

Network Strengthening Grants Scheme

Application Guidance Notes – Round 1

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Background

The [International Science Partnerships Fund](#) (ISPF) is a science-led fund that responds to geostrategic priorities, seeking to leverage science and research partnerships for diplomatic, trade, prosperity, security, and other secondary UK benefits, and contribute to global development challenges.

The ISPF's main objectives are:

1. **Impactful research and innovation (R&I):** international science delivers bigger, better science than we can do alone, with higher impact than domestic science.
2. **International influence:** place the UK in a position where it can shape and influence global standards and norms that are aligned to UK interests and values.
3. **Leveraging UK science reputation for domestic gain:** strengthens perception of the UK and UK research and development (R&D) in partner countries.
4. **Tackling global challenges:** will support and deliver on the strategic priorities of His Majesty's Government (HMG).
5. **Developing global science capability:** strengthens research capacity.
6. **Delivered through trusted partners:** plans for high-impact partnerships ready to go, and at risk of being lost through any further delay.
7. **Scalable and flexible:** designed to expand to invest additional funding, as well as respond to changes in HMG priorities around partners and themes, complementing the broader funding landscape.

Overview

The Academy of Medical Sciences is pleased to be able to offer Network Strengthening Grants awards funded through the ISPF.

Goal

These awards support previous Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Networking Grants awardees from the list of ISPF-eligible countries to maintain their collaborative networks and undertake related research projects. Applicants may have obtained pilot data for their proposed research projects during their initial GCRF Networking Grant.

Whilst this initiative continues to support the networks formed through the GCRF Networking Grants scheme, it diverges by placing less emphasis on exploratory networking. It is assumed that networks applying in this round are well-established and equipped to collaboratively address a specific research question. Therefore, whilst focused networking or collaborative meetings may be a component of the activities supported by an award, the primary purpose of an award is to conduct a research project. The overarching goal for an award supported by this scheme could be to either position the network to pursue more substantial funding or to reach a pre-determined research endpoint.

Remit

In keeping with the multidisciplinary nature of the GCRF Networking Grants, these follow-on Network Strengthening Grants awards will welcome applications from the remits of all four National Academies: the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Royal Society and the Academy of Medical Sciences.

The remit can broadly be described as research within natural sciences, including physics and chemistry, mathematics, computer science, engineering, agricultural, biological and medical research, social science, humanities, the scientific aspects of archaeology, geography and experimental psychology, and clinical or patient-oriented research.

Reporting and monitoring

Awardees will be required to submit an Annual Expenditure Report throughout their award and a Final Expenditure Report within three months of their award end date. In addition, they will be expected to report on the research outputs that arise from the grant annually throughout their award and for five years after its completion through the Academy's evaluation tool, Researchfish.

Please direct any queries regarding the scheme to the Office at networkstrengthening@acmedsci.ac.uk.

Eligibility criteria

This funding forms part of the UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, and awards must therefore be supporting networks spanning the UK and a selection of developing countries that have been identified for support by the ISPF: **Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, South Africa and Vietnam**, as well as all countries on the [Least Developed Countries \(LDCs\)](#) list.

As with the GCRF Networking Grants, a joint application will be submitted by an overseas researcher (“the lead applicant”) and a UK researcher (“the co-applicant”).

It is assumed that the researchers know each other well and have worked together previously.

Networks are eligible to apply for this scheme regardless of whether they have obtained funding from other sources to support follow-on activities relating to the GCRF Networking Grant. Details of any funding acquired will be requested within the application form to inform the reviewers (see “Grant selection process and assessment criteria” section).

As this funding is a direct follow-on from the GCRF Networking Grants, we will only accept **one** application per GCRF Networking Grant.

Projects are required to provide direct benefit to one or more of the eligible countries listed above, and address at least one of the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#):

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and economies
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnership for the goals

Applicant eligibility

The overseas researcher and UK researcher should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Have completed a PhD or have experience at an equivalent level.
- Have proven research experience in their field.

- Be affiliated with a university or research institute, either governmental or non-governmental, that is not for profit and has the necessary research capacity and capability to support the specified research. (Additional core partners outside of the UK must also be affiliated with a university or research institute.)
- Currently hold a permanent position or fixed-term contract for the duration of the grant at a university or research institute.
- The overseas researcher does not need to be a national of the country but does need to be resident.
- The UK researcher should be resident within the UK for the duration of the award.
- Each application must have only one co-applicant in the network and they should be the UK researcher who jointly submits the application.

