

Annexes to Final Report

Global Challenges Research Fund Evaluation

Module: Research Fairness

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Authors: Valeria Izzi, Becky Murray and Colleen Sullivan

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Disclaimer

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAS	African Academy of Sciences
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Council
ARUA	African Research Universities Alliance
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Co-I	Co-Investigator
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Delivery Partner
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESPA	Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FCO	Foreign & Commonwealth Office
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FLAIR	Future Leaders – Africa Independent Research
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
GESIP	Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Poverty
GtR	Gateway to Research
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IP	Implementing Partner
KFPE	Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMICs	Low and Middle-Income Countries
LSTM	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
MEQ	Main Evaluation Question
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
PI	Principal Investigator
R&I	Research and Innovation

R4D	Research for Development
RC	Research Council
RFI	Research Fairness Initiative
RRC	Rethinking Research Collaborative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TGI	The George Institute for Global Health IndiaUK United Kingdom
UKCDR	UK Campaign for Digital Rights
UKRI	UK Research & Innovation
UKSA	United Kingdom Space Agency
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 1: Highlights from literature review

Three literature reviews were conducted by the Fairness module in the early stages of Phase 1a – one with a global focus and two with a regional focus on Africa (by Afidep) and South Asia (by Athena Infonomics). The literature findings served to refine our coding frameworks and interview topic guides.

Box 1. Note on terminology

We use the word '**partnership**' to refer to formal collaborations, for which the institutions are typically named in project documentation and receive funding. This can include academic institutions as well as other research partners (e.g. NGOs). '**Stakeholder engagement**' is used as an umbrella term to refer to the involvement of non-academic stakeholders at various stages of the research process and for research uptake and use. We pay particular attention to the involvement of **local communities** because of the distinctive theoretical, practical and ethical issues that such engagement pose in relation to R4D.

Formal research partnerships

Equitable and fair research partnerships between institutions in the global North and the global South are widely regarded as critical in ODA-funded Research for Development (R4D).

The rationale for these collaborations responds to arguments that are *normative* (i.e. it is 'the right thing to do' for research to redress inequitable global systems of knowledge); *instrumental* (i.e. collaborations lead to better research as well as greater potential for research uptake and impact) and *statutory* (i.e. 'it needs to be done' as part of ODA requirements).^[1] In order to yield these benefits, North–South partnerships should be built on mutual understanding and trust, and reflect the different partners' views, values and priorities. Achieving fairness in partnerships goes beyond good intentions: it requires a deliberate effort and well-defined priorities, as well as significant skills, time and resources. Many argue that, to date, partners in Southern countries have lagged behind in their ability to benefit from research partnerships.^[2]

Asymmetries of power among partners, along with operational conditions and the pressure to 'deliver' under tight timelines, often create disincentives for fairness. The typical division of labour of research collaborations sees Northern partners responsible for the design of research questions and methods as well as for presenting and publishing results, while Southern researchers are most active in the data collection stage and are often relegated to the role of 'fixers' or 'research Sherpas'^[3], whose main role is to provide access to, and facilitate interaction with, local stakeholders and communities.^[4]

Funding and contractual arrangements often penalise Southern institutions. In most R4D partnerships, the main contractual arrangements are between the funder and the lead institutions in the global North. Operational conditions posed by academic institutions and funding bodies can run counter to stated aims of fairness. Northern institutions are required to demonstrate *due diligence* when it comes to transferring funds to their Southern partners. These requirements may be too stringent (e.g. in terms of documentation required and the timeline to provide it) for smaller institutions and NGOs. Northern institutions themselves

have often little flexibility in modifying these conditions, which generally derive from terms and conditions in the primary funding agreement.^[5]

Academics are faced with the same challenges that development practitioners have confronted for some time, and there is significant potential for cross-learning among the two communities. At the same time, some of the challenges are distinctly academic. In particular, **appropriation of local data is an emerging concern in the reflection on North–South research partnerships**. While the increasing emphasis on data sharing and open data can have benefits for Southern researchers, there are also concerns that it could result in a ‘data drain’: structural inequalities between research systems may mean that academics in the global South are not in a position to translate data into publications at the same speed as their partners in the global North, at least when it comes to the type of journals favoured by the Northern research publication industry.^[6]

Box 2. The Bukavu Series

A recent initiative to reflect on partnerships from a Southern perspective is the Bukavu Series – a collaboration between Ghent University and Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium and the Bukavu-based Angaza Institute and *Groupe d’Etudes sur les Conflits et la Sécurité Humaine*. Through a series of workshops in the Eastern Congolese city of Bukavu, started in early 2018, Congolese and European researchers sought to explore the ethical issues that arise when Northern researchers engage colleagues from the global South to carry out fieldwork in conflict and post-conflict settings. The resulting blog series (recently collected into a book) explores issues such as the lack of visibility of local researchers and their under-representation in publications, the lack of consideration of personal risks and trauma that Southern researchers face in the field, and cultural differences and specificities and how those affect research approaches, methods and outcomes.

Source: <https://bukavuseries.com>

Significant reflection has gone into devising tools and frameworks that partners can use to ensure that their collaborations are equitable. A number of guidelines and recommendations have been developed by different organisations in an effort to infuse fairness principles into partnership design and implementation.^[7] It has been noted, however, that few of these frameworks explore partnerships from the perspective of Southern partners, and even when these views are taken into account, ‘this is often limited to leading partners and neglects the viewpoints of all actors within the partnership, including students, grant makers, Research Councils and administrative departments’.^[8]

While frameworks that focus on individual partnerships are useful, **ultimately North–South partnerships reflect global power differentials that are far beyond the influence of research teams and their institutions.** At worst, research collaborations – particularly if established with elite institutions in the South – can act as a smokescreen, shifting attention away from the roles of funding systems and other structures that perpetuate global inequity in research.

