

# REACH Partnership Funding

African Postdoctoral Fellowships

## Applicant Guidance Note

Further information on specific calls under this programme will be advertised on the [www.reachwater.org.uk](http://www.reachwater.org.uk)

Closing Date: 20 July 20 2018, 17:00 UCT

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## 1 Summary

REACH is a global research programme to improve water security for the poor by delivering world-class science that transforms policy and practice. The seven-year programme (2015-22) is led by the University of Oxford, funded by the UK Department for International Development, and brings together a consortium of global leaders in water science, policy and practice. REACH Partnership Funding calls are designed to support novel approaches to water security and poverty research and policy that complement the core research conducted by the REACH programme.

This document provides general guidance for an African Postdoctoral Fellowship ('Fellowship') which is commissioned under the REACH programme. This Fellowship provides the recipient with an opportunity to develop their academic career in water security and in partnership with the REACH programme. Their research will promote the co-production of effective tools and technologies relevant for and adopted by policy makers, practitioners, civil society organisations and enterprise.

Proposals must be submitted to [reachfunding@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:reachfunding@ouce.ox.ac.uk) by 17:00 UCT, 20 July 2018.

## 2 The REACH programme

### 2.1 Background and context

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

Water security is widely referred to as "the process of ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of water for health, productive uses and the environment, with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies" (Grey and Sadoff, 2007). REACH will advance this conceptual understanding using a risk-based framework for research to understand trade-offs and interactions between water resources and water services.

Achieving water security for the poor requires decision making across alternative and often competing choices with different outcomes at a range of scales. A risk-based definition of water security embeds the management of natural variability and associated political, economic and social uncertainties as the basis for interdisciplinary decision making.

### 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.

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 pathways to significant and sustainable *development impact*.

We identify three primary dimensions where water security risks interact with poverty pathways:

- Resource Sustainability – increasing climate variability and extremes pose unprecedented risks for managing surface water and groundwater sustainably for the competing needs of people, industry, agriculture and the environment. Improved understanding of complex water systems in resource-poor environments requires novel approaches linking scientific advances with the political reality of making difficult decisions under uncertainty. The political economy of resource decision making in weak institutional contexts often increases risks to the poor though transformational opportunities may exist to reduce poverty.

- Inclusive Services – major advances in increasing water access to the poor are now advancing a global drive for universal water services. The shift from ‘access’ to ‘services’ is a major step requiring significant improvements in monitoring systems and institutional regulation to ensure reliable, safe, affordable and physically-accessible water services are available. Progress to date has often benefited those in the upper wealth quintiles disproportionately, with the most in need and difficult to reach requiring major innovations in policy, regulation and delivery to achieve the target of universal services by 2030.
- Sustainable Growth – extensive evidence illustrates the macro-economic role of growth from agriculture or enterprise to lift people out of poverty. However growth can increase inequality or damage water systems with external costs paid by less powerful groups or future generations. It is less clear the role and responsibility of water-related enterprise to respond to increasing water security risks to balance economic growth with water security and poverty reduction. Strategic industrial sectors, such as food, mining, garment, infrastructure, beverages or energy, all offer potential pathways out of poverty if growth is sustainable and inclusive. Leading national and international enterprises are working to understand and to respond to these risks and opportunities in emerging economies in partnership with government and civil society.

Resource sustainability, inclusive services and sustainable growth are not mutually exclusive but interact in different contexts with varying consequences (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1 REACH conceptual understanding of Water Security Risk and Poverty Reduction

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, spanning across the themes of resource sustainability, inclusive services and sustainable growth.

### 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 will seek 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 Africa and Asia.

### 2.3 Programme design

There are two strands to the REACH programme. First, core research will be conducted through 'Water Security Observatories' ('Observatories'). An Observatory is a research location where significant but uncertain trajectories of change – such as urban growth, migration, or climate risks – are predicted over the next decade or even longer time spans. In each Observatory we're carrying out an in-depth, long-term and interdisciplinary study on water security and poverty.

Our Observatories are complemented by partnership funding (see below) which is intended to extend the thematic and geographical scope of the programme.

A combination of research, action research and partnerships will be commissioned to complement the wider research-into-action programme ('Partnership Funding'). Partnership Funding makes up to 30% of funding for the REACH programme.