The co-applicant and UK Administering Organisation must agree to administer the grant and must make all the necessary practical and administrative arrangements for the duration of the grant. Further details about this can be found in the [Award Terms and Conditions](#).

Lead applicants, core partners and collaborators

Applicants who played a significant role in a GCRF Networking Grant and are based within one of the ISPF-eligible countries mentioned above will be eligible to lead a Network Strengthening Grant. Previous members of a GCRF Networking Grant (typically a core partner) within these countries may substitute the previous Lead Overseas Applicant, especially if the previous Lead Overseas Applicant is not based within an eligible country. Lead applicants will be asked to evidence their suitability for this role for the Network Strengthening Grant.

We understand that the networks may involve additional participants. Each application may include up to **five** other core partners, who will provide further expertise or represent additional countries in the network. Full details and justification should be given for the involvement of all participants.

Network member	Eligible country of employment	Note
Lead applicant	Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, South Africa, Vietnam and all LDCs	Must have been involved in corresponding GCRF Networking award
Co-applicant	UK	Must have been involved in corresponding GCRF Networking award
Core partner	Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, South Africa, Vietnam and all LDCs	Typically will have been involved in corresponding GCRF Networking award
Collaborator	Any	

Collaborators and core partners can receive funding for eligible costs, where justified.

Finance and project details

Value

Awards can be up to **£200,000**.

Awards offer up to £100,000 per year.

Start date

The award start date must be between 1 March 2025 and 31 March 2025.

Duration of funding

Awards are for up to two years. Should the budget not be spent in full at the end of the award period, applicants may be able to apply for a no-cost extension.

Eligible costs

Funding must be requested in sterling (£).

- Consumables.
- Research assistance.
- Equipment – small items of equipment only.
- Costs associated with collaborative activities, e.g. accommodation, room hire and catering.
- Administrative support to the overseas country to deliver activities.
- Modest administrative support costs of up to £2,000 to the UK Administering Organisation. Typically these funds will support the transfer of award funds overseas, however this should be proportionate to the size of the award and in line with proportion of the grant due to be transferred overseas.
- Technical support access at the university/institute level (e.g. accessing existing data management, statistical support services or archives available at the university/institute).
- Use of animals (covering the cost of licence fees, handling fees, procedure costs and animal purchase costs).
- Support for up to **20 %** of the Lead Overseas Applicant's salary costs.
 - o Such requests will require justification for how the “bought-out” individual's time will contribute to this project. We will also require confirmation from the overseas institution that the individual's employment contract enables this arrangement.
- A portion of the budget can be used towards capacity-strengthening activities at the overseas organisation. These activities should be directly linked to the proposed project and not covered by the above budget headings. The Academy would typically expect these costs to total no more than **20 %** of the total award value.
 - o We are unable to provide a prescriptive list of eligible activities, but these could include training for research/finance office support staff, PhD training or soft-skills development courses. We recognise that the type of activity supported by this budget portion may differ between applications.
 - o Please note that it is not mandatory for an application to include a request for research capacity-strengthening costs.

We would expect that the majority of the funding is spent in the overseas institutions rather than at the UK institutions.

Applicants are invited to discuss their proposed budgets with the Office, if helpful, and particularly if their proposed capacity-strengthening activities exceed the 20 % of total award guidance.

Application submission and review process

All applications must be submitted via the Academy of Medical Sciences' online Grants and Awards management system Flexi-Grant® via <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com>.

There will be funding available for approximately 10 awards in this round.

This scheme will utilise a **two-stage application process**, following the below timelines:

Opening date for Stage 1 of the call	Thursday 13 June 2024
Closing date for Stage 1 of the call	Thursday 1 August 2024
Outcome release from Stage 1 of the call	Tuesday 3 September 2024
Opening date for Stage 2 of the call	Thursday 5 September 2024
Closing date for Stage 2 of the call	Thursday 3 October 2024
Announcement of awards	March 2025

Stage 1

The Stage 1 application form is intended to capture a brief overview of the proposal.

Applications to Stage 1 of the call will be reviewed by the scheme's Selection Panel, using the criteria noted below.

