

Catalyst Grant – Full Proposals REACH Partnership Funding

Applicant Guidance Note

Deadline for submitting proposals: 29 April 2016, 17:00 GMT

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1 Introduction

REACH launched a call for Catalyst Grants on 10 December 2015. 172 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for Catalyst Grants were submitted, of which 29 were shortlisted and invited to submit a full proposal ('Proposal'). We expect to fund a minimum of 10 projects for this first call, subject to the quality of applications and value for money. This document is intended to guide applicants which were invited to submit a Proposal through the application process of the REACH call.

Each Proposal will be judged on its own merits and the reviewers, together with the Science Board, will use their combined experience and knowledge to reach decisions on those projects to be supported with a Catalyst Grant.

Proposals must be submitted online¹ by 17:00 GMT on 29 April 2016.

2 The REACH programme

2.1 Background and context

The REACH programme aims to make at least five million poor people 'water secure' by 2022.

REACH aims to generate improvements in water security for the poor by working at the interface of water security risk and poverty reduction research and practice. For further information on the REACH programme, please refer to the [REACH website](#) and the [Guidance Note](#) for the Catalyst Grant Proposals.

2.2 Objectives of the programme

REACH will generate improvements in the way that national and global sector actors plan, implement or monitor aspects of water security. The programme's focus on water security prioritises the explicit, and often under-researched, linkages between: drinking water supply; water supply for livelihoods; water security for growth development and/or water ecosystem risks. A siloed and traditional approach on drinking water supplies or water resources alone was a common reason many EOIs were rejected. We encourage all applications to go beyond narrow sector approaches as they will not meet the goals of the programme.

At the heart of the REACH programme is its global science-practitioner partnership. Aligning research design and activities with practitioner interventions will enable the programme to have a significant and material impact. REACH's projects are expected to deliver both *academic impact* (eg. globally-outstanding journal papers, theoretical advances, methodological innovations) and/or pathways to significant and sustainable *development impact*.

Gender

Gender forms a critical element of the programme, as it is a vital building block for enhancing and maintaining water security for all. Consequently, understanding differential impacts of water security on the poor women, men, girls and boys, and the different barriers to equity is essential. This gender inclusive approach seeks to identify and address gender challenges such as unequal access to knowledge and differing capacities to adapt and implement change.

Capacity building

A key aim of REACH is to facilitate strengthened technical capacity in the design, delivery and monitoring of water security interventions by policy-makers, practitioners and change makers in

¹ A link will be sent to you for you to complete the online survey.

Africa and Asia. Thus in this programme, we particularly encourage applications from women, early career researchers, and researchers from Africa and Asia across a range of sectors.

3 REACH call for Proposals: general information, guidelines and rules

3.1 Proposal submission format

These guidelines are important. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disqualification from the application process.

The requirements of the Proposal will encompass:

- details of lead organization and of all partners;
- detailed project description;
- detailed project design;
- a description of the quality and organisation of the consortium;
- an indication of if your project addresses gender, exclusion and marginalisation;
- a brief management strategy;
- applicability of the results in practice including plans for dissemination activities; and
- a detailed Budget per activities and per partners.

3.2 Submissions

- All submissions must be submitted via the REACH online survey.
- Submissions must comply with the word limit indicated for each selection criterion.
- Submissions must be in English.

3.3 Submission deadline

This call will close (the 'deadline') at 17:00 (GMT) on 29 April 2016. All submissions must be received on or before the deadline. Revisions to submissions will be accepted before, but not after, the deadline.

3.4 Timeline of the call and evaluation

An outline of the process of commissioning the Catalyst projects is detailed below.

Application timeline	
Action	Date
Stage Two	
Invitation to submit full Proposal	16 March 2016
Online applications of full Proposals due	29 April 2016
Award letter and contract sent to successful consortia	17 June 2016
Funding contract signed	July 2016
Projects commenced	July 2016

3.5 Duration

Projects are expected to begin by the end of July 2016 and may not last longer than 12 months. All Projects must be completed by December 2017 at the latest.

3.6 Funding

- Funding available for each project is subject to a maximum £50,000 for the entire period. Funding requests cannot exceed this amount.
- Applicants should explain any material deviations from the preliminary budget detailed in the EOI. It is permissible to move the budget between budget lines and partners in the final budget, as long as the overall total remains within 10% of the budget proposed in the EOI.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to match funding through either their own in-kind contributions, or through the leveraging of other funding.
- All budgets must not allocate more than 20% to indirect overheads. Indirect costs, sometimes referred more generically to as 'overheads' are the type of costs which are necessary for underpinning project work but which cannot necessarily be allocated to individual projects. Such costs may include central administrative support or office costs but would not include the purchase of laptops or equipment. Value for money is a key priority for the programme and opaque budgets without convincing justification will not be viewed favourably.
- Generally, the REACH programme does not allow per diem payments to be made and instead require expenditure to be reimbursed against receipts or invoices. However, a case may be made for per diems in exceptional circumstances, and the applicant should make reference to why this is necessary and how this would be practically managed (what rates would be used, what sort of records would be kept, if recipients would be made to sign on receipt of funds etc.).

