BRITISH COUNCIL

International Science Partnership Fund

—

Research Collaborations (Global)

11 June 2025

www.britishcouncil.org

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

Research Collaborations Programme

Bilateral programme – one UK and one Thai partner organisation

Under the ISPF and Thai Partner Themes

▶ Initiate new research and innovation collaborations between academic groups, departments, and institutions in Thailand and the UK

▶ Develop existing collaborations at group, departmental, and institutional level

▶ Encourage these collaborations to work with non-academic organisations and individuals to support the exchange of research and innovation expertise and the translation of research knowledge into tangible benefits

▶ Establish local hubs for joint UK-Thailand activity in a particular area, enabling engagement from the wider research and innovation community.

Closing date for Expressions of Interest: 30 June

Closing date for full Applications: 4 August

Outcome of selection: late November/December 2025

Funding is for 2 years and projects are expected to start in January 2026

What's New

Two step application process

Collaborative Application system

Updates to the country guidance / priority thematic areas

Update to the scoring system

Risk Assessment for Travel requested for successful projects

Questions on the Expression of Interest

- Project Abstract
- Details of UK Project Leader
- Details of Thai Project Leader
- Pre-Submission checks include:
  - You have permission to submit the application
  - The UK institution is willing to receive funds
  - Both institutions have capacity to complete the proposed activities
  - Does the Freedom of Information Act apply to your organisation?

How the Expression of Interest will be assessed

▶ Are the institutions eligible to take part in the Research Collaborations programme?

▶ Does the Project Leader currently hold an ISPF British Council Research Collaborations Grant?

▶ Has more than one application been submitted by the UK Project Leader?

▶ Is the Thai Project Leader a lead partner on current ISPF British Council Research Collaborations project?

▶ Is the Thai Project Leader named as the lead partner on more than one application

Projects which fail at this stage will not be asked to submit a full application

Review of Guidance for Applicants Eligibility - Organisations

UK applicants

A higher education institution which takes part in the **Research Excellence Framework** and receives recurrent annual funding from one of the UK's higher education funding bodies.

A not-for-profit research organisation with the capacity to undertake high-quality research.

A Catapult Centre

Thailand Partner

A higher education Institution

A not-for-profit research organisation with capacity to undertake high-quality research

Organisations affiliated to higher education institutions in the UK or any other country and based in the Thailand, (e.g. an international or satellite campus) are **not eligible** for ISPF Fund awarded grants**.**

Review of Guidance for Applicants Eligibility - Project Leader

UK Applicants

Established Researcher:
Has demonstrated a level of independence in their research
Leading Researcher:
Leaders in their research area or field

Permanent employee (not Emeritus or Honorary Professor)

May only act as Project Leader in one application

Not a current Research Collaborations grant holder

International Partner

Leading or Established Researcher

May only act as Project Leader in one application

Not a Project Leader on a current Research Collaborations grant

Thailand partners have additional requirements

Inclusion of Other Organisations

- Only one UK institution and one Thailand Partner institution can be named in the application.

- These are the organisations which will be responsible for the grant funds and will have a responsibility for reporting on the outcomes and expenditure.

- Other organisations and individuals from other organisations can be included as Associate Partners

- Individuals who you wish to include as partners in the proposal from other institutions should have letters for support from their institution

- Associate Partners and institutions are expected to provide in-kind or monetary support to the project. Their inclusion should add value to the project proposal.

- For Profit Organisations may join as Associate Partners, but are only eligible to receive ISPF **UK funding** for travel and subsistence

Outcome from previous calls

Last year only 8% of eligible projects received funding in our second Research Collaborations call

Over 25% failed to meet the criteria for Official Development Assistance

38% failed to meet the requirements for the Gender Equality Statement

15% failed on quality

(There will be some overlap on these three categories)

No Sustainable Development without Gender Equality

Developed in collaboration with **TROLLBÄCK + COMPANY** | TheGlobalGoals@trollback.com | +1.212.529.1010
For queries on usage, contact: dpicampaigns@un.org

5 Questions

- Have measures been put in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project?
These measures include the development of the project, the participants of the research and innovation, and the beneficiaries of the research and innovation.

- What is the expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond.

- Will there be an impact on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender.
For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc. Please provide details if no change is expected.

- How will any risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality be avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?
Please provide an explanation if there are no risks or unintended negative consequences on gender equality are expected.

- Are there any relevant outcomes and outputs being measured, with data disaggregated by age and gender (where disclosed)?
Please explain if there are no relevant outcomes and outputs which

Criteria for applicants

▶ Measures are in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project. This includes the development of the project, the participants of the research and innovation, and the beneficiaries of the research and innovation.

▶ The project will have a positive impact on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond.

▶ The potential impact on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender is clearly described. For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc.

▶ Risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality will be monitored, avoided, or mitigated against.

▶ Relevant outcomes and outputs will be measured with disaggregated data by age and gender (where disclosed).

▶ Applicants have set the context for the potential outputs of the project as it relates to gender equality and social inclusion, considering the demographics (gender, age, disability, social/economic status...) of stakeholders, researchers, participants and beneficiaries.

How they are assessed

Insufficient

- Not Addressed

- Reservations
  Gender is considered in the research project's rationale but is not an operative concept in the design and methodology.

Sufficient

- Good
  Understand context
  Show due diligence

- Excellent
  Also build assets, capabilities and opportunities

- Transformative
  Address unequal power relations and seek institutional, legal and societal change

Common errors

- Only considering the project team and not the longer-term impact on the project

- Not involving people of different genders in the project design

- Failing to demonstrate an understanding of the gender dynamics of a group of people (eg when talking about 'farmers' what is the split among genders?)