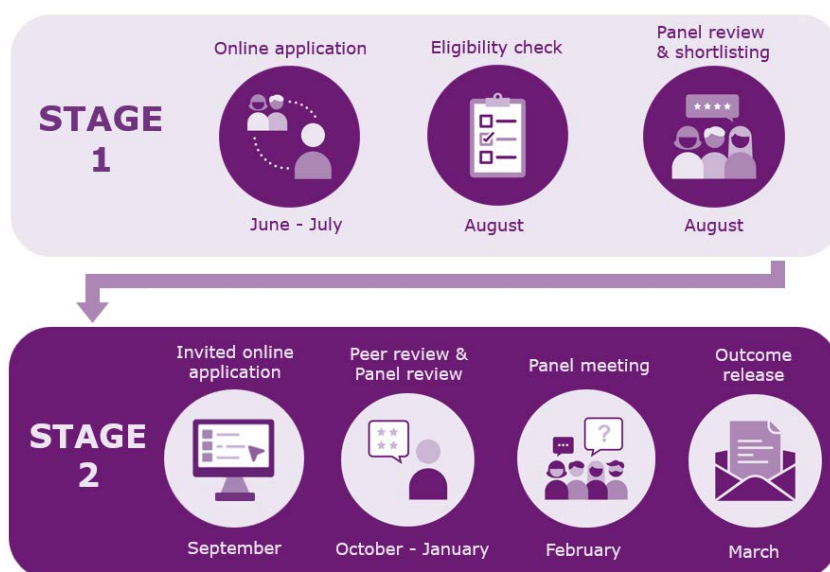
Shortlisted applications will be invited via email to submit full details of the proposal via the Stage 2 application form.

Stage 2

The Stage 2 application form invites shortlisted applications to expand upon the details provided within the Stage 1 form, to provide full details of their proposal, including research methodology and budget requests.

Applications to Stage 2 of the call will be reviewed by external peer reviewers, as well as the scheme's Selection Panel, using the criteria noted below.

Funding decisions will be finalised at the scheme's Selection Panel meeting in February 2025, and outcomes will be released shortly afterwards.



An outline of the Stage 1 and 2 application form content and assessment criteria can be found below.

Grant selection process and assessment criteria

The main criterion for the assessment of applications is whether the proposed activities will build upon those conducted during the GCRF Networking award to deliver research that will ultimately provide specific benefits to the overseas country.

As noted above, applications will be assessed on different criteria in Stage 1 and Stage 2. **Please consider the relevant assessment criteria when completing your application.**

Stage 1

- To what extent does the proposal build upon successes and lessons learned during the corresponding GCRF Networking activities?
- How well have the applicants articulated the added value of an award to their network? To what extent would an award enable new activities to take place?

Stage 2

- Is the proposal well-designed with the potential to strengthen the network? Is an important problem being addressed and are the approaches and methodologies appropriate?
- Is the network, to include the applicants, core partners and collaborators appropriate for the proposal under consideration? The proposal should be well-supported by the research expertise, skills and experience of the network members.
- Have the applicants demonstrated that the activities have the potential to yield impact? This could be defined in multiple ways, to include the pursuit of more substantive funding and/or a defined research outcome.
- Has the suitability of the Administering Organisations for the proposed activities been evidenced?

- Have the applicants demonstrated that their proposal meets key ODA requirements? How well does the research address one or more global challenges, specifically within the lead overseas country involved in the network?
 - o Please note that in order to meet ODA requirements, applicants are asked to justify how their proposal will promote and specifically target the economic development and welfare of the lead overseas country, and if applicable, of the other eligible DAC-listed countries involved in the network.

Selection Panel:

The Panel membership is interdisciplinary and includes Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences, British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Society and additional expertise from across the Academies and from Development Assistance Committee (DAC)-listed countries.

The Selection Panel Membership is still being recruited, but at time of publication of this document, the following experts have been confirmed:

Professor Athimalaipet Vaidyanathan Ramanan FMedSci (Chair), University of Bristol

Professor Mark Woolhouse OBE FRSE FMedSci, University of Edinburgh

Dr Naile Dame-Teixeira, University of Brasilia

Dr Saloni Krishnan, Royal Holloway, University of London

Professor Emile Chimusa, Northumbria University

Dr Matt Baillie Smith, Northumbria University

Professor Lauren Rea MBE, University of Sheffield

Dr Sola Afolabi, Loughborough University

Professor William Powrie FREng, University of Southampton

Professor Eric Wolff FRS, University of Cambridge

Dr Benyi Cao, University of Surrey

Professor Richard Bentall FBA, University of Sheffield

Professor Erkkö Autio FBA, Imperial College London

Applicants should not approach Panel members to discuss their application. All queries should be directed to the Panel secretariat on networkstrengthening@acmedsci.ac.uk.