Global North and global South are not monoliths. There are institutions in the global South that have privileged access to networks and resources (what Pradeep Narayanan calls ‘a North in the South’), just as there is marginalisation even among Northern researchers and institutions.^[9] There is a risk that a limited number of well-connected institutions may emerge that can show a reliable track record of collaborations as well as meeting due diligence requirements, and which may therefore become even better resourced and connected while the majority of Southern institutions remain at the periphery of these networks.^[10]

The ongoing movement to ‘decolonise the academy’ and ‘decolonise development’ – which has gained momentum during the lifetime of GCRF – has important bearings on how equitable and fair partnerships are conceptualised and promoted. The reflection on equitable and fair partnerships is closely intertwined with broader ethical and epistemic debates about the global political economy of knowledge production (what counts as knowledge, whose knowledge counts).^[11] These concerns go to the core of what we define as ‘research excellence’ and how this related to the incentives for researchers and their institutions.^[12]

Capacity building – if understood in a unilateral (North to South) and technocratic manner – can further reinforce the epistemic privilege of Northern institutions.^[13] Capacity-building support and technology transfer from North to South is commonly stated as an explicit aim of ODA-funded international research partnerships^[14] – yet identification and prioritisation of ‘which’ and ‘whose’ capacities are to be built remains often vague. All too often, capacity building tends to be seen as a one-way channel (Northern researchers building the capacity of Southern researchers/institutions) rather than as a process of mutual learning. The combination of these factors ‘reinforces the politics of knowledge whereby Northern partners design and lead scientific production efforts, while Southern partners are primarily engaged to support (or commence) in-country engagement and have their “capacity built”. This immediately positions Southern partners as effective “recipients”’.^[15]

Covid-19 has served as a ‘wake-up call’ to recognise the limits and potential harm of the way in which research was done. Many R4D projects have suffered disruptions and delays due to Covid-19 and related containment measures. Researchers in the global South have also raised concerns about the deprioritisation of other existing research agendas that are crucial for the global South – such as Malaria or HIV/AIDS.^[16] At the same time, Covid-related travel restrictions are transforming North–South research partnerships. There are many accounts of local researchers are taking leading roles that used to be reserved for their Northern partners. This potentially offers an entry point to reduce power imbalances in the longer term.^[17]

Engagement of stakeholders beyond formal partners

The development of the impact agenda in academia has been paralleled by a rising call for the engagement of non-academic actors in the design and production of knowledge. An underlying assumption for most of R4D is that meaningful collaboration between researchers, research users and ultimate beneficiaries of research will generate more accessible, relevant and credible knowledge, thus increasing the likelihood of its use – and, potentially, reconstituting a ‘social contract’ between science and society.^[18]

Three main rationales are given for engaging non-academic stakeholders in research:

- **Better research (‘knowledge value’):** better-informed problem definition; more pertinent (and more challenging) research questions; better data collection; and a more nuanced understanding of how the research fits into the ‘bigger picture – all resulting in “better”, more relevant research’.
- **Greater research uptake (‘instrumental value’):** the idea here is not only that ‘better research’ will naturally lead to greater research uptake, but, more specifically, that the involvement of particular stakeholders in the research process will constitute effective ‘positioning for use’ of research: in other words, stakeholders are more likely to act on research that they have been involved with, rather than on findings that are ‘disseminated’ to them *ex post*.
- **Transformative knowledge (‘ethical value’):** Critical theorists have long challenged academics to reflect on the ways in which knowledge about development reinforces existing power hierarchies and excludes groups with limited voice from being able to

develop and legitimate their own options.^[19] In this sense, therefore, involving stakeholders beyond academia would be ‘the right thing to do’, from an ethical standpoint, irrespective of its instrumental value. Similarly to ‘rights-based’ research, these views of co-production seek to challenge unequal power relations *in* the research process, while at the same time challenging unequal power relations in society *through* the research process.

While a strong case is made in R4D for engaging non-academic actors throughout the research process, it is also increasingly clear that fairness is not a guarantee in these collaborations. A number of key issues are explored in the literature.

Researchers often do not have sufficient time and resources to meaningfully engage non-academic stakeholders. While in academia the expectation of stakeholders’ engagement is growing, there is not always an appreciation of the time and energy commitments that are required for such processes to be effective and equitable. Thus, the time spent by academics on relationship-building with stakeholders – at the expense of other activities, such as publishing high-quality research – is not always considered a valuable investment career-wise. There are even reputational risks for academics heavily engaged in informing policy, who are sometimes criticised as academic ‘lightweights’.^[20] Prescriptive, ‘tick-box’ approaches may run counter to substantive, more effective engagement with stakeholders.^[21]

Engagement with academics can divert local time and resources from more relevant and/or pressing priorities. Stakeholders in the South (e.g. government officials) are typically under pressure from a multitude of research and development interventions all requiring consultation and engagement; therefore it is important to critically gauge requests for engagement in light of the value it adds to achieving goals and outcomes.^[22] In a similar vein, there is a risk that involving NGOs and community activists in knowledge production processes may divert their time and energy from alternative – and potentially more effective – ways of promoting societal change.

Research findings can be politically divisive. For all its proclaimed benefits, research that is co-produced with various stakeholders can lead to ‘uncomfortable’ findings that contradict the *status quo* and the direction of policy driven by political imperatives. In such cases ‘the position of researchers and policy actors within the networks may be jeopardised. This raises a question of the costs and benefits of researchers being insiders within policy processes, often in an advisory role, or whether they are likely to be more influential by remaining outside. There is no clear answer to this’.^[23] If some influential stakeholders are involved in the process, they may be keen to pick up its findings; but those findings may be biased, compromising both the inherent knowledge value of research, and its value for social transformation. On the other hand, emphasis on transformative knowledge would necessarily be much more focused on the process, and therefore potentially failing to lead to innovative (and publishable) research findings or to translate into actionable results.

