

ODA Compliance for applicants to Royal Society International Collaboration Awards Call

The following text has been developed to provide general guidance on ODA compliance to applicants for Royal Society International Collaboration Awards. It is intended as general guidance only and is not officially endorsed by the OECD.

The UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA funded activity focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list and is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

Overall principle of ODA

“ODA is defined as those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral development institutions which are:

- provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and
- each transaction of which:
 - a. is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
 - b. is concessional in character (note specific rules on loans).

The DAC list of countries eligible to receive ODA is updated every three years and is based on per capita income: [DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/ODA/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf)

The OECD defines ODA compliant research activities as follows:

“Research includes financing by the official sector, whether in the donor country or elsewhere, of research into the problems of developing countries. This may be either (i) undertaken by an agency or institution whose main purpose is to promote the economic growth or welfare of developing countries, or (ii) commissioned or approved, and financed or part-financed, by an official body from a general purpose institution with the specific aim of promoting the economic growth or welfare of developing countries. Research undertaken purely to elaborate an aid project or programme may be considered either as an integral part of the relevant activity, or as an administrative cost.” (DAC Statistical Reporting Directives [pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/ODA/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf))

In addition the OECD further specifies the following in relation to ODA compliant research:

“Only research directly and primarily relevant to the problems of developing countries may be counted as ODA. This includes research into tropical diseases and developing crops designed for developing country conditions. The costs may still be counted as ODA if the research is carried out in a developed country.”

Awards can support research capacity building to address the development issues, for example, to increase the skills and knowledge base and support the development of the research capability within developing countries. Capacity building should be aimed at improving the ability to undertake and disseminate research in order to promote the welfare and economic development of the developing countries.

Key ODA compliance issues to note in writing applications for funding:

Any proposal must make it clear that its primary purpose is to promote the economic development and welfare of a developing country or countries.

Applicants should:

- Seek to investigate a specific problem or seek a specific outcome which will have an impact on a developing country or countries on the DAC list;
- Provide evidence as to why this is a problem for the developing country or countries;
- Address the issue identified effectively and efficiently;
- Use the strengths of the UK to address the issue, working in collaboration with others as appropriate;
- Demonstrate that the research is of an internationally excellent standard;
- Identify appropriate pathways to impact to ensure that the developing country benefits from the research.

Any benefit to the UK or other developed countries has to be the secondary consideration and should not lead to a project being funded if it doesn't primarily deliver the development objective.

Applications will be assessed by a competitive peer review process with ODA eligibility being a criterion for approval i.e. projects must be fully ODA compliant to be considered for funding. Initial ODA compliance checks will be carried out by the delivery partners; proposals that do not meet the eligibility as defined in this document may be rejected without reference to peer review. Peer reviewers will also be provided with this guidance and asked to comment on ODA compliance and likelihood of significant impact.

Pathways to Impact

It is important that the pathways to impact are realistic and appropriate to the particular developing country or countries context. Impacts from research are always uncertain, often unexpected and cannot be guaranteed – this includes impacts in developing countries. The likelihood and scale of beneficial impact is increased:

- If the research is orientated towards a problem or challenge affecting developing countries currently or in the future, where there is potential to benefit a large number of people to a significant degree;
- If the academics and research team can demonstrate experience or understanding of successful impacts within the specific context; relevant expertise might be located within both UK and overseas partners;
- If stakeholders that are close to the problem, from the voluntary and community sector, commercial and private sector and/or public sector and government, are actively involved in the research. Particularly through the whole life cycle from initiation, design, progression, knowledge exchange and application of the research.

Applications should describe the nature and scale of the development challenge they are seeking to address through this research. For example, how many people would be affected by progress in this area?

Applications should explain how any stakeholder collaboration and knowledge exchange activities strengthens the pathways to impact and likelihood or scale of beneficial outcomes. This should include any specific commitments from institutions or enterprises from developing countries to adopt or apply outcomes of the research, and where appropriate it is helpful to outline how this enhances local innovation and research capacity at an individual, institutional or whole system level.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the resources required to undertake their proposed impact activities and include project specific costs within their request for funding.

Where the research could lead to commercialisation the application must demonstrate that the developing country or countries have existing or potential ability to grow industry (or other relevant sector). It is not normally acceptable for the commercialisation of research to take place solely in developed countries, unless there is a clear plan to build new businesses or business growth in the developing country or countries.

Version September 2023