Gender equality¹

The Academy of Medical Sciences is committed to supporting gender equality in the funding it provides. Applicants must submit a Gender Equality Statement as part of their application, in accordance with this UK Government policy statement on [Gender Equality in Research and Innovation Official Development Assistance \(ODA\)](#), published in May 2021.

The statement must meet compliance standards as set out in the above publication and all applications will be reviewed at the eligibility and assessment stages to ensure they

meet the necessary requirements. Not meeting the necessary requirements will mean that applications are automatically not fundable.

All applicants are strongly recommended to review the above publication before designing and drafting their application. In addition, the [guidance document](#) for applicants may be especially helpful when preparing a Gender Equality Statement.

¹ Official Development Assistance provided by Delivery Partners complies with the requirements of the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 which states, the “desirability of providing development assistance that is likely to contribute to reducing poverty in a way which is likely to contribute to reducing inequalities between persons of different gender

Completing the application form online

Applications must be submitted online using the Academy of Medical Sciences' Grants and Awards management system (Flexi-Grant®) via <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com>.

Lead Overseas Applicants and UK Co-applicants of eligible GCRF Networking awards have been emailed with a direct link to the Flexi-Grant application form. If you believe you should have received this link and haven't, please get in touch with the Office at networkstrengthening@acmedsci.ac.uk.

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and they should ensure that all necessary information has been provided prior to submission. These requirements are strictly adhered to, and applications without all the necessary information, or evidence to show the assessment criteria are met, will be rejected.

Applications must be started by the overseas researcher, who is then responsible for inviting "Participants" to the application. These individuals are:

- UK co-applicant
- Overseas Head of Department (*Stage 2 only*)
- Overseas Finance Officer
- UK Head of Department (*Stage 2 only*)
- UK Finance Officer

These declarations must be completed before you can submit via Flexi-Grant®. Late applications will not be accepted. An overview of the submission process is included below.



ORCID identifier

All applicants applying for a Network Strengthening Grants award must include an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier in their application for it to be accepted for submission. ORCID maintains a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research funding, research publications, research data and any other research outputs to these unique identifiers. You can register for an ORCID identifier via <https://orcid.org/register>.

Application form sections

Please note that the information submitted in your Stage 1 application form will be automatically transferred to the Stage 2 form, so you will not need to re-type any of it, but you may edit it if you so wish.

Stage 1

- Page 1: Eligibility criteria
- Page 2: Progress made due to GCRF Networking grant
- Page 3: Proposal
- Page 4: Lead overseas applicant

- Page 5: UK co-applicant
- Page 6: Network
- Page 7: ODA compliance & Sustainable Development Goals
- Page 8: Overseas lead applicant declaration
- Page 9: UK co-applicant declaration
- Page 10: Finance officer (overseas) declaration
- Page 11: Finance officer (UK) declaration

Stage 2

- Page 1: Eligibility criteria
- Page 2: Progress made due to GCRF Networking grant
- Page 3: Proposal
- Page 4: Lead overseas applicant
- Page 5: UK co-applicant
- Page 6: Network
- Page 7: ODA compliance & Sustainable Development Goals
- Page 8: Gender Equality
- Page 9: Financial details
- Page 10: Use of animals in research
- Page 11: Human tissues or subjects
- Page 12: Outputs management, sharing and subsidy control
- Page 13: Overseas lead applicant declaration
- Page 14: UK co-applicant declaration
- Page 15: Head of Department (overseas) declaration
- Page 16: Head of Department (UK) declaration
- Page 17: Finance Officer (overseas) declaration
- Page 18: Finance Officer (UK) declaration

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found below. Each box represents a page of the application form (some can be completed by both the overseas researcher and the UK researcher); the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion. A red asterisk (*) indicates which questions are mandatory and therefore must be completed before the application can be submitted. Please read these guidance notes carefully as you complete the form.