The fundamental political question is ‘who should we engage with’. Because involving ‘everyone’ is, in practice, impossible, a real question is: ‘whose voices and experiences, priorities and agendas should be listened to in forging research pathways and trajectories?’^[24] Questions of partnerships and engagement are closely interlinked with questions of epistemological privilege – who ‘knows’ about a specific issue, who has the right to be listened to and to forge agendas – and ultimately, whose reality (and knowledge) counts.^[25] Familiarity with particular jargons and with technology can further position some actors in a privileged position in the process.

A narrative of mutuality, reciprocity and equality underpins the emphasis on stakeholders' engagement, and may lead to a lack of recognition of structural asymmetries of power. As the extensive literature on participatory processes tells us, equality among participants is not self-evident and cannot be taken for granted. Uneven power relations are often present from the start and exogenous to the research process. The way in which the process is shaped can reinforce and legitimise them, *'for example when individual citizens or representatives from community organisations or non-profits are invited to participate in processes of which the scope for participation and the problem framing of a project have already been defined by a narrower set of elite actors. This is further exacerbated by the fact that these elite actors are often paid to participate as part of their professional roles, while the other participants are expected to volunteer their time'*.^[26] In the absence of an awareness and critical engagement, there is a risk of depoliticising power dynamics and thus unintentionally contributing to reinforcing existing unequal power relations.^[27]

Engagement with local communities

The involvement of local communities in research is widely regarded as crucial to the relevance and impact of R4D. However, it raises a number of important fairness issues, which – albeit increasingly recognised – remain at the periphery of discussions about research fairness.

R4D research teams often engage with local communities in the global South in different ways. This engagement can potentially be transformative, but it also amplifies the issues outlined above, given the inherent power differential between the parts. The moral, ethical and social implications arising from such engagement are substantial.^[28]

Time and budget limitations often limit meaningful engagement. The long timeline necessary for establishing relationships of mutual trust with local communities do not fit well with the compressed timeline of most research projects. For example, feeding results back to communities can be seen as a 'minimum condition' for ethical engagement. Where communities have low levels of literacy or low levels of fluency in the official research languages, this requires innovative ways to communicate, beyond the written word. In many cases, however, there are not enough resources in the project budget to fund feedback activities.^[29]

It is often unclear 'what's in it' for the communities. Given the nature of R4D research, in many cases communities are not likely to experience benefits of projects in which they participate in the short term, and not at a scale that they might attribute to the project. Multiple iterations with a community can strengthen the quality and value of research findings, but can also lead to saturation and research fatigue on the part of local participants. At a basic level, this raises the question of **compensation for local communities' participation in research**. There are well-known arguments in favour of and against compensation. On the one hand, community members spend time away from productive activities to engage with researchers – so compensation seems fair. On the other hand, there are concerns that compensation may create expectations in communities as well as causing resentment between those who are selected to participate and those who are not (even when this is the result of random sampling). Compensation may also influence respondents if they believe that certain responses are more likely to provide rewards.^[30]

Community involvement does not lend itself to standardised procedures or ethical reviews. It blurs boundaries around intellectual property and it calls for careful consideration of how various contributions should be acknowledged, attributed and rewarded. The conventional principle of informed consent assumes that 'research participants are individuated subjects who are more-or-less autonomous of social ties and obligations, literate, adult, and

accustomed to relating to others in the context of formal contractual agreements', and may therefore be ill-suited to addressing community-level concerns.^[31] Ethical procedures which focus on informed consent completely bypass larger ethical issues.^[32] Similar considerations apply to the issues of anonymity and safety. Guaranteeing individual anonymity does not automatically mean that no harm will come to the community as a whole. There are clearly difficult decisions to be made: research methods must be transparent and information about the location of the research is often important for the interpretation of the results. Recent years have seen the increasing use of research methods designed specifically to enable researchers to ask sensitive questions and to ensure that confidential information is not linked to any individual respondent.^[33]

Researchers often fail to recognise the diversity and power dynamics within communities.

One key issue is that local priorities are not homogenous but vary according to perspectives and responsibilities of a particular group. Communities are not monoliths, and issues of inclusion and exclusion should be given careful consideration. There is a risk of elite capture of the research process: 'local elites (who are less poor and more influential locally) will tend to capture the attention of outsiders and push their view of "community needs"'. This is an issue that is familiar to development practitioners working on community-driven development projects, but it may not necessarily be on the radar of academic researchers.

Box 3. The San Protocol of Research Ethics

The San peoples of Southern Africa have been the subject of much academic research over centuries. In recent years, San leaders have become increasingly convinced that most academic research on their communities has been neither requested nor useful nor protected in any meaningful way – resulting in dissatisfaction and even outright harm.

In 2017 the South African San finally published the San Code of Research Ethics, the first ethics code developed and launched by an Indigenous population in Africa. The Code requires all researchers intending to engage with San communities to commit to four central values – fairness, respect, care and honesty – as well as to comply with a process of community approval.^[34]

Annex 2: Award sampling strategy

We included two ‘types’ of sample to promote integration across GCRF evaluation modules (a common sample) and to allow module-specific sampling (Fairness-specific sample). These were as follows.

The **common sample** used a stratified random sampling approach to identify awards across the GCRF portfolio, corresponding to the five focus countries and the five focus Challenge Areas agreed in collaboration with BEIS. The aim was to ensure a core set of awards was assessed from each module’s perspective, to help identify connections and crossovers across the modules. All the awards in the common sample were included in the sample for the Fairness review. The common sample provides a representative account of how Fairness issues have been addressed in the GCRF as a whole.

The **Fairness-specific sample** used a purposive and targeted sampling approach to identify awards with particular relevance for the module, as they could showcase ‘best practice’ and/or provide insights into specific challenges and learning. Given the wide variety of degrees and modalities of partnership and stakeholder engagement in the wide GCRF portfolio, we anticipated that good practice and learning would not necessarily emerge spontaneously from a random/stratified sample and will require a more targeted search.

