International & GCRF: Opportunities & Challenges

Katherine Benson & Melanie Macrae 16th April 2018
Today’s session

Focussing on GCRF, what are the opportunities and challenges of international collaboration?

- What is GCRF?
- Funders and their aims
- How is York doing?
- How do you build international collaborations? Who can help?
- Practicalities of applying for GCRF funding
- Challenges of collaboration
- Solutions to problems - lessons learnt so far
The Global Challenges Research Fund

‘Growing research capability to meet the challenges faced by developing countries’

Harnessing the UK’s research base to explore new solutions and approaches to tackling global challenges in partnership with Low and Middle Income Countries.
● Launched in 2016
● £1.5bn is allocated between 2016/17 and 2020/21, with spend increasing each year
● Part of UK Aid Strategy
● Challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research
● Strengthening capacity for research, innovation and knowledge exchange.
● UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) - June 2017
Challenges manifest in emerging economies
RCUK STRATEGY FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT

CORE

▪ Areas with a strong UK research community, closely engaged with developing world challenges, often actively engaged with UK and international partners and making a significant global contribution. Examples include infectious diseases, crops for developing world, development studies.

STRETCH

▪ Areas with a strong research community, but not strongly orientated to developing world contexts, examples include clean energy or industrial biotechnology where the opportunity for developing world is considerable but nascent.

▪ Also renewal and growth in capability through targeted new blood and early career investment. Careful consideration of the opportunities and implications of supporting new capability overseas.

TRANSFORMATIONAL

▪ All challenge topics benefit from a multidisciplinary approach. However, it is particularly suited to multidimensional “wicked” challenges seeking new insights or needing radical approaches. Examples include the consequences for developing world of climate change, demographic shifts, economic development, rapid urbanisation and conflict.
Funded projects & collaborations

Portfolio of 30 live projects across 12 UoY departments

UoY award value of £9.5m

Collaborations across a wide range of countries including:

Egypt, India, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Columbia, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Vanuatu, Indonesia, Malaysia, China
Challenges

New Organisations as lead and collaborators

- Working with non-HEIs
- Reputation?
- UK funding landscape is new to collaborators (funding mechanism, reporting requirements, UK legislation)
- Management challenge for academic colleagues - remoteness
Challenges

New Countries

- Ethical/Political/cultural environment unsettled or unknown (is it safe to conduct research?)
- Research environment of countries is unclear (legal restrictions, financial legislation, tax legislation, insurance)
- Practical challenges - physically getting to places (visas, travel)
- Transfer of data collected, samples (Nagoya)
Developing new international collaborations – a practical guide

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT
The five stages of developing a new international collaboration

1) Deciding what type of activity you would like to undertake – research, staff exchange, study abroad?
2) Selecting a suitable partner
3) Conducting background checks and completing due diligence (Global Partnerships team & RGC)
4) Applying for funding (RGC & Research Development team)
5) Obtaining institutional approvals
Stage one: a side note on which teams to approach

**Research collaboration:** Research & Enterprise specifically RDT & RGC, Global Partnerships
International & EC Team: phil.wiles@york.ac.uk, Team Leader
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**Staff & Student Exchange:** Study Abroad Office
sarah.leach@york.ac.uk, Head of Study Abroad

**Joint Degrees/ Collaborative Teaching:** Academic Support Office
jane.iddon@york.ac.uk, Academic Quality team leader
Stage two: Selecting an international partner - questions to consider

The goal here is to consider the broader working context and to mitigate any potential challenges **BEFORE** an application is submitted.

- **Is this institution a good fit for my department?**
  - Does the potential partner department or institution have similar or complementary areas of strength?
  - Areas of synergy?
  - Existing links with York

- **Areas with the potential to derail the project**
  - Political/financial/cultural/regulatory environment
  - Potential for reputational risk?
  - Differences in research techniques, project management, QA processes
Stage three: Background checks and due diligence process

1) Initial background check and due diligence on partners  
   (Global Engagement & RGC)

2) In-depth review of proposed collaboration - project and capacity of partners to manage this specific project  
   (Research & Enterprise, Departments)

Introduction to the due diligence process for new partners

- Assessing new international partners – Global Engagement’s due diligence process
- Checklist - who else needs to be consulted?
- Final approval stages and authorisation by the relevant body
The Global Partnerships team can advise on all stages of developing an international collaboration, and conduct due diligence on new partners.
RGC Due Diligence

Focus on ability to conduct research and manage funds - combination of pre-application declarations and questionnaire to cover:

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<th>Governance and Control</th>
<th>Ability to Deliver</th>
<th>Financial Stability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Past Performance</td>
<td>Financial viability</td>
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<td>Fraud, bribery, corruption, money laundering and slavery</td>
<td>Staff capacity and capability (number, track record)</td>
<td>Financial Management eg experience of finance team and segregation of duties</td>
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<td>Internal controls</td>
<td>Infrastructure and programme management for research</td>
<td>Strength of audit, internal and external</td>
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<td>Risk Management</td>
<td>Monitoring and management</td>
<td>Value for money</td>
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<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Policies, procedures and systems – inc IT systems</td>
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<td>Assurance Processes</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>Separate bank account</td>
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<td>Research Governance</td>
<td>Data Management</td>
<td>Income from other sources – diversity of income streams</td>
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<td>Scientific Misconduct</td>
<td>Openness and Publications transparency</td>
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Stage four: Applying for GCRF funding - some practicalities

Roles of collaborators need to be defined prior to development of proposal
- Different funding rules and mechanisms
- Registration on systems
- Additional documentation

Costing to be provided by collaborators using the RGC template
- Ensure Collaborating Institution is aware of the proposal and stipulations of the funder
- Ensure funder guidance on costing is followed

Sticking to UoY submissions policy is extremely important. RGC and Global Partnerships will take you through University and funder authorisation processes.
Managing International collaboration & GCRF: lessons learnt
Case studies
Lessons learnt: Paying Collaborators

Brazilian and Indian examples
Feedback or questions to:

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