Stage 1

Page 1: Eligibility criteria	
Eligibility criteria *	By ticking this box, I confirm that we meet the overseas/UK applicant eligibility criteria for the Networking Grants

Page 2: Progress made due to GCRF Networking Grant	
Summary of current outputs *	Please summarise the outputs and achievements attributable to your GCRF Networking Grant, to include (where appropriate) those that have occurred since the grant ended. <i>(300 words max)</i>
Funding history *	If you have received further funding, please list all current and previous research funding awarded <u>which directly relates to your GCRF Networking Grant</u>, listing the most recent first. State the name of the awarding body, name(s) of grantholder(s), title of project, amounts awarded, your role in the project, and start and end dates of support. If you have any active grants, please indicate the number of hours per week that are spent on each project.
Other grant applications *	Does your network have any other grant applications pending? If so, for each ongoing grant application, please detail the funder, amount, when you expect the outcome and how it relates to this proposal.

Page 3: Proposal	
Proposal title *	Please give the full title of your project.
Lay summary *	Provide a lay summary of your proposal. This should be understood by a layperson. Explain why you have chosen to study this subject area and what it is about your proposal that you find particularly exciting, interesting or important. Please also explain the potential impact or wider benefits to society of your research. <i>(250 words max)</i>
Subject Group/Area *	Select the subject group/area that most closely defines the research area of the proposal, from a pre-defined list of options.
Project start date *	Please enter the proposed start date of the project. This must be between 1 March 2025 and 31 March 2025.
Project duration *	Please enter the proposed duration of the project. Awards are for a maximum duration of two years.

Outline of aims *	Please provide an outline of the aims of your research proposal. This could include; • Key milestones • Anticipated outputs from project • Next steps for your network and research <i>(300 words max)</i>
Building on GCRF Networking activities *	How does your research proposal build on the activities supported by your GCRF Networking grant? <i>(300 words max)</i>
Added value to your network *	How would the support of a Network Strengthening Grant provide added value to your network and research? <i>(250 words max)</i>

Page 4: Lead overseas applicant	
Please ensure that your personal details have been filled out accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.	
Name *	Title, first name and surname
Previous role in GCRF Networking grant *	Did you hold the role of 'lead applicant' in the GCRF Networking Grant corresponding to this application?
Suitability to lead grant *	Please briefly outline your suitability to lead this Network Strengthening Grant proposal. For example, if relevant, you might reflect on your experience or learnings during the corresponding GCRF Networking Grant. <i>(150 words max)</i>
ORCID iD *	Enter your ORCID using the following format: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1825-0097
Title of current position *	Please state the title of your current position.
Field of specialisation *	Please enter details of your field(s) of specialisation.
Current employer or institution *	You must add at least 1 organisation(s) with a name, organisation type, complete address, phone number and email specified.
Current position start date *	-
Current position end date *	For permanent positions, enter 31 December 2050
Country *	Select the country where your current employer is based.

Page 5: UK co-applicant	
Please ensure that your personal details have been filled out accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.	
Name *	Title, first name, surname and email address
Previous role in GCRF Networking grant *	Did you hold the role of 'UK co-applicant' in the GCRF Networking Grant corresponding to this application?
Suitability as UK co-applicant *	Please briefly outline your suitability to act as UK co-applicant on this Network Strengthening Grant proposal. For example, if relevant, you might reflect on your experience or learnings during the corresponding GCRF Networking Grant. <i>(150 words max)</i>
ORCID iD *	Enter your ORCID using the following format: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1825-0097
Title of current position *	Please state the title of your current position.
Field of specialisation *	Please enter details of your field(s) of specialisation.
Current employer or institution *	-
Current position start date *	-
Current position end date *	For permanent positions, please enter 31 December 2050

Page 6: Network	
Each application may involve up to five other core partners, who will provide further expertise or represent additional countries in the network. Full details and justification should be given for the involvement of all participants.	
Core partners	Please provide the name, country, institution, and position title of the core partners.
Collaborators	If applicable, please also provide a list of additional collaborators who will be involved in the network, including their name, institution and country. <i>(250 words max)</i>

Page 7: ODA compliance & Sustainable Development Goals	
Context of challenge *	How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of the countries of the Overseas Applicant and Core Partners? <i>(250 words max)</i>
Sustainable Development Goals *	Please select the primary (and secondary, if applicable) Sustainable Development Goal that your research proposal will address.

Pages 8 & 9: Overseas lead applicant and UK co-applicant declarations	
Applicant declaration *	If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.