The Fairness-specific sample was generated through a combination of three methods:

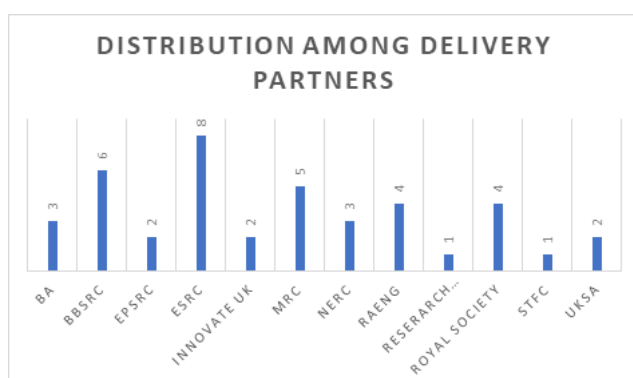
- **Keyword analysis of project abstracts:** The BEIS Tracker did not provide enough information to carry out this targeted search. The primary channel for selecting project was data and topic modelling based on project abstract on Gateway to Research (UKRI project only). Through keyword analysis, identification of projects with high recurrence of fairness-related words (*fair**, *equit**, *partnership**, *collaborat**). The top-scoring projects were included in the Fairness sample; however, the sample was adjusted to avoid over-representation of any one Research Council. Projects from any one RC were capped at 4.
- **Funding calls analysis:** We conducted an analysis of funding calls (coding in MaxQDA & a basic rubric assessment) and selected two funding calls as particularly relevant for the emphasis placed on partnerships and stakeholder engagement. These were (1) UKRI Interdisciplinary Research Hubs, to address intractable challenges faced by developing countries, and (2) UKRI Growing Research Capabilities. Two projects were selected randomly for each call (using an online random number generator).
- **Open call** for interesting fairness experiences, by which GCRF project teams, delivery partners, and other key informants nominate projects for potential showcase experiences of partnership and engagement. The Open Call also served to rebalance the Fairness sample, as the previous two methods returned awards only from UKRI/Research Councils. A simple **online form** (using SurveyMonkey) was developed for GCRF project teams, DPs and other key informants to nominate projects for potential showcase experiences of partnership and engagement. The form was brief, and required a maximum of five minutes to fill out. The accompanying message emphasised the learning dimension of the evaluation and the interest of the team to hear about different types of experiences that can help strengthen GCRF’s approach to partnership and engagement. We proactively engaged DPs that were non-represented or under-represented in our sample. Seven awards were nominated through the Open Call. The Open Call announcement and questionnaire are provided in **Annex 3.4**.

From the above methods, we derived a sample of 50 awards. Of those, 14 declined, were unresponsive or could not be reached. Those were replaced using a like-for-like reserve list. Our final sample had 48 awards, of which 22 were part of the cross-module sample and the remaining 26 were in the Fairness-specific sample.

Sample characteristics

48 projects in total were sampled for the Fairness module. Most of the awards were research grants (43 out of 48). The sample included projects from a range of DPs, as seen in Figure A1 below. The delivery partner with the highest number of projects was ESRC (8), and the DPs with the lowest number of projects were STFC and Research England, each with 1.

Figure 1: Figure A1: Distribution among delivery partners



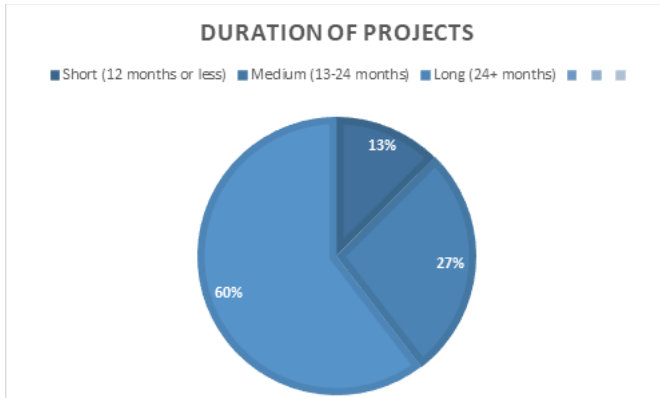
The projects sampled addressed a range of Challenge Areas, seen in Table A1. The most common challenge area was 'Secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and agriculture', with 23% of the projects. The least common Challenge Areas were 'Clean air, water and sanitation' and 'Sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources', each with 2% of the projects.

Table A1: Challenge Areas

Challenge area	%
Clean air, water and sanitation	2
Inclusive and equitable quality education	6
Reduce conflict and promote peace, justice and humanitarian action	10
Reduce poverty and inequality, including gender inequalities	10
Resilience and action on short-term environmental shocks and long-term environmental change	15
Secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and agriculture	23
Sustainable cities and communities	6
Sustainable health and well-being	21
Sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources	2
Not known	4

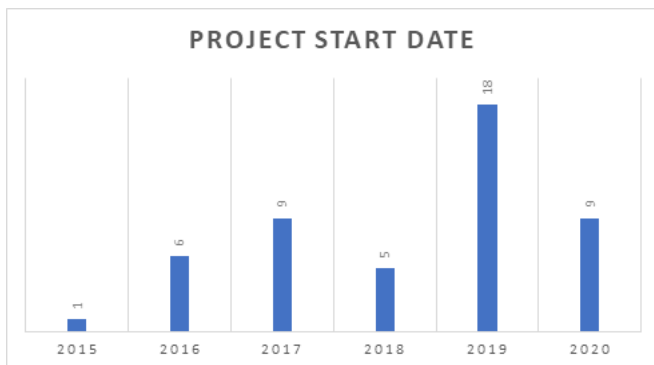
The duration of the projects was categorised as: short (12 months or less), medium (13–24 months), and long (24+ months). The vast majority (60%) of the projects had a long duration, lasting over two years, and only 13% were short, lasting less than a year.

Figure 2: Figure A2: Duration of projects



85% of the projects began in 2017 or later, with the largest proportion (38%) beginning in 2019.

