



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

DFID-ESRC Growth Research Programme (DEGRP) Financial Sector Development & Growth Call Specification (Call 3) 2015 -16

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Summary

The DFID-ESRC Growth Research Programme (DEGRP) is a jointly-funded initiative of the Department for International Development (DFID), and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Launched in 2011, this £20.9 million programme is focused on economic growth¹ and related issues in low income countries (LICs)². The aim of DEGRP is to strengthen evidence-based policymaking that contributes to inclusive and economically sustainable growth and poverty reduction in LICs, through enhanced quality and impact of relevant social science research. Inclusive growth is not precisely defined, but reflects an underlying motivation to ensure that the benefits of development are broadly realised. Research activities supported by DEGRP must demonstrate effective demand from, and practical relevance to, decision-makers, practitioners and communities. To date DEGRP calls have focused on three themes: agriculture and growth; innovation/productivity and growth, and finance and growth.

The 2015-16 call has a single thematic focus on **financial sector development and growth**³. We invite proposals to establish a single programme that will produce excellent research on financial sector development and growth in LICs. The research programme will improve and deepen our understanding of the role institutions, international financial capital flows, and technological diffusion play in triggering and sustaining financial development in LICs. Proposals must address at least **two** of the following overarching questions:

- What role do international capital flows (private and public) play in LICs' domestic financial development, economic growth and development trajectories?
- How can institutional frameworks support inclusive financial development and sustained economic growth?
- How can the financial system (private and public institutions) in low-income countries be a catalyst and a channel for technological diffusion?

In addition to the research undertaken by the successful applicant, the funders aim to work with the research team to identify additional areas for targeted research within this theme of specific relevance for particular policymakers. Up to £500,000 of additional funding may be made available for this additional co-produced research.

We expect to fund **one** research programme under this call. Proposals are invited for projects with a full economic cost (fEC) value between **£1.5 million and £2 million** (GBP). Proposals outside this value range will not be accepted. This budget limit refers to the total cost of the project, not the contribution paid by the ESRC and DFID. Projects may be up to four years in length. The earliest start date for successful grants is 1 March 2016.

The deadline for proposals is **16.00 (UK time) 2 July 2015**.

¹ In this context, economic growth is defined as sustained increase in the quantity and quality of goods and services produced per person, providing the basis for increased national income and living standards.

² For the purpose of this research programme LICs include both Least Developed Countries and Other Low Income Countries in the: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>

³ Further information about DEGRP Calls 1 & 2 and the programme are available at: <http://degrp.squarespace.com/>

Programme overview and call background

A growing body of empirical work highlights the importance of economic growth for poverty reduction but there are significant gaps in our understanding of the role of policy to stimulate growth in LICs. We have an understanding of the basic ingredients that make up a successful growth strategy, but there is a need to deepen our understanding, including how to apply strategies to economic and political contexts. In addition, evidence of good policy may be well-established but is not put into practice by decision-makers. Greater efforts are needed to ensure evidence - both existing and new - is used in policymaking.

Against this background, ESRC and DFID have allocated £20.9 million to support research through the DEGRP. The DEGRP programme focuses on three complementary outputs:

- The generation of world-class and cutting-edge policy relevant research addressing key questions on economic growth in developing countries, particularly LICs. Typically this will take the form of publications in high-quality peer-reviewed academic publications.
- The effective dissemination of research findings to key policy and decision-makers. This will be indicated by examples of engagement with and influence on policymaking.
- Strengthening capacity of southern researchers to lead and manage research.

The DEGRP programme has three thematic focus areas. These include agriculture and growth; financial sector development and growth; and innovation and productivity growth in LICs⁴. Within each of these themes, the programme expects to provide evidence on the details behind the growth process and structural transformation more generally (eg linkages amongst sectors), to explain drivers of productivity change and effective contributions of the themes to growth, and to highlight significant research gaps.

The two previous DEGRP calls funded projects across the programme's three themes. In call 1, 18 projects (2011-12) were funded and 19 projects were funded under call 2 (2013-14)⁵. In grants funded under this programme to date, the least represented theme is that of financial sector development and growth. The funders are keen to address this gap and ensure we support policy relevant research that is addressing important questions on the mechanisms that link finance with growth and enabling a body of evidence to be built around this area of growth research in LICs, which will ultimately enhance the overall impact of the programme.