Pages 10 & 11: Overseas and UK Finance Officer declarations	
Finance Officer declaration *	If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.

Stage 2

Successful applicants of Stage 1 of the Network Strengthening Grants scheme will be invited to proceed with Stage 2 of the form, which is an opportunity to provide full details of the proposal.

Please note the responses submitted in Stage 1 of the form will be available for review and editing within this form. The following additional questions will also be asked.

Page 3: Proposal	
Research proposal *	Your research proposal should provide a general description of the proposed research to be carried out. This should include, but is not limited to, the following: • clear specification of the context and research objectives of the proposed study. • why the research is important • a brief description of any background work undertaken so far • plan of investigation, including a description of the methodology and design • an indication of the milestones and timescales Please use numbers to refer to your references, which you can provide in the following question. If applicable, preliminary data, figures and tables can be uploaded and attached to your proposal separately below. <i>(1000 words max)</i>

References *	If applicable, please provide a list of references to support the statement above.
Preliminary data, tables and figures	An opportunity to upload up to two A4 pages of preliminary data in support of your research plan, which must be presented only as tables or figures (with brief legends). No additional text is permitted. Please upload any additional tables or figures to support your proposal (e.g. timeline, GANTT chart etc.), which must be presented only as tables or figures (with brief legends). No additional text is permitted.
Keywords *	Please give up to six keywords that might be helpful in classifying your research.
Reviewers *	Please suggest three potential reviewers for your application. Reviewers should not be based at your current or previous institution(s), nor at those of your collaborator(s). Co-authors in previous publications should also be excluded. You are required to provide a contact email address for each suggested reviewer. You should only provide an email address that is publicly available, please do not provide the individual's personal email address. Your suggestions will be hidden from reviewers and Panel members.
Reviewers to be excluded	You may indicate up to two potential reviewers that you wish to be excluded from the peer review selection process. This information will be hidden from other reviewers and Panel members.
Research environment *	Describe the laboratory facilities and any technical support that will be available to you (<i>150 words max</i>)

Page 4: Lead overseas applicant	
Summary of current research *	Provide an outline summary of your current research. Please also include a brief comment on the strength of your organisation. (<i>150 words max</i>)
Academic qualifications & career history *	List all your qualifications and career history in reverse chronological order. (<i>400 words max</i>) The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible.
List your five key and / or relevant publications *	Provide details of authors, titles and references for up to five of your most relevant publications in refereed journals, in reverse chronological order. You should choose the most relevant to the application to support your case.

Impact of COVID-19	Please briefly outline any issues you have experienced that can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and have directly impacted you and/or the following: • Research • Publications • Funding • Research time • Institutional support • Other <i>(500 words max)</i> You may wish to read the Academy's 'Top tips for factoring COVID-19 into grant applications' article for further advice on completing this statement. As part of their statement, applicants are asked not to: 1. name any third party individuals; 2. identify the relationship with any third parties; 3. otherwise include anything which might identify the third party. The Academy encourages applicants to use phrases such as 'a close relative had Covid19 and required significant support in order to recover' or 'I had to carry out caring responsibilities in addition to my research and admin workload, which had an impact on the amount of time I could dedicate to my research'.
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Page 5: UK co-applicant	
Summary of current research *	Provide an outline summary of your current research. Please also include a brief comment on the strength of your organisation. <i>(150 words max)</i>
Academic qualifications & career history *	List all your qualifications and career history in reverse chronological order. <i>(400 words max)</i> The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible.
List your five key and / or relevant publications *	Provide details of authors, titles and references for up to five of your most relevant publications in refereed journals, in reverse chronological order. You should choose the most relevant to the application to support your case.