Figure 3: Figure A3: Project start date



Annex 3: Research tools used

Annex 3.1 Topic guide: strategic level (BEIS & DPs)

Interview record – Fairness

This template contains questions for the Fairness module and also the priority questions for each of the three other modules. The interviewer should adapt this document for each interview, only asking questions for the additional module identified in the 'DP Interviews Master list' spreadsheet.

Interviewee(s)	Organisation
Interviewer(s)	Date & time of interview
General notes (e.g. <i>interview was short, participant was distracted, etc.</i>)	

General introduction:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are evaluators from Itad, RAND and Digital Science – a UK-based consortium of research organisations with specialisms in evaluation - We have been commissioned by BEIS to carry out an evaluation of GCRF - The purpose of this interview is to understand... [tweak for each interview] - The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes 	
Consent:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As this is an independent evaluation, all interviews are confidential, anonymised and non-attributable. Everything you tell us will be confidential, and we take care to maintain anonymity in our data protocols. However, we would like to use one or two anonymous and non-attributed quotes from this interview, if relevant. - Do you have any questions about the research, or concerns you would like to raise before we start? - Do you consent to be interviewed on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to be interviewed?	Yes / No
Recording consent [only if you choose to record]:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We would also like to record the interview to facilitate note-taking and later analysis. - The recording would not be accessed by anyone beyond our team and would be deleted following analysis. - Do you consent to being recorded on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to be interviewed?	Yes / No / N/A

QUESTIONS

Intro: we are looking at fairness as it relates to equitable and fair partnerships between Northern and Southern academic partners, but also – more in general – at fairness in GCRF interaction with non-academic actors (including local communities), and the overall context where this engagement takes place.

Equitable and fair academic partnerships

1. How has the thinking around equitable and fair partnerships evolved in GCRF since its beginning?
2. What are, in your opinion, the main ways in which GCRF ensures equity and fairness in engagement with Southern partners?

3. Do you think there is a 'common approach' – or are there differences among DPs?
4. Are there particular challenges that you are aware of in relation to fairness and equity in partnerships? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prompt: is there a potential tension between engaging with 'tried and tested' partners – thus ensuring effectiveness – and broadening the range of potential partners – to enhance 'contextual fairness'?</i>

Fairness in engagement with non-academic partners

1. Beyond academic partnerships, how has the thinking around engagement with non-academic stakeholders evolved since GCRF's beginning? <i>(Note to interviewer: this refers to involvement of non-academic stakeholders as partners in the research process, as well as their engagement in research dissemination, uptake and use)</i>
2. Has there been a reflection on how to ensure fairness when engaging with other stakeholders? (Can you give examples?)

Fairness in engagement with local communities

1. Has the issue of fair and ethic engagement with local communities emerged in GCRF?
2. Have ethical guidelines provided by individual institutions proved appropriate?
3. Is there a need for/effort towards GCRF-wide guidance on how to engage ethically and responsibly with local communities?

Next steps

1. Any suggestions on additional contacts/additional documentation on fairness?

Annex 3.2: Fairness module – document review and coding framework

Initial screening

An initial screening is done in the Excel file '**Cross-Module Data Log**' that can be found in the Cross-Module Data folder in Teams ([this link](#)).

Any document rated 3 or up will need to be coded.

Adding new documents

If you come across a new document that is relevant for Fairness, add it in the Cross-Module Data Log and save it in the relevant sub-folder in the Cross-Module Data folder.

Variables

There are six variables to add for each document:

1. Level of aggregation: A, B, C or D

- Level A: BEIS Fund management
- Level B: Delivery partners (DPs) level
- Level C: Programme level
- Level D: Award level

NB: focus will be on Level A and B in the initial phase of coding

2. Organisation (BEIS, UKRI, MRC, etc.)

3. DP group (if the organisation is a DP). The Portfolio Analysis has a table showing which DPs fall into which group. Choose from:

- RCs & UKRI
- National academies
- HEFCs

4. Date (enter the year of publication). If the document isn't dated, it's worth doing a really quick google to see if you can find the date from the webpage it was downloaded from. If you can't find it easily, just put a question mark in this column.

5. Type of document:

- Strategic document
- Report
- Funding call documentation
- Analysis/study (generic)
- Analysis/study (partnership-specific)
- Evaluation
- Comms document (e.g. brochure, info sheet, etc.)

6. If the document is 'funding call documentation', further specify the **type of funding**:

- GROW
- HUBS
- Research grant

- Fellowships
- Partnership-building/Networking funding (e.g. conference, symposia)
- Innovation – discovery/development/pilot/scaling
- Innovation – commercialisation

Analytical framework	What to code	Codes and sub-codes
<p>To what extent have considerations of fairness been reflected in GCRF strategy, agenda-setting, vision of impact, and decision-making structures?</p>	<p>Level A – strategic documents Level B – strategic documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnership with Southern institution (generic) ▪ Partnership with Southern academic institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic partnerships ▪ Engagement with non-academic actors in the global South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ policymakers ○ practitioners ○ private sector/business ○ NGOs ○ local communities ▪ Equity and fairness in partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fairness of opportunities ○ fairness of process ○ fairness of benefits ▪ Capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ individual ○ institutional ▪ Challenges related to partnerships (obstacles to fairness in partnerships) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative requirements (e.g. excess of bureaucracy, different admin systems, etc.) ○ Capacity-related challenges ○ Funding-related challenges ▪ Challenges related to stakeholders’ engagement ▪ Acknowledgement of potential negative effects of research ▪ Environmental impact of research (e.g. carbon footprint)

Annex 3.3: Topic guide – programme-level partnerships

This template serves to guide the interview on programme partnerships (Royal Society/AAS and UKRI/ARUA). **The interviewer should adapt this document in advance of each interview, only selecting the questions that are relevant for specific programme partnerships and interviewee(s).**

Interviewee(s)	Organisation
Interviewer(s)	Date & time of interview
General notes (e.g. interview was short, participant was distracted, etc.)	

