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Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance for International Science Partnerships Fund – International Collaboration Awards

Introduction

This document provides guidance on Royal Society application finances, cost eligibility and organisation funding rules. This guidance applies to the following Royal Society programmes:

- ISPF – International Collaboration Awards

For other [Royal Society programmes](#) please see the appropriate guidance documents.

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1 General Information

The following funding rules only apply to new applications from September 2023.

The finance section of the application should provide a breakdown of costs associated with undertaking the grant as described in the proposal. These grants do **not** fund Full Economic Costing (FEC). Support may be requested for both the UK and overseas partners. The Royal Society will fund the following costs and rates:

Cost Category	Royal Society Contribution	
	UK Host Organisation	Overseas Host Organisation
Permitted		
Directly Incurred Staff costs * (excluding Principal / Co-Investigator salaries/time)	100%	100%
Other Directly Incurred costs * such as travel, consumables, and small items of equipment (less than £10,000) (excluding specific costs listed below)	100%	100%
Directly Allocated costs * (excluding Principal / Co- Investigator salaries/time and Estate costs)	100%	100%
Not Permitted **		
Principal / Co- Investigator salaries/time	-	-
PhD studentships and fees	-	-
Items of equipment above £10,000	-	-
Purchase/hire/running costs of vehicles if necessary for the project exceeding £10,000	-	-
Estate costs	-	-
Indirect costs/Overheads	-	-

* for definitions and more detail on eligible costs under each heading see section 4 and 5 below.

** for definitions and more detail on ineligible costs see section 7 below.

Applicants should consult their organisation's finance department for the appropriate figures to include within their application finances.

Resources requested must be appropriate for the activities proposed, will require justification and must demonstrate value for money.

The Royal Society will fund grant applications from UK based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCI) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs).

Payments will be made to the UK host organisation and the UK host organisation will be responsible for issuing appropriate collaboration agreements and passing on any money due to their overseas partner organisation(s).

Payments will be released in line with the requested annual values within the application. The Royal Society recommends that applicants spread research expenses equally across the grant duration, although we will consider alternative payment schedules. The Royal Society reserves the right to amend the phasing of payments where it is deemed necessary.

Further itemisation of costs and methods of calculation may be requested to support the application before an award is made.

Appropriate sub-contracts must be put in place for any element of the grant which is to be paid to another organisation.

All applications are expected to have appropriate partner organisation input into the finance section of the application form.

Applicants are to apply the funding rules listed below to anticipated partner organisation costs.

2 Grant Funding Caps and Inflation

Each Royal Society programme will allow a maximum value that may be applied for. The International Collaboration Awards has a total value of £225,000 (£75,000 per year) from the Royal Society.

For applications that include a Least Developed Country (LDC): UK-Brazil or UK-South Africa applications that also include an LDC can apply for an additional £75,000 (£25,000 per year) to cover LDC partner costs (i.e. the maximum grant value that can be applied for is £300,000 (£100,000 per year). Applicants are not limited to only spending £25,000 of the annual maximum grant value on LDC partner if they wish to spend more.

Within this maximum value, a reasonable level of inflation to all grant costings should be applied. The Society reserves the right to reduce the levels of inflation applied if it does not consider the rate applied to be reasonable.

3 Information on different types of organisations

3.1 Host UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), UK Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCIs) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs)

The Royal Society will fund eligible costs for host UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), UK Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCIs) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs). This is the organisation at which some or all of the research funded by the award will be carried out and employs the UK lead applicant. Such costs will be provided at the funding rate of 100% of the direct costs. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove costs that are deemed ineligible or that do not represent value for money.

3.2 Host Overseas Organisations

The Royal Society will fund eligible costs for the host overseas organisation. This is the overseas HEI or not-for-profit research institute at which some or all of the research funded by the award will be carried out and employs the Overseas lead applicant(s). Such costs will be provided at the funding rate of

100% of the direct costs. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove costs that are deemed ineligible or that do not represent value for money.

4 Directly Incurred

Costs may be requested under Directly Incurred if they meet the general requirement that they are grant-specific, auditable costs. Principal / Co-Investigator salaries / time are not permitted as a cost.

4.1 Directly Incurred Staff

4.1.1 Other research staff (non-Principal / Co-Investigators)

Other staff (if applicable) can be charged to a grant as Directly Incurred (DI) if their time spent on the grant is auditable, this includes individuals who are either contracted to work 100% on the award or where timesheets are used.

The Royal Society will cover contributions to other staff salaries and any associated on-costs at the UK or overseas host organisation commensurate with skills, responsibilities, expertise, and experience. It is expected that the requested basic salary contribution will be consistent with institutional salary scales or equivalent departmental posts. Posts may be held full or part time.

All categories of research and non-research staff are eligible but should be appropriately justified including, but not limited to: Postdoctoral Research Assistants, Technicians, Fieldworkers, Project Managers.

4.1.2 London allowance

London allowance is an eligible cost where applicable and should be included where appropriate under the institution's pay policy, and if not included in basic salary.

4.1.3 Oncosts

Oncosts may include employer's National Insurance contributions, employer's pension contributions, Apprenticeship Levy and the Health and Social Care Levy.

For host overseas organisations, this may include medical insurance and social security costs.