Impact of COVID-19	Please briefly outline any issues you have experienced that can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and have directly impacted you and/or the following: • Research • Publications • Funding • Research time • Institutional support • Other (500 words max) You may wish to read the Academy's 'Top tips for factoring COVID-19 into grant applications' article for further advice on completing this statement. As part of their statement, applicants are asked not to: 1. name any third party individuals; 2. identify the relationship with any third parties; 3. otherwise include anything which might identify the third party. The Academy encourages applicants to use phrases such as 'a close relative had Covid19 and required significant support in order to recover' or 'I had to carry out caring responsibilities in addition to my research and admin workload, which had an impact on the amount of time I could dedicate to my research'.
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Page 6: Network	
Contribution of core partners *	Please provide a brief description of the involvement of each core partner in the network, and how their expertise will directly contribute to the success of the project. (150 words max each)
Contribution of collaborators *	Please give a brief description of the involvement of the collaborators in the network and how their expertise will directly contribute to the project. (250 words max)

Page 7: ODA compliance & Sustainable Development Goals	
Benefits for country/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 ? (250 words max)

Page 8: Gender equality	
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Does your proposal relate specifically to the issue of gender? *	Please indicate if gender equality is the principal theme, or is central to the main objectives.
Gender Equality Statement *	Please provide a Gender Equality Statement, outlining how the design, implementation and impact of the proposal will seek to reduce inequalities between persons of a different gender. It should address the following criteria, where these are appropriate: • Have measures been put in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project? This includes the development of the project, the participants of the research and the beneficiaries of the research. • What are the expected impacts of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond? • What are the expected impacts on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender? For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc. • Are there any risks and/or unintended negative consequences on gender equality that need to be avoided, mitigated against and monitored? If so, how? • Are there any relevant outcomes and outputs being measured with data disaggregated by age and gender (where disclosed)? <i>(400 words max)</i> This question should be completed with reference to this UK Government policy document on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the associated guidance document for applicants.

Page 9: Financial details	
Applicants must consult with the appropriate financial administrators before completing these details. For more information on how to allocate the budget, please read the guidance notes and refer to these when completing this section of the form.	
Budget *	Please note that the Network Strengthening Grants scheme is only able to provide a maximum of £200,000 over a two-year period and that all funding must be requested in sterling (£). A maximum of £100,000 can be requested per year of award. Please refer to Page 5 of this document for a more detailed breakdown of research expenses that can be requested through the Network Strengthening Grants. The value requested for each one should be included in the relevant sections of the budget table.

Justification of costs *	Please provide a full costings breakdown and justification in the appropriate boxes. Please note: costs should be proportionate to the needs of the network and the listing of high costs, or costs that are not sufficiently justified, will cause delays to the review process. All financial details will be checked by Academy staff to ensure that they are eligible.
The next four questions should only be completed if you intend to use animals in your research.	
Total number of purchased animals	Please provide the total number of animals to be used in your research for the tenure of the award.
Total cost of purchased animals	Please provide the total purchase cost for animals used in your research for the tenure of the award.
Total procedure cost	Please provide the total cost of the procedure(s) outlined in your proposal for the tenure of the award.
Animals total cost	This amount should be included under the 'Use of animals' section in the budget table above, and should include licence fees, handling fees, procedure costs and animal purchase costs.
Administration of grant *	As per the Award terms and conditions, the grant will be paid to the UK Administering Organisation in the first instance and will flow to partner institutions as appropriate. Please provide details on: - the institutions that will receive a proportion of this grant, and - the amount of funding that will be sent to each institution <i>(250 words max)</i>

It is important for us to know if any animals will be used in your research project and, if so, that you comply with the [Academy's Policy and Position](#) on the use of animals in research. The Academy is committed to being open about when, how and why animals are used in the projects we fund. In addition, we aim to ensure that every effort is made to replace, refine and reduce animals in research. For more information please see www.nc3rs.org.uk.

Applicants proposing to use animals in their research must ensure that the use of animals falls within the regulations stipulated in the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986 and subsequent amendments. Welfare standards consistent with the principles of UK legislation must be applied and maintained, wherever the work is conducted.

If your proposed research involves animal experiments, we encourage you to consult the NC3Rs [Experimental Design Assistant](#) (EDA) to help you design your study. This complements the [ARRIVE guidelines](#) (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) for reporting animal research. Our awardees are required to follow these guidelines when conducting research using animals to improve the design, analysis and reporting of animal research, maximising information published and minimising unnecessary studies. Further useful guidelines and practical information in the use of animals can also be obtained from the [3Rs resources library](#).

You are also encouraged to refer to the [PREPARE guidelines](#) when planning your animal experiments.

This section gives applicants the opportunity to explain the use of animals involved in their project proposals and measures in place to ensure openness about their use. Where non-human primates, cats, dogs or equines are used, anonymised information will be sent to the NC3Rs for review.

Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you select 'Yes', it is mandatory to complete all of the relevant questions on the 'Use of animals in research' page.
Does your proposal involve the collection of specimens and/or other materials? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you select 'Yes', it is mandatory to answer the following questions: • Has specific permission been obtained from the host country to collect and, if appropriate, export specimens and/or materials? • Has the director (or another relevant decision-maker) at the site where the specimens and/or materials will be deposited indicated their willingness to accept them? You will also be asked to upload any documents of permission relating to the collection, export and deposition of specimens and/or materials.

If your proposal features the use of human tissues or subjects, on this page you will need to confirm that the study has been approved and enclose details of the approval.

Research involving human participants is governed by principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, the Nuremberg Code, and the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS), all of which set out requirements with regard to the rights and safety of research participants and standards for research design and conduct.

The Academy requires researchers to have the relevant regulatory and ethical approvals in place before the relevant research begins, although you may apply for funding before this. In the event of an award being made, commencement of any research involving human participants will be subject to these approvals being in place and sent to the Academy.

Does your proposal involve the use of human tissue or subjects? *

Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you select 'Yes', it is mandatory to complete all of the relevant questions on the 'Use of human tissue or subjects' page.

Page 12: Outputs management, sharing and subsidy control

To maintain research integrity, institutions and researchers must ensure research outputs are preserved so that results can be verified and data reused in the future. The Academy expects all award holders to maximise the availability of research outputs.

You should consider your approach for managing and sharing research outputs at the research proposal stage. The Academy will review those plans as part of the funding decision.

We do not have a set format for data management and sharing plans. You can structure your plan in a manner most appropriate to the proposed research. The information submitted in plans should focus specifically on how the outputs will be managed and shared, detailing the repositories where data will be deposited. However, in considering your approach for outputs management and sharing, you should consider the following questions as briefly and unambiguously as possible.

1. What outputs will your research generate and what outputs will have value to other researchers?
2. Where and when will you make the outputs available?
3. If the research output is of high public interest, how will it be made accessible not only for those in the same or linked field, but also to a wider public audience?
4. Specify whether any limits will be placed on the outputs to be shared, for example, for the purposes of safeguarding commercial interests, personal information, safety or security of the data.
5. How will data and metadata be stored, backed up and preserved, to ensure their long-term value?

6. What resources (to include financial and time) will you require to deliver your plan?	
7. Does your institution have a data repository that is available to you?	
Please provide an outputs management plan *	Please read the scheme guidance notes and outline your plans for the management of your research outputs in a way that will achieve the greatest health benefit, maximising the availability of research data, software and materials with as few restrictions as possible. <i>(300 words max)</i>
Applied research *	The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. As part of this regime, the Academy is required to report to the UK Government on how award funding is being used when applications collaborating with commercial enterprises are awarded. The regime determines the lawfulness of monetary awards made using public sector resources when given to businesses and other organisations that are engaged in economic activity. Do any of the activities proposed in this application involve applied research? If yes, please provide details. <i>(100 words max)</i>
Collaboration with a commercial enterprise *	Are you collaborating with a commercial enterprise as part of the proposed work? Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you select 'Yes', it is mandatory to complete all of the relevant subsequent questions on intellectual property.

Declarations of support

Pages 13 & 14: Overseas lead applicant and UK co-applicant declarations

Applicant declaration *	If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.
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Pages 15 & 16: Head of Department (overseas) and Head of Department (UK) declarations

Head of Department declaration *	If the applicant is the Head of their Department, or if their current supervisor is the Head of Department, an alternative referee must supply the Head of Department's statement, e.g. Head of School / Faculty. If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.
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Page 17: Finance Officer (overseas) declaration

Finance Officer declaration *	If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.
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Page 18: Finance Officer (UK) declaration

Finance Officer declaration *	If you agree with the above statements, please tick the box. By checking this box, you are signing this form electronically. In doing so, you confirm that your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this form.
Due diligence of award *	As per the conditions of the award, the UK Administering Organisation must undertake all appropriate due diligence on the overseas host institution and the lead applicant, as per the UK Administering Organisation's usual policy and must provide a copy of such due diligence to the Academy on request. Please provide an explanation of the due diligence process to be followed to ensure against fraudulent use of funds. (500 words max) Please see the Award terms and conditions for further information.
Due diligence document upload	If you wish to expand on the due diligence process stated above, please upload your document here. Please note that a file upload is to aid the explanation above and not compulsory.