INTRODUCTION

General introduction:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A UK-based consortium of research organisations with specialisms in evaluation, led by Itad, has been commissioned by BEIS to carry out an evaluation of GCRF. ▪ This evaluation has four modules: relevance, fairness, gender and social inclusion, and Management review. ▪ As part of the Fairness module, we are looking at equitable and fair partnerships between Northern and Southern institutions. We are looking at partnerships at the level of individual awards but also at the programme level. ▪ We have selected this programme partnership [<i>insert name of partnership here</i>] because [insert] ▪ The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes. 	
Consent:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As this is an independent evaluation, all interviews are confidential, anonymised and non-attributable. Everything you tell us will be confidential, and your name will not be used in any of our reports. ▪ Do you have any questions about the research, or concerns you would like to raise before we start? ▪ Do you consent to be interviewed on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to be interviewed?	Yes / No
Recording consent [only if you choose to record]:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We would also like to record the interview to facilitate note-taking and later analysis. ▪ The recording would not be accessed by anyone beyond our team and would be deleted following analysis. ▪ Do you consent to being recorded on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to be interviewed?	Yes / No / N/A

QUESTIONS

Questions for GCRF delivery partners (UKRI & Royal Society) – GENERAL

How has the thinking around equitable and fair partnerships evolved in GCRF since its beginning?
What are, in your opinion, the main ways in which GCRF ensures equity and fairness in engagement with Southern partners?

Are there particular challenges that you are aware of in relation to fairness and equity in partnerships? • <i>Prompt: is there a potential tension between engaging with 'tried and tested' partners – thus ensuring effectiveness – and broadening the range of potential partners – to enhance 'contextual fairness'?</i>

Questions for AAS & ARUA – general

What do you see as the main challenges to achieve fair and equitable North/South research partnerships?
What steps could funders take to address these challenges?

Questions for UKRI – specific on the partnership with ARUA

What were the main reasons to establish the partnerships with ARUA? Why was ARUA selected as a partner?
What are your views on how the partnerships went so far? What were the key challenges that emerged?
Are there key lessons from the UKRI/ARUA partnerships that should be considered for similar collaborations in the future?

Question for the Royal Society – specific on partnership with the AAS

What were the main reasons to establish the partnerships with the African Academy of Science? Why was AAS selected as a partner?

What are your views on how the partnerships went so far? What were the key challenges that emerged?
Are there key lessons from the Royal Society/AAS partnerships that should be considered for similar collaborations in the future?

Question for ARUA – specific on the partnership with UKRI

What were the main reasons to establish the partnerships with UKRI? What were the main expectations that ARUA had from this partnerships?
What are your views on how the partnerships went so far? What were the key challenges that emerged?
Are there key lessons from the UKRI/ARUA partnerships that should be considered for similar collaborations in the future?

Question for AAS – specific on partnerships with Royal Society

What were the main reasons to establish the partnerships with the Royal Society? What were the main expectations that AAS had from this partnership?
What are your views on how the partnerships went so far? What were the key challenges that emerged?
Are there key lessons from the Royal Society/AAS partnerships that should be considered for similar collaborations in the future?

Next steps (for all interviews)

Any suggestions on additional contacts/additional documentation on fairness?

Annex 3.4: Topic guide – award-level interviews

Interview record: Fairness – awards

Note: this topic guide applies to Research Grants only.

Guidance for interviewers

- Please ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the project prior to the interview, through desk review of all available documentation. This will enable you to focus the interview on Fairness-specific questions rather than on the general aim/activities of the project.
- Review and adapt the questions before the interview as needed. It is recommended that you develop a tailored template prior to each interview. Please get in touch with Valeria if you are not sure how to adapt the template to a particular award.
- Please ensure that your notes are clearly written in full sentences and make sense to someone who has not been involved in the interview.

Interviewee(s)	Institution
Role in the project (e.g. PI, Co-I, partner...)	Country
Interviewer(s)	Date & time of interview
General notes (e.g. interview was short, participant was distracted, etc.)	

INTRODUCTION

General introduction:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UK-based consortium of research organisations with specialisms in evaluation, led by Itad, has been commissioned by BEIS to carry out an evaluation of GCRF. • This evaluation has four modules: relevance, fairness, gender and social inclusion, and Management review. • As part of the Fairness module, led by LTS International, we are looking at a sample of 50 GCRF awards. Your project has been selected as part of our sample. • The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes. 	
Consent:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As this is an independent evaluation, all interviews are confidential, anonymised and non-attributable. Everything you tell us will be confidential, and there will be no attribution of quotes or opinions. • Do you have any questions about the research, or concerns you would like to raise before we start? • Do you consent to be interviewed on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to be interviewed?	Yes

Recording consent [only if you choose to record]:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would also like to record the interview to facilitate note-taking and later analysis. • The recording would not be accessed by anyone beyond our team and would be deleted following analysis. • Do you consent to being recorded on this basis? 	
Did interviewee(s) consent to the interview being recorded?	Yes

QUESTIONS

FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS
<p>Talk me through the main formal partnerships of this project. How did they come about? <i>For UK partners: how did you choose your partner(s) in the country/region?</i> <i>Difference between educational institutions and NGO partners?</i></p>
<p>At the design stage, what was envisaged as the main contribution that each of the partners would bring to the project? Did the expectations change in the course of the project? Have these expectations been realised?</p>
<p>From your perspective, what were the main ways in which the project promoted fairness and equity in partnerships? <i>Can you give examples?</i> <i>Prompt: you can ask about how the project ensured that partners were given a voice in the shaping of the project and partnership? How was fairness ensured during the process? What steps were taken to ensure fair benefit-sharing among partners?</i></p>
<p>Did you find that there were enough time and resources in the project design phase to ensure that all partners' perspectives were included? <i>Prompt: reflect in particular on the time frame of the GCRF application process</i></p>
<p>Did the project involve capacity building? If so, please tell me about it.</p>
<p>Is there a formal partnership agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or similar document? If so, can it be shared? <i>IMPORTANT: only ask this question if the agreement/MoU has not been already shared.</i></p>