The 2015-16 call draws on a paper published in the *voxeu* (N F Campos & S Dercon, 2014, *Gaps, cracks, and lacunae: The finance and growth nexus in low- income countries*, <http://www.voxeu.org/article/finance-and-growth-nexus-low-income-countries>), as well as a targeted consultation process involving policy, research and practice stakeholders. This highlighted a lack of sufficient high-quality research and data on the financial, institutional and

⁴ The full guidance provided to applicants on the overall thematic scope of the programme in DEGRP calls 1 & 2 and the full specification for call 2 are available at: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/25156/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_2.aspx

⁵ For a full list of DEGRP call 1 projects see: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/international-funding/esrc-dfid/growth-research-programme-funded-projects.aspx>. A full list of DEGRP call 2 funded projects is available at <http://degrp.squarespace.com/projects2/>. Further information about DEGRP, including programme outputs is available from DEGRP's Evidence and Policy Group (Overseas Development Institute, ODI) website: <http://degrp.squarespace.com/>

technological processes and structures that support economic growth in LICs, as well as the need to improve links between research and policy working in this area. This call aims to strengthen the evidence base on the role international finance, institutions and technology play in the development trajectories of poorer countries. It also aims to bridge the research and policy divide ensuring policymakers are involved in research to maximise its relevance and uptake. The funders will work with the successful programme grant when it is up and running to explore opportunities to co-ordinate associated activities on knowledge exchange and research and policy development within this area.

Specification of Call 3- Financial Sector Development and Growth

Grant overview

There are two distinctive components of DEGRP 2015-16 Call 3, focusing on Financial Sector Development and Growth.

The **first** is the academic scope of the call which concentrates on three important and broad overarching lines of enquiry in order to build the evidence base on financial sector development and growth in LICs. We seek to commission a programme that will deliver an original proposal for innovative excellent social scientific research on financial sector development and growth, with potential for high impact, which addresses at least **two** of the three overarching research questions:

- What role do international capital flows (private and public) play in LICs' domestic financial development, economic growth and development trajectories?
- How can institutional frameworks support inclusive financial development and sustained economic growth?
- How can the financial system (private and public institutions) in low-income countries be a catalyst and a channel for technological diffusion?

The **second component**, once the grant is established, seeks to support additional, yet complementary, targeted streams of research to address specific questions co-designed with DFID policymakers and other relevant stakeholders. Additional funding of up to £500,000 will be made available for this research activity.

Proposals **must** demonstrate a commitment to, and the feasibility of, working with the funders and other national and international stakeholders to develop a separate work stream that encourages researchers, policymakers and users of research to work collaboratively on scoping and producing important policy relevant papers. In this way, the programme will support better linkages between research, policy and practice, and increase the chances of findings being taken up and embedded in policy decisions. See the 'Finance & Growth policy relevant questions' document (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx) annexed to this call for the types of important policy questions identified through the consultation process which are of particular interest to the funders.

Applicants are invited to address any of the ten Finance and Growth policy relevant questions or modifications of these. However, the extent to which applicants address the indicated questions will **not** affect the level of top-up funding made available in the second component for additional work. Themes for the second component can be developed in

other areas, provided these are co-produced with research users, if the successful proposal encompasses many of the indicative questions.

Proposals **must** demonstrate the skills, experience, capabilities and capacity of the team to deliver this component; this may include identifying additional resource and expertise from applicants' organisations or networks that may be brought in to the programme at a later stage. Applicants are welcome and encouraged to identify how they will use their own stakeholder networks to identify opportunities for co-production, but it is expected they will also be open to working with stakeholders identified by the funders.

The DFID-ESRC Growth Research Programme Grant in this area will:

- Be a hub of research excellence
- Make a significant contribution to scientific, economic and social impact
- Involve potential users of research from the project initiation stage and take advantage of international collaborative and/ or comparative opportunities
- Support additional research and co-produced policy work streams for policymakers to maximise policy relevance and uptake
- Support an active career development programme aimed at building international research capacity in the financial sector and growth development in LICs
- Include plans for research uptake

Structure and organisation

Applicants are encouraged to think imaginatively about the appropriate structure for their proposed programme. There are various ways of structuring a Research Programme grant.

The Programme may consist of:

- A team of researchers in one or more organisations, including (or exclusively) institutions in developing countries, with a lead institution that has overall management and financial responsibility
- A hub and spokes model where the team is mostly in the lead organisation but works closely with experts at different organisations in a multi-stream research programme. (This type of arrangement provides an opportunity for more transformative individual work streams and for early career researchers to lead particular projects)
- Researchers from a number of disciplines within the social sciences and beyond
- Partner and co-investigator institutions may include any combination of academic, civil society and private organisations.

We welcome inter-organisational proposals and also strongly encourage partnerships with non-HEI organisations and the inclusion of business, civil society or public sector co-investigators. We expect non-academic stakeholders, including potential research users and intermediary organisations with a mandate to communicate research, to be included and involved in both the early design and on-going conduct of the programme.

Management Plan

Applicants should explain how