The purpose of partnership funding is to:

- complement core research activities<sup>1</sup> and fill gaps in water security thematic areas;
- extend the regional reach of the programme, particularly in South Asia;
- attract high quality applications from African and Asian-based institutions;
- encourage young and/or female African and Asian researchers;
- identify new opportunities and partnerships, for example through matching funds;
- generate high quality research and capacity development in target regions; and
- produce high quality research results in journal publications and policy impacts.

## 3 The Postdoctoral Fellowship

The purpose of the Fellowship is to provide an early career researcher an opportunity to develop their career in water security in Africa. Proposals are sought for independent research that will align with the core REACH programme, and help us deliver improved water security in Sub-Saharan Africa. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their ideas with current REACH researchers and partners to consider how their relationship with the programme might operate. Applicants may approach REACH researchers about hosting their Fellowship.

### 3.1 Thematic focus

The focus of this Fellowship aligns with the REACH Observatory, *Sustaining Growth through Water Security*. This Observatory is located at the Awash basin (Figure 2), which is an example of where national economic productivity is contingent on water security. The basin represents an economically significant region for Ethiopia's expected economic growth, with significant increase in irrigation schemes. The area consequentially reports the highest abstraction of any basin nationally.

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<sup>1</sup> Core research is conducted through the Observatories. Descriptions of core research will be available through the REACH website.

The area extends across five regions and two urban administrative zones, resulting in complex governance arrangements. There is a steep rainfall gradient within the basin, ranging from over 1,500 mm/yr at the headwaters to less than 200 mm/yr toward the bottom of the basin, and with high variability. Manufacturing and agriculture are more concentrated at the upper end of the basin, resulting in pollution and water availability challenges for the downstream populations, including the agro-pastoralists and pastoralists.

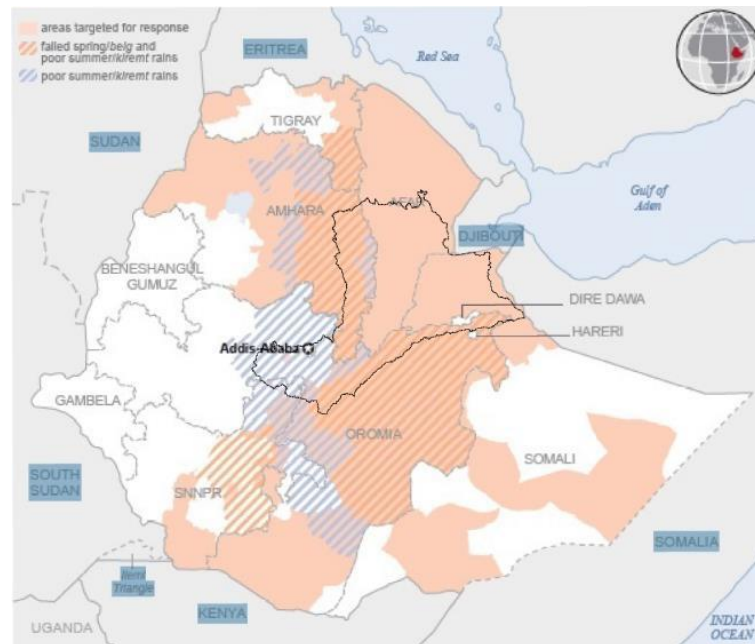


Figure 2 The Awash basin, an endorheic basin located wholly within Ethiopia, is indicated by the black outline. The underlying map from the OCHA Humanitarian Requirements Documents (January 2016) highlights the extent of the impact of the drought in the basin and the humanitarian responses.

There are many different water users within the basin, with roughly 14 million people living within the area. The upper basin provides water for large urban centres and industrial districts in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Adama, Dessie and Kombolcha. In the middle part of the basin it supports large scale sugarcane irrigated farms, and in the lower basin, it supports key wetland ecosystems, such as the Chefa wetland, on which local farmers and pastoralists rely. Shrinking of the wetlands in recent decades has led to conflicts between these users, while farmers encroach on drying wetland areas.

A key limitation for decision making in this basin is the lack of understanding of groundwater availability and sustainability, including groundwater-surface water interactions. A coherent method to assess and communicate the contribution of groundwater resources to meeting the needs of users across the basin is essential to promoting equitable water resource management in the basin. This needs to encompass an understanding of groundwater recharge zones to map the impact of land management in those areas. The Fellow will contribute to addressing this challenge by designing and undertaking independent research to develop a decision support tool that integrates surface and groundwater resources that is useable by MOWIE and AwBA.