<p>What have been the main challenges in the partnership(s)? <i>Prompt: you can ask about how the project ensured that partners were given a voice in the shaping of the project and partnership? How was fairness ensured during the process? What steps were taken to ensure fair benefit-sharing among partners?</i></p>
<p>Is there anything else that the funders could have done to promote equity and fairness in partnerships?</p>
<p>What do you think are the key lessons emerging from this project in relation to fair and equitable partnerships?</p>
<p>ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES</p>
<p>How did the project engage with other stakeholders, beyond formal partners? <i>(this can include, for example, government, NGOs, community groups)</i> <i>Prompt: you can ask about how the project ensured that partners were given a voice in the shaping of the project and partnership? How was fairness ensured during the process? What steps were taken to ensure fair benefit-sharing among partners?</i></p>
<p>What were the main challenges related to the involvement of non-formal partners and local communities?</p>
<p>What were the main lessons related to the involvement of non-formal partners and local communities?</p>
<p>Did the project share its findings with non-formal partners and local communities? How? <i>(For projects not yet completed: is the project planning to share its findings with local communities? How?)</i> <i>What do you know about the use of findings by non-formal partners and local communities?</i></p>
<p>Suggestions for additional contacts <i>(note: we would ideally like to talk to at least one in-country researcher/in-country partner)</i></p>

Annex 3.5: Award analysis guidance and write-up template

Award analysis write-up

Guidance for analysts on using the template

The template has been designed to help you organise the award-level information and analysis in a way that is, as much as possible, consistent across awards and analysts. We do not expect that you will necessarily be able to fill all the boxes for all the awards.

Guidance on the Fairness analytical framework

The analytical framework is adapted from the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)'s [Research Fairness Initiative](#). It also builds on insights gained in the [Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation \(ESPA\)](#) programme, which led to the development of the [ESPA partnership equity framework](#). The framework has been further tailored to the specific needs of the GCRF Evaluation.

Fairness of opportunities: Broadly speaking, this refers to what happens **before the research starts**. It concerns how different priorities and needs are taken into account in the stage of research design and partnership-building. Here, you would look at things like:

- How did the idea for the research originally come about? Was the original idea adapted to account for inputs from partners, and to respond to their needs, priorities and practical constraints?
- Was there time devoted to partners coming together? *Note: this is particularly important if this is the first collaboration of the partners. Also, the timeline of the application process plays an important role here, and can potentially constrain the fairness of opportunities in the pre-research phase.*
- How were the roles of various partners determined?

Fairness of process: This refers to what happens **during the research**, and as it relates to that particular research project. You would look at things like:

- Are there clear and transparent procedures for accountability and for everyone to have a voice?
- Is there a partnership agreement or similar document? Have they been formulated so as to reflect the needs and priorities of various partners? Do they include mechanisms and processes to resolve differences and conflict between partners?
- Do we have examples of differences/tensions/conflicts between partners, and how they have been resolved?
- Was there dedicated time during the research process for partners to touch base, get to know each other, exchange views, discuss emerging issues?
- How did the financial conditions work out for various partners?

Fairness of benefits: This refers to the benefits that accrue from the collaboration **after the research**, both for individual researchers and for their institutions. These benefits go beyond the specific research project and they can include:

- Publications, conference papers and other academic outputs that strengthen the profile of the researcher and the institution;
- Access to networks;
- Increased capacity;
- Enhanced capacity/positioning to apply for further funding.

Guidance for rubric assessment

The rubrics include two separate assessments:

1. A rating of the criterion according to the scale of values. Here you are trying to give 'your best guess', on the basis of the evidence available, on which of the ratings the award best fits into.
2. A rating of the confidence that you have in the strength of the evidence to substantiate your claim. This is based on how strongly the evidence emerges from your individual sources, as well as the degree to which you were able to triangulate these claims.

Rubric explanation:

Absent	Beginning	Developing	Good	Exemplary
The award does not have any partner	The award has partnership but there is little or no consideration of fairness or equity	Attention is being paid to fairness and equity in at least one of the three dimensions	Attention is being paid to fairness and equity in at least two of the three dimensions	All partners feel that the partnership is fair and equitable; attention is being paid to all three dimensions

Confidence in evidence:

Red – poor evidence	Only one source OR multiple sources but scant/inconsistent findings
Amber – moderate evidence	At least two sources (or three sources but no Southern source) and reasonably robust/consistent findings
Green – good evidence	3+ Sources – including both the PI and at least one Southern sources – as well as robust and consistent findings

Award analysis write-up template for Fairness sample

This template outlines the structure to write-up the analysis of each award included in the core sample. For the unique ID codes, the author should refer to the 'IP Interviews Master list' spreadsheet.

Author:
INTERVIEW INFORMATION
Unique IDs of interviewees
DOCUMENT REVIEW INFORMATION
Please list the documents that have been reviewed for this write-up
AWARD INFORMATION
Award name
Unique BEIS ID
PI name
Lead institution
Primary research partners
Start – end dates
Total budget
Delivery Partner
Funding call
Type of awards (<i>e.g. research grant, training grant, fellowship, networking grant</i>)
SUMMARY OF KEY FAIRNESS FINDINGS (approx. 200 words)
Notes about data and methodological limitations (including any suggestions for additional documentation/information for the next phase of the evaluation)
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE AWARD
<i>Please provide a short narrative describing the award, including objectives, country(ies) of focus, intended impact(s), if known (approx. 200 words)</i>

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RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP – this section relates to partners

Origins of the partnership – please describe how the partnership came about, whether the partners had already collaborated before, how the partners ‘chose’ each other
Fairness dimensions – please give details on each of the dimensions of fairness, based on available evidence. (Details on each of the dimensions are included in the Annex.) In case of consortia and multiple partnership, please specify which partnership you are referring to
Fairness of opportunities (before research)
Fairness of process (during research)
Fairness of benefits (after research)

RUBRIC ASSESSMENT

Rubric assessment (i.e. absent/beginning/developing/good/exemplary – see guidance for details)
Confidence in evidence (i.e. red, amber, green – see guidance for details)
Rationale for judgement (please give details on how you reached your conclusions)

ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS OTHER THAN FORMAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Please describe the award’s engagement with wider stakeholders including, where applicable, local communities, including any fairness consideration that emerged.