3.7 Submitting questions and the provision of advice

- Questions about submission must be sent by email to the Partnership Funding manager at: reachfunding@water.ox.ac.uk. The Partnership Funding Manager may consult other members of the REACH for advice on specific technical questions.
- Advice may be requested from members of the REACH Science Board to develop or revise Proposals that are considered to have potential for high impact. This will help to develop research that may be considered high risk or innovative ideas from people with limited track records. However, the type and nature of advice requested will be considered in the final evaluation to ensure transparency and to promote an inclusive portfolio of work.
- The online Q&A form on the REACH website will be regularly updated to include all relevant questions for the benefit of all applicants.
- Questions will not be answered if submitted after 20 April 2016.

4 Selection process

Each of the Proposals will be reviewed internally and also by two external experts from industry, academia or civil society. The REACH management team will appoint reviewers with the skills and knowledge appropriate to the tasks assigned to them, and are not faced with conflict of interests on the matter on which they are asked to give opinion. The reviewers will be required to sign a declaration of confidentiality and 'no conflict of interest' at the time of their appointment. Reviewers will be chosen based on their specific knowledge of the topic areas covered by the applications, and may represent both the scientific and user community.

4.1 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria against which the Proposal will be assessed are outlined below. Proposals will be selected on the basis of demonstrated potential to fulfil the aims of the REACH programme.

Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate how their team(s) of researchers and practitioners intend to deliver impact from their project.

Your Proposal will be comprised of two main sections. The 'technical' section of the Proposal will be reviewed by two external reviewers as well as the REACH team.

The second section pertains to project management and cost effectiveness. This section will only be evaluated by the REACH management team. In order to qualify for funding, the REACH team must be satisfied that the proposed project management and cost effectiveness components are satisfactory.

Evaluation Criteria	Judgment based upon	Weighting	Reviewer
Criterion 1. Quality and significance	Quality of project objectives and their alignment with the objectives of the REACH programme. The project fills gaps or addresses strategic needs of the overall programme. Innovation and originality of project.	30%	External reviewer and REACH team
Criterion 2. Impact and dissemination	Potential impact for the poor, and how project outcomes and outputs contribute to REACH's targets. Potential of the project to create benefits at scale. Quality of the plan for implementing and evaluating the dissemination and use of the expected project outputs and the knowledge generated by the project.	30%	External reviewer and REACH team
Criterion 3. Project design	Appropriate project planning tools for monitoring both management and implementation/research activities including key milestones and dates that they are expected to be achieved. Stakeholder analysis and engagement plan, with indicative cooperation structure and strategy sensitive to gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.	20%	External reviewer and REACH team
Criterion 4. Project management	Project coordination, management strategy and previous management experience. Quality of project team, including the synergies between the partners bringing added value by working together. Leadership by African and Asian partners, female researchers and early career researchers in the project team.	10%	REACH team only
Criterion 5. Cost effectiveness	Cost of the Proposal set against its significance and potential impact against REACH aims. Value for the money to be invested, taking into account any other leveraged funds.	10%	REACH team only

All scores from external reviewers will be collated by the REACH management team and be circulated to the REACH Science Board. The REACH Science Board will meet to make the decision on which projects will be funded. The Science Board will aim to create a balanced portfolio of projects, taking into account the objectives of the call, the quality of the Proposals, and the advice from the evaluators and the availability of funding. The decision of the Science Board is final.

4.2 Notification of the results of evaluation

Successful applicants will be notified by email and this information will also be posted on the website: <http://reachwater.org.uk/>.

The REACH team will endeavour to provide targeted feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

4.3 Terms and conditions of the call

- By submitting a Proposal, applicants indicate agreement with the guidelines and rules associated with the open call, in particular its terms and conditions.
- REACH's decision on an application is final. REACH is under no obligation to provide further information to the feedback issued for the reasons for its selection, or for the rejection of a Proposal.
- An invitation to submit a Proposal does not imply obligation on the part of REACH to fund the Proposal.
- REACH will treat submissions in confidence. Information contained within unsuccessful Proposals will not be shared, communicated or otherwise utilised.

5 Project requirements

5.1 Due diligence

Recipients of Catalyst Grants under the REACH call ('Grant Recipients') will need to provide evidence that they have in place the resources, systems and processes that will enable them to effectively manage the size of funds that they are requesting. The University of Oxford reserves the right to audit the projects of all Grant Recipients throughout the life of the project.

5.2 Progress monitoring, reporting requirements and approval of deliverables

Grant Recipients will need to fulfill specified reporting requirements. Grant Recipients must report progress on the project at defined milestones within the programme. A template for the structure of activity and financial reports will be provided by REACH. Project reports must be produced in English, and may be produced in other languages at the researcher's discretion and cost.

A first stage payment will be issued upon signing of the contract and submission of due diligence materials. All other payments will be contingent on the successful completion of deliverables and the submission of reports or financial statements to the satisfaction of the Partnership Funding Manager. Further information about the timing of the payments and these milestones will be provided to successful applicants.

