of GCRF-STARS funding
- A brief business plan, indicating how BBSRC funding would be used
- If applicable, reference to the evidence gathered by/from BBSRC supported engagement networks in reference to the proposal.

### **Advisory Group**

An advisory group is recommended for all activities involving one or more non-academic partners, particularly where multiple cohorts are planned such as multiple skills schools running over an extended time period. An advisory group may also be established for academic-only applications where appropriate. The rationale for and description of the advisory group should be provided in the case for support.

The role of such a group would be to provide guidance on development of learning resources, sector requirements, appropriate delivery mechanisms, costings, etc.

### **Business Plan**

All applications should include a basic business plan, which is included in Section 2 of the Case for Support form.

The purpose of the business plan is to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to the relative costings, activity fees, delegate numbers and potential profits / shortfalls of the proposed training activities. **The ability to demonstrate co-funding of activities outside the BBSRC GCRF-STARS programme (including contributions from the host institution(s) and other sources) will be considered favourably by the assessment panel**, especially where activities build on resources such as existing skills schools or undergraduate research experience programmes.

BBSRC expects that activities planned to be repeated over a number of cohorts will eventually become self-sustaining. This may be through industrial sponsorship, uptake into postgraduate teaching modules or relying on delegate fees for continued existence. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that some future profit may be generated.

## **Collaborative approaches and partnerships**

Applications should include a letter from the developing country partner that describes the skills gap/training opportunity and how the collaboration would be beneficial to researchers in that country.

BBSRC strongly encourages collaboration and partnership approaches to the support of strategically important and global challenge targets. Any partnerships should be described in the Management and Partnerships section of the Case for Support. Partners could include industry, charities, professional bodies, existing research or training networks, or other funders.

Collaborative approaches should enhance a GCRF-STARS application through intellectual, financial and/or in-kind contributions, for example by:

- providing input into the skills areas in need of support and the reasons for the chosen support mechanism(s), in particular by providing knowledge, expertise and evidence for such needs
- playing a role in delivering training activities, for example contributing to teaching, site visits and other activities as part of skills schools, or hosting students on research placements
- co-funding training activities

Please refer to the **Eligibility** section for details on how to include non-academic partners on applications.

## Eligibility

### 1. Applicants

Standard BBSRC eligibility rules apply. Lead and co-applicants **must** be employed by an eligible Research Organisation (RO). Full details of eligibility conditions can be found in BBSRC Research Grants: - The Guide <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/grants-guide.aspx>.

### 2. Collaborators

Collaborating organisations that are not eligible to apply for BBSRC funding may still be included as a non-academic partner on applications. Such partnerships should be described in the Case for Support (Management and Partnerships section) and through completion of Letter(s) of Support.

### 3. Postdoctoral researchers

BBSRC wishes to encourage the involvement of its postdoctoral researcher community in the development, management and coordination of GCRF-STARS activities – as well as through participation in the training where appropriate. Post-Doctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) staff are **not** eligible to apply for a GCRF-STARS award (including as a Researcher co-Investigator) but are strongly encouraged to take an active involvement in GCRF-STARS activities where this does not breach the rules of their existing employment contract.

Activities could be included within individuals' annual allowance for continuing professional development. Such involvement might include initiating and contributing to the writing of the GCRF-STARS proposal, as well as:

- initiating and managing collaborations and partnerships associated with the GCRF-STARS award
- managing research placement programmes, including sourcing projects, recruiting DAC citizens, supervising students during placements and supporting post-placement reporting
- contributing to planning of teaching programmes, site visits, networking and other activities associated with skills schools
- leading on reporting and assessment activities.

Details of any planned participation of BBSRC postdoctoral researchers in the coordination / management of GCRF-STARS activities should be described in the Case for Support (Management and Partnerships section).

### 4. Participants

Global challenges and the interconnection of training between ROs can be supported through GCRF-STARS by building connected cohorts of researchers. The GCRF-STARS programme aims to improve global skills capacity and not just the capacity of those applying. As such, events and large-scale training activities should involve a majority of delegates from DAC listed countries. Applications should detail how the wider research community will be engaged and the ROs and developing countries from which delegates are expected to attend.

Participation on Research Experience Placements should be allocated to DAC citizens only to train in the UK.

Where appropriate, preference for participation on skills schools and courses should be given to DAC citizens.

## Due diligence

This call will award funds to the lead UK institution named on the application, which will then be responsible for the overall management of the award, including control, disbursement and assurance of funds. The lead organization will be responsible for disbursing funds to other institutions/organisations named on that application.

It is important to highlight that the lead Research Organisation is responsible for the conduct and administration of the grant, should the proposal be recommended for funding. It is accountable for the effective use of public funds, and must therefore ensure that all grant monies are subject to proper financial management processes. It is the Research Organisation's responsibility to ensure that expenditure on collaborations in the UK and abroad is subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety and that all costs should be fully vouched and maintained for possible inspection and checks by, or on behalf of BBSRC.

In particular, it is the Research Organisation's responsibility to undertake due diligence checks to ensure that any funding requested will be appropriately used by the overseas organisation(s). Due diligence should therefore be considered from the outset and should be proportionate. It is not expected, for example, that Research Organisations will carry out the same level of due diligence checks for £2k of funding being distributed as they would for £200k; the level of due diligence should be commensurate with the risk. For further guidance, including suggested steps to take at each stage of proposal development, please see the [UKRI due diligence guidance for UKRO's](#).

## Assessment of applications

GCRF-STARS proposals will be assessed by a panel comprising BBSRC staff. The BBSRC Bioscience Skills and Careers Strategy Advisory Panel will maintain a strategic oversight of the call, and will regularly monitor the portfolio of activities to ensure a breadth of topics and areas are appropriately supported. GCRF-STARS applications will not be routinely externally reviewed, but BBSRC reserves the right to seek external advice on individual applications when required. This process allows applications to be reviewed quickly and responsively, in proportion to the size of the awards.

The primary aim of GCRF-STARS is to support high quality research training and resources, therefore **the key assessment criteria** will be:

### 1. Evidence and strategic need

- Rationale behind the strategic need to support this research capability
- Rationale behind the proposed mechanism to support training in this area
- The 'added value': to what extent the objectives of the proposal could not be achieved through any other mechanism and how, without a GCRF-STARS award, there would be a lost opportunity

### 2. Overall quality of training activities offered

- Suitability of the individuals / organisations involved
- The extent to which they have the specialist expertise and facilities needed to provide such training activities
- Cohort, community building and networking between ROs and other relevant organisations

In addition, the assessment will take account of the following:

### 3. Suitability of the proposal

The extent to which the proposed training activities

- fit to BBSRC's remit
- fit to Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) strategy
- address the aims of the GCRF-STARS scheme
- support appropriate levels of activities (number of individuals benefiting and timescale) based on the strategic need and proposed training mechanism

### 4. Benefits of the proposed training activities to DAC listed countries

- Level of acquisition of skills and knowledge by individuals participating in the activities

### 5. Management and partnership

- Coordination and management / oversight of proposed training activities, especially where collaborating organisations are involved
- Intellectual and financial contributions by partner organisations
- Value for money, including rationale for the proposed use of resources

## How to apply

### **Applications must be made through the Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system.**

Please refer to the detailed Je-S HelpText, available at

[www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-gcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-gcrf-stars](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-gcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-gcrf-stars) for each section of the application form.

In addition to the Je-S application form, applicants are requested to submit the following documentation:

1. GCRF-STARS *Case for Support* Proforma (**mandatory, exactly 1**)
2. Completed *Letter of Support* form(s) from developing country organisations (**mandatory, 1 or more**)
3. Completed ODA compliance questionnaire (**mandatory, exactly 1**)
4. Gender equality statement (**mandatory, exactly 1**)
5. Completed *Evidence of Additional Support* form(s) from collaborating organisations (**optional, 1 or more**)
6. A covering letter may also be submitted (**optional, exactly 1**)

**Applications must be submitted using the document templates available from the download section at: [www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-gcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-gcrf-stars](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-gcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-gcrf-stars). Failure to use the templates will result in the application being withdrawn.**

**Applications must be received by 4pm on the closing date specified. Late applications will not be accepted.**

BBSRC recommends applications are submitted in advance of the application deadline. Furthermore, applicants should ensure applications are submitted to their institution's submitter/approval pool a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the published deadline; this enables institution checks to be carried out prior to final submission.

## **Queries**

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, the helpdesk can be contacted Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm UK time (excluding Bank holidays and other holidays): [JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk), +44 (0)1793 444164 (out of hours please leave a voicemail message).

Please provide your name, organisation and User Id; date and time; which part of the form or system you were working on; and the nature of the problem.

If you have queries regarding the GCRF-STARS scheme, contact [postgrad.studentships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.studentships@bbsrc.ac.uk).

## **Decision and award condition**

Applications will be assessed by a panel, after which decisions and feedback will be provided.

Global Challenges Research Fund Strategic Training Awards for Research Skills (GCRF-STARS) are funded and operated by BBSRC. The Award is made as a Training Grant and is subject to the GCRF-STARS Terms and Conditions which can be found at [www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-qcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-qcrf-stars](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/bbsrc-qcrf-strategic-training-awards-for-research-skills-qcrf-stars).

Successful grants will be required to start **no later than 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020**; this is a condition of award.

## **Data Protection Act 1988**

BBSRC will use information provided on the application form in processing the application, any contract awarded and subsequent payment, including maintenance and review processes. This includes:

- Registration of applications
- Operation of BBSRC processing and management information systems
- The acquisition of UK and possibly international referee comments on the application
- The preparation of material for use by peer review panels
- Policy and strategy studies

## **Payment Profile**

GCRF-STARS awards will be treated like Training Grants and as such will be paid quarterly in advance. The final payment will be released upon receipt of the Final Expenditure Statement (FES).

## **Monitoring**

Reporting of the outcomes of GCRF-STARS awards will be required at the end of the funded period. Further details will be provided.