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IMPLICATIONS OF Covid-19

For projects active during Covid-19, please describe any effect that the pandemic had on the award (including how different partners were affected, and any change to the project due to Covid-19).

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Key conclusions and implications for the evaluation

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'So what?' Emerging recommendations for funders

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Annex 4: List of reviewed funding calls

Funding call	Delivery partner	Year (by closing date)
(Re)Thinking the Off-Grid City: Human Infrastructure Interaction in the context of urban crises and urban changes (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	UKRI	2019
Cultures, Behaviours, and Histories of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Partnership Award, Call 1 (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	UKRI	2019
Health and Context Call (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	MRC	2019
UKRI GCRF Collective Programme Climate Resilience Knowledge Manager call (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	UKRI	2020
UKRI GCRF Collective Programme Climate Resilience Network Development Call (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	UKRI	2020
UKRI GCRF Education as a Driver of Development Research Grants (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	ESRC	2019
UKRI GCRF Equitable Resilience call for ensuring resilience enhances the Sustainable Development Goals Call specification (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	ESRC	2019
Sustainable Energy and International Development: Beyond Technology (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	UKRI	2019
Network Plus Call – Education in Conflict and Crisis Research (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	AHRC	2019
Network Plus Call – Preventing Conflict, Building Sustainable and Inclusive Peace (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	AHRC	2019
Network Plus Call Protection in Contexts of Conflict and Displacement (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	AHRC	2019
A Combined Food Systems Approach to Scaling Up Interventions to Address the Double Burden of Malnutrition (UKRI GCRF Collective Programme)	BBSRC	2019
GCRF Challenge Clusters	UKRI	2019
Development-based approaches to Protracted Displacement	UKRI	2019
Digital Innovation for Development in Africa (DIDA)	UKRI	2019
Global Engagement Networks	UKRI	2019
Global Impact Accelerator Account (GIAA)	UKRI	2018
Global Research Translation Awards	UKRI	2019

GROW	UKRI	2016
GCRF Networking Grants	UKRI	2019, 2020
GCRF/Newton Fund Agile Call to Respond to Covid-19	UKRI	2020
Multi-hazards & Systemic Risks	UKRI	2019
Network Plus Call for Gender and Intersectionality and for Education as a Driver of Sustainable Development	UKRI	2019
AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme GCRF	AHRC	2020
Area-Focused Network Plus Call	AHRC	2017
Conflict Intersections Global Partnership Development Award	AHRC	2020
Creative Economy	AHRC	2016
Development Grants UKRI GCRF Agriculture	AHRC	2019
Education in Conflict and Protracted Crises	AHRC	2018
Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement	AHRC	2016
GCRF: Cultures, Behaviours, and Histories of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Partnership Award	AHRC	2019
Translating Cultures and Care for the Future Research Innovation Awards	AHRC	2016
Urgency Grants Pilot	AHRC	2020
Urgency Grants Scheme Highlight Notice for Innovation Awards and Case studies on the Impact of Covid-19 on Persons with Disabilities	AHRC	2020
EU-India platform for the social sciences and humanities funding call (EQUip)	ESRC	2017
GCRF Foundation Awards for Global Agriculture and Food Systems Research – Invite Only	BBSRC (with MRC, ESRC, AHRC and NERC)	2017
International Wheat Yield Partnership Call	BBSRC	2016
Responsive Mode	BBSRC	2015
Follow-on Funding	BBSRC	2021
GCRF Foundation Awards: Global Infections and Non-Communicable Diseases 2016	MRC	2017
GCRF Global Multimorbidity Seed Funding	MRC	2019
Health Systems Research Initiate Call	MRC	2016
Joint Global Health Trials Scheme	MRC	2014
Joint Health Research Initiative Call	MRC	2015
Understanding the mechanistic links between nutrition and non-communicable diseases in LMIC	MRC	2019
GCRF Call in Networks for Vaccine R&D	MRC	2017
Call for research in global multimorbidity – seed funding	MRC	2019
GCRF: Building Resilience	NERC	2016
Tackling global development challenges through physical sciences research	EPSRC	2019
Towards Engineering Grand Challenges: Network and Multidisciplinary Research Consortia Call	EPSRC	2015
Challenge-led Grants Scheme	Royal Society	2019
Future Leaders –African Independent Research (FLAIR) Fellowship	Royal Society	2021
International Collaboration Award	Royal Society	2020
GCRF Africa Catalyst Sustainable Infrastructure	RAEng	2020
Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation	RAEng	2018
Higher Education Partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa	RAEng	2019
Sustainable Development Programme Scheme Notes	British Academy	2018

Youth Futures Programme	British Academy	2019
GCRF Challenge-led Grants	British Academy	2019
Heritage, Dignity and Violence Programme Scheme Notes	British Academy	2019
Cities and Infrastructure	British Academy	2017
Early Childhood Education Scheme	British Academy	2019
Education and Learning in Crises	British Academy	2020
Agri-Tech Catalyst Round 8	Innovate UK	2019
GCRF Belmont Forum: Disaster Risk, Resilience and Relief	UK contributed to Belmont Forum through GCRF	2019
International Partnership Programme	UKSA	2018, 2019, 2020
QR GCRF	Research England	2018
STFC GCRF	STFC	2018

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[@ItadLtd](https://twitter.com/ItadLtd)

mail@itad.com

Itad Ltd

Preece House
Davigdor Road Hove,
East Sussex UK
BN3 1RE

+44 (0) 1273 765250

Itad Inc

c/o Open Gov Hub
1100 13th St NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC, 20005
United States

+1 (301) 814 1492