This research will help both the sector and policy makers to take appropriate regulatory and precautionary measures to manage the water resource against a backdrop of economic growth and transformation.

The Ethiopia component of REACH is coordinated by Water and Land Resource Center (WLRC) of Addis Ababa University.

## 4 Application process

The following documents will be required as part of your proposal:

- **Description of proposed research** (up to 4 A4 pages)
- **Career development plan** (up to 1 A4 page)
- **Research into action** (up to 1 A4 page)
- **Budget / Justification of resources requested**
- **CVs** (maximum two pages) for the Fellow and host institution supervisor
- **Letter of support from host institution/s** expressing its intention to collaborate and endorsement of the proposed Fellowship, and the value of the proposed Fellowship. This should also include a **declaration from host institution** (see declaration at the end of this guidance note) with the letter of support.
- **Letter of support from your nominated supervisor** outlining their relationship to you, the role they have had in developing the proposal and their agreement to supervising you.

### 4.1 Description of proposed research

In the description of proposed research, you should outline the rationale for the proposed work, methodology and proposed work plan as well as how this links to the core REACH research programme.

The description of proposed research should address the following points:

- Underlying rationale, scientific, technological, social and developmental issues to be addressed. This should cover the research question and objectives and highlight the overarching policy questions/evidence challenges.
- Specific objectives, hypotheses and/or research questions of the project, including their potential relevance to international research.
- Methodology and approach; this should include methods and location of primary data collection, and details on the use and manipulation of data.
- Programme and/or plan of research;
- The rationale for the chosen host institution, and support provided in mentoring;
- Any associated collaborations, partnerships or co-funding.

### 4.2 Career development plan

The Career development plan should provide evidence on how this Fellowship will support you in your career development as a water security professional. This should consider:

- Mentorship to help you develop;
- New skills or knowledge that you will develop to support your career; and
- Outputs and activities that will raise your academic profile.

### 4.3 Pathways to Impact statement

In order to see how your proposal will help us generate improvements in the way that national and global sector actors plan, implement or monitor aspects of water security, and to deliver REACH's target of improved water security for 5 million poor people, we are asking for a 'Pathways to Impact' statement. For this you should address:

- Why should the UK's Department for International Development fund this research?
  - Which stakeholders will be interested in your research?

- Who are the intended beneficiaries of the research?
- How will they learn about this new knowledge and when?
- What support will they need, if any, to develop the capacity to take up the research?
- How will you integrate your research with the wider REACH programme?

You may consider spending part of your Fellowship with Government or an NGO involved in water security implementation for this purpose.

You will be required to track impacts and outcomes with appropriate metrics. This will feed into REACH programme reporting and is a required element of each REACH funded project.

#### 4.4 Budget and justification of resources

The Justification of Resources should state the full cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed, including identifying why the proposal presents value for money. In other words, you must demonstrate why you are requesting the funds you are, and how they will be used to deliver the cutting edge research with impact that you are proposing.

#### 4.5 CV

A CV should be included for the applicant and the host institution.

#### 4.6 Letter of support

A Fellow must be hosted by a University or Research Organisation. Applications must include a letter of support from the host institution or institutions. This should provide a statement of the resources that will be provided to the Fellow, including supervision or mentorship, space and IT facilities, equipment, approval of the budget that has been proposed and access to other funds.

The letter should include the declaration form from the host institution. A copy of this declaration is appended to this guidance note and is also available for download from the REACH website.

### 5 Proposal guidelines and rules

#### 5.1 Eligibility

These Fellowships are intended for early to mid-career academics and researchers. Applicants must be nationals of a Sub-Saharan African country and should hold a PhD at the time of application. Applications from PhD candidates will not be considered. 'Early to mid-career' is defined as within 10 years of completion of a PhD at the time of application; however career breaks can be taken into account and should be made clear in the CV.

REACH partners are eligible to be host institutions.

Each host institution must be able to demonstrate that it:

- has internal controls which provide reasonable assurance that the use of resources is consistent with all relevant laws, regulations, and award terms; and
- is able to safeguard resources against waste, loss, and misuse; and will obtain, maintain, and fairly disclose reliable data in reports.