5.3 Ownership of Intellectual Property Rights and Use and access to results

Results, materials, outputs and new intellectual property rights resulting from projects funded through the Catalyst Grants will be owned by the Grant Recipient, subject to rights being reserved for Oxford and DfID, as the funder of the REACH programme, to use such results, materials and outputs.

5.4 Dissemination requirements

Grant Recipients will be expected to engage with the REACH programme as a whole as well as proactively promote the knowledge resulting from the work undertaken, in both academic and policy fora, as well as with beneficiaries and end users. Examples of dissemination activities include, but are not limited to: knowledge sharing events, policy briefing materials, open access journal articles, blogs, media articles and videos. The REACH website will provide a dedicated platform to publish and promote the work of Catalyst Grant recipients.

Grant Recipients may be requested to attend a REACH conference to report on the findings from the project. In the event of this, expenses associated with attending the conference will be paid for by REACH.

Appendix: Guidelines for the completion of the application form for full Proposals

Section A: General Project Information

Please provide a project title and acronym if applicable as well as date of start and end of project. The implementation period may be between July 2016 and 31st December 2017. Projects should not exceed 12 months. Please include a period of reporting within the project period.

All proposals must be completed using Times New Roman font size 11. Failure to do so will result in the application being rejected.

Section B: Specific Project Information – for external review

In this section applicants must provide information that will be used for evaluation of the Proposal. Proposals exceeding the established limit for section B may be disqualified from the evaluation process. Attached additional information other than the uploaded project description for question 4, the budget, and CVs will not be considered in the evaluation process.

- 1. Project Abstract*
Provide a half page abstract of your project, covering objectives, activities and expected outputs and impact. This will be put on the REACH website if successful, so please make it accessible to a range of audiences.
- 2. Which country(ies) will be the focus of your Catalyst project?*
Indicate which country your project will be situated.
- 3. If this research is demand-led, explain how you have assessed that demand? (100 words)*
- 4. Please expand upon the description of your project in your EOI. Please describe the project as well as the individual work package in terms of:*
In this section, please address evaluation criteria 1, 2 and 3. Indicate what research gaps or needs your project addresses and how it will advance knowledge beyond the current state-of-the-art. Please upload a document that is no longer than 2 pages to your application.
- 5. Describe the outcomes and deliverables for the project. How will your project contribute to improving water security for the poor? (200 words)*
Describe your pathway to impact. Describe the potential impact of the project and its outputs on the target groups. Include the outcome planning and monitoring components to be used.
- 6. A requirement of the project is to disseminate your findings. Please indicate which methods you would use to achieve this (eg. knowledge sharing events, policy and practice briefing materials, open access peer reviewed journal articles, blog posts, interview with PI, short raw video material) (maximum 200 words).*
Provide a plan for the dissemination and exploitation of the expected project outputs and the knowledge generated by the project.
- 7. Does your project address gender, exclusion and/or marginalisation? If so, please briefly describe how (maximum 200 words).*
If applicable, please outline where gender, exclusion and marginalisation will be included within your project.

Section C: Specific Management Information – for internal review only

8. *Briefly describe your management strategy. Outline your work plan, key milestones, risk management and monitoring strategy. (maximum 200 words)*

Please provide a brief outline of how you plan to manage your project.

9. *Please list the names, titles and key project personnel, and their roles on the project (CVs of the key people should be provided in the appendices). (maximum 250 words)*

Describe the role and contribution of each partner in the project, providing evidence of special competences, details of key individuals and other relevant background information. Short CVs of the Research Coordinator and key staff of the partner organisations should be appended to the application. Please highlight any personnel who are: female, early career or from an African or Asian country.

10. *Why would funding this project produce value for money? (maximum 200 words)*

This is your opportunity to explicitly demonstrate to the REACH management team why your project represents excellent value for money. In answering this question, you may choose to refer to your budget, leveraged funding, the work produced, and why this particular Catalyst Grant is necessary to undertake the work proposed.

Section D: Budget

Please provide the costs per activities and per partner that you request from REACH. If your salary costs do not include overheads, specify them in the respective budget line. All budget indications must be in Pounds Sterling.

If you declare third-party funding for your consortia you will be asked to provide written and signed evidence (contract with or letter of commitment from the third party) on how and from whom this contribution is being made and for what it will be used in your consortium if you are successful. For in-kind contributions we will expect a written statement explaining what these contributions actually are. In-kind contributions will have to be included in any audits, so make sure that you only declare in-kind contributions that can actually be quantified and are auditable.

Please note that REACH will only cover reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, such as necessary economy airfares. Further guidance on this will be provided to successful applicants.

Curriculum vitae

REACH suggests a standard structure for your CVs. You may use other formats as well, but you should make sure that your CV contains the information required in the standard structure. We will only accept CVs that are not longer than 1 page. CV must not be sent as individual files but must be assembled in only one document.

Submitting the full Proposal

Before you submit the full Proposal, please check the following:

1. you have completed and checked all parts of the application form, including declarations;
2. you have used Times New Roman, font size 11;
3. you have attached your project description (required for question 4);
4. you have attached your budget;
5. declarations are complete and signed by suitably authorised persons; and
6. CVs of key personnel are attached.