- Lacking in consideration of the local context – understanding the roles and occupations of people of different genders in that country

- Having opportunities to create positive impact but failing to do so.

- Copying University Guidelines, so the statements around gender equality are not specific to the proposal

- Having Gender Equality as an add-on and not integrating it into the project

Project Design Considerations

The University of Edinburgh has produced some guidance on Gender Inclusion in Research Proposals (Gender.ed.ac.uk)

▶ Who has access to decision making?
Are people of different genders equally represented in decision making?
Do social attitudes limit their access?

▶ Who has access to and control over resources
Do all people, no matter what gender, have equal access to resources in the communities where the research is taking place and findings will be applied?

▶ What is the division of labour?
Do all people, no matter what gender, perform the same labour in relation to the goals and themes of your research, in the context where the research will be undertaken and findings will be applied? Are different social groups performing, or assumed to perform, distinctive tasks and responsibilities? Are they performed in different spheres or locations (domestic/private or public)? What are these differences?

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

▶ To be counted as ODA, all activities (research or otherwise) must qualify under rules set down by the OECD.

▶ To be ODA-eligible, the OECD states that research projects should be *directly and primarily related to the problems of Thailand.*

▶ We will have questions in the application about ODA impact and relevance, usually projected over a medium-term timeframe to ensure this is applicable to all projects.

▶ Please consider the economic development and social welfare impact of your work, including how it is conducted as well as the outputs and potential outcomes.

▶ Including relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is encouraged and can help frame ODA relevance.

▶ ODA funding cannot be used for military, security, or dual use projects.

ODA Table

Reportable as ODA	NOT reportable as ODA
Directly and primarily relevant to the problems of ODA countries (eg) • research into tropical diseases, improving crops or renewable energy (even if carried out in UK) • operational research to support an aid programme • research that underpins country-specific development priority plans • education research and innovation • research into infrastructure for social and economic development (big data engineering, communication) • disaster risk reduction • rural and urban development (cities) • arts and humanities for development • supporting people with disabilities • research addressing Inequalities	**Research without a plausible pathway to a development impact within a short- to medium timeframe (eg)** • generic solutions to fundamental research questions • research specific to non-ODA countries (eg. cancer, if general) • research on global climate change (non-specific) for example modelling • research on defence technologies with 'dual use' • research to improve commercial use of extractive industries and energy • research to improve healthcare which would not be affordable or accessible • research where the primary benefit is to a UK company • research which cannot be legally regulated in the country concerned

Assessment criteria for ODA

- Clear evidence is provided demonstrating that the suggested impacts assessed are relevant to the lives of vulnerable people/low-income populations in a DAC country.

- Clear evidence is provided demonstrating that the project will contribute to the economic development and social welfare of the partner country and within a reasonable timeframe (within 3-10 years).

- Development-relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries are defined, and the project plan includes an engagement plan.

Hints for successful ODA statement

▶ Involve local stakeholders, policymakers as Associate Partners and clearly state their role in the partnership

▶ Detail the need for the research and place it in the country context

▶ Clarify the time frame for impact and the steps that need to happen to create impact

▶ Ensure that the socio-economic benefit of outcomes are for low-income and vulnerable populations in the partner country

▶ Does the research align with a priority which has been identified by the partner country?

Budget - Eligibility UK Funding

Eligible Costs

Staff Costs

Travel and subsistence costs

Directly Incurred Costs

Estates

Indirect Costs

Additional Funding for Inclusion

Ineligible Costs

Equipment over £10,000

Standard office equipment (laptops)

Studentships (including Phd Stipends)

Dissemination costs

Patent costs

Entertainment costs

£ **Directly Incurred costs:** These are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record.

Indirect costs are ones which cover the costs of the Research Organisation's management and administrative services

Supporting documents

The following are the required supporting documents:

UK Project Leader CV in Resume for Research and Innovation format (R4RI)

Partner Project Leader CV (R4RI)

UK Letter of Support

Partner Letter of Support

Gantt Chart (no more than 1 page)

Associate Partners Letter of Support (if applicable)

Requirements Letters of Support

Projects will be considered **ineligible** if files are missing , or don't comply the with the requirements of the Guidance for Applicants. There will not be a final re-submission process.

Letters of Support for Project Leaders

▶ One from each of the two Lead Institutions;

▶ Each on headed paper;

▶ Each signed by a person with appropriate delegated authority, giving specific commitment to the project

▶ Not signed by project leader

▶ Dated no earlier than 4 May 2025

Other Documents

Projects will be considered **ineligible** if files are missing , or don't comply the with the requirements of the Guidance for Applicants. There will not be a final re-submission process.

▶ CVs in Resume for Research and Innovation Format for both Project Leaders
No more than 2 pages long

▶ Gantt Chart
One Page long

▶ Letters of Support for Associate Partners
Submitted as one PDF document
Must also be on headed paper, dated no earlier than 4 May 2025 and be signed by someone with appropriate authority
Should detail the support that the Associate Partner will offer

Submission

- Expression of Interest to be submitted by 30 June

- Full application deadline 4 August

- You are able to save and continue

- Once submitted you will be able to make changes up to the closing date

- **Submit early to avoid any complications due to computer systems – we can not accept late submissions**

- **Apply via this link:**

Contact us

✉ UK-ISPF@britishcouncil.org

𝕏 @HEGoingGlobal

f https://www.facebook.com/britishcouncil

in https://www.linkedin.com/company/british-council