4.2 Other Directly Incurred Costs

The Royal Society will fund 100% of Directly Incurred (DI) research expenses, primarily categorised as Travel and subsistence, Consumables, items of Equipment under £10,000, purchase of animals. The Royal Society's funding is intended to provide the resources required for successful researchers to achieve their research aims. The following provides a list of eligible costs; this is indicative and other costs may be included subject to appropriate justification. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove any costs considered to be inappropriate:

- Travel and subsistence
- Consumables

- Open Access
- Visitor Visa costs
- Small equipment (must not exceed £10,000 per item)
- Software, software licences and other recurring computing costs dedicated only to the project.
- Specialist publications (not expected in institutional libraries)
- Fieldwork fees/subjects/informants
- Technical and non-technical training
- Consultancy fees
- Public engagement costs
- Research Data management
- Recruitment and advertising costs for staff directly employed on the project
- Purchase/hire/running costs of vehicles if necessary for the project (must not exceed £10,000)
- Summer students
- Subcontracting - Research Organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts are subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety.
- Animal costs
- Access charges to facilities and services which are not recoverable through other sources
- Public and school engagement
- Bank charges/fees – associated with transferring funds to international partners

Guidance on some of the above headings is provided below.

4.2.1 Travel and subsistence

All travel should only be undertaken if necessary and should consider the environmental impact and whether the same objectives may be met without the requirement for travel.

Travel costs may be included as an eligible research cost where it is required for the delivery of the research objectives set out in the application, this would include but not be limited to training of group members, communication of research findings (conference attendance), collaborative visits and fieldwork.

Travel arrangements must also take into account value for money considerations, however, grant holders are encouraged to use the most environmentally sustainable form of transport rather than the most cost effective. Travel by train must be in standard class. For flights travel should be in economy class for flights less than 5 hours and premium economy for flights of 5 hours or more. All other travel and subsistence costs should be consistent with the host organisation's travel policy.

The Royal Society will not pay for the cost of carbon offsetting arising from travel associated with grants.

The costs of travel insurance should normally be covered by the indirect costs of the research organisation. But they may be requested as a separate directly incurred cost where it can be shown that the cost: arises specifically as a result of the project funded by the grant; is not covered by the existing organisation policies; and is separately identifiable and audited.

Receipts should be kept where possible, and staff should be reimbursed for actual vouched expenses. Where this is not possible when travelling outside the UK expenses for accommodation and subsistence

may be claimed in line with the rates as set by HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/expenses-rates-for-employees-travelling-outside-the-uk>

The total amount requested for Travel and Subsistence can be entered in the grant application as a single figure.

4.2.2 Consumables

Consumables required to deliver the grant are permissible except where they are otherwise already included within facility and equipment charge out rates.

4.2.3 Open Access

The Royal Society is committed to the widest possible dissemination of research outputs through the awards it supports. All recipients of a Royal Society award are encouraged to publish peer-reviewed accepted articles and conference proceedings in open access journals. As a minimum, award holders are expected to follow green routes for open access by publishing in a journal which allows deposit of the accepted manuscript version in an institutional or subject repository with no embargo period on access. The Royal Society's preference is for the version of record of peer-reviewed publications to be freely accessible and re-useable on publication to ensure the widest reach and maximum benefit to the scientific community.

In order to support award holders to achieve this, the Royal Society will allow the use of funding to cover fair and reasonable article processing charges (APCs) for articles published in journals or platforms with immediate open access under CC-BY licence. We encourage our award holders to practise due diligence to minimise their risk of using predatory outlets and avoid predatory journals and conferences; broad guidance for researchers can be found in the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) recent 2022 report "[Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences](#)".

The total amount requested for Open Access can be entered as a single figure.

4.2.4 Visa costs

Applicants may request costs to cover visitor visa application fees related to visits for the lead applicants and project participants from each team.

The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce such visa costs where they are not considered to be reasonable.

5 Directly Allocated

Costs should be requested under Directly Allocated where resources will be used by a project but are also shared by other activities. They are charged to projects based on estimates of usage rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis. Please note that Estate costs and Principal / Co- Investigator salaries / time are not permitted as a cost.

5.1 Other Directly Allocated

Other Directly Allocated includes costs of shared resources, such as Research and technical staff whose time is shared across several projects (such as pooled and infrastructure technicians) and is not supported by an audit record, Charge-out rates for equipment and major research facilities, Charge-out costs for departmental technical and administrative services and animal costs (where there are no auditable records of use).

6 Ineligible Costs

The following are ineligible costs for this programme:

- Principal Investigator salaries / time
- PhD studentships and fees
- Items of equipment above £10,000
- Purchase/hire/running costs of vehicles if necessary for the project exceeding £10,000
- Estate Costs, including building and premises costs, basic services and utilities, as well as clerical staff and equipment maintenance or operational costs that have not been included under other cost headings.
- Indirect costs/overheads, non-specific costs used by multiple activities, and which cannot therefore be assigned to specific cost objects. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, IT, legal, general laboratory, office consumables, library and some departmental services.

7 Virement rules

Funds must be used to support the objectives of the grant only.

Funds cannot be transferred outside of the grant.

If plans change during the lifetime of the grant, you may be able to utilise some of your funding to be spent elsewhere on the project in line with virement rules in the Royal Society Conditions of Award.

8 Justification of costs

Applicants must provide a full justification of costs. This includes but is not limited to:

All direct costs charged to the grant from the Royal Society – including the costs of other staff contributions, consumables, equipment and other direct costs.

Cost should be added in GBP and within the justification include the exchange rate at the time of application and the rate of inflation applied.