## 5.2 Conditions

The Fellowship must be undertaken on a fulltime basis. A limit of 1 hour teaching per week is allowed. The funding arrangement can be designed as a teaching buy-out in agreement with your University or research organisation.

## 5.3 Duration

Projects are expected to begin as soon as possible after award. All projects should be finalised by December 2019.

## 5.4 Funding

- Funding available for this project is subject to a maximum £60,000 for the entire period. Funding requests cannot exceed this amount.
- All budgets must be inclusive of any institutional overheads that are to be applied. However, overheads must not exceed 20% of direct costs. All budgets must be reviewed and approved by the host institution before being submitted as part of the proposal. Per diems will not be permitted under the REACH funding agreement but travel costs will be covered such as accommodation, food and others as per REACH guideline.

## 5.5 Review process

The proposals will be reviewed by REACH academics, including members of the REACH Science Board. External reviewers, including representatives from DFID, may also be involved in the review process.

Advice may be provided 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. However, the provision of any advice should not be taken as an indication of guaranteed funding.

Applicants may be asked to respond to feedback or questions from the reviewers as part of the evaluation process.

## 5.6 Notification of the results of evaluation

Successful applicants will be notified by email. The REACH team will provide some feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

## 5.7 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 a proposal 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.
- REACH will treat submissions in confidence. Information contained within unsuccessful proposal submissions will not be shared, communicated or otherwise utilised.
- REACH is under no obligation to provide any funding for this call. All funding is contingent on satisfying the REACH Science Board that the proposal demonstrates excellent value for money and potential for impact.

- Before funding is awarded, the host institution will be asked to assist with a short due diligence process in order for Oxford to ensure that organisation selected has appropriate systems and processes to manage grant funds appropriately.

All applications must be completed in English and must be in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or equivalent), with margins of at least 2 cm. References should also be at least 11-point font.

## 6 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria against which the proposal will be assessed are outlined below.

Applications 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 they intend to deliver impact from their project.

### 6.1 Scoring

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals against a number of criteria. Scores will not be publically available. For all criteria, the evaluation scale features a range that begins at zero and ends with twenty.

- 0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1-4 Poor: The criterion is addressed inadequately, or there are significant weaknesses.
- 5-8 Fair: While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are considerable weaknesses.
- 9-12 Good: The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
- 13-16 Very Good: The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
- 17-20 Excellent: The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

| Evaluation Criteria                   | Judgment based upon  | Scoring |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------|
| Criterion 1. Quality                  | Quality of methodology and potential to produce outstanding science based on the call specifics.<br><br>Appropriate project design to deliver the aims of the call.  | 30%     |
| Criterion 2. Impact and dissemination | Proposal demonstrates potential lasting impact for the poor.<br><br>Project outcomes and outputs contribute to REACH's targets.<br><br>Quality of the plan for facilitating uptake of the expected project outputs and the knowledge generated by the project. | 25%     |

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| Criterion 3.<br>Project management and research credentials | Project coordination, management strategy and previous management experience of host institution.<br><br>Quality of the project team, including supervisor. Demonstrated research credentials and publication record of postdoctoral Fellow.<br><br>Career development plan of postdoctoral researcher.  | 25% |
| Criterion 4.<br>Cost effectiveness                          | Cost of the proposal set against its significance and potential impact against REACH aims.<br><br>Value for the money, taking into account any leveraged funds.<br><br>Both actual results from the Fellowship work, as well as the benefits of the Fellowship to the Fellow will be taken into account. | 20% |

## 7 Appendix - Declaration of host institution

The following declaration should be appended to the letter of support from the host institution.

### Declaration

#### ***Host Institution's Declaration***

An authorised signatory of the host institution should complete this declaration.

I declare that I have read the terms and conditions relating to applications for funding and that the information given in this application including the proposed budget is complete and correct.

The institution has not committed any financial or other indiscretion in the implementation of any previous funded programme.

I consent to the information collected on this form being stored electronically and used to process my application. I consent to the information being sent to the members REACH or to third parties for the purposes of assessing and reviewing the application.

| <b>Name of and title of authorised signatory</b> | <b>Institution</b> | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date and place</b> |
|--|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|  |                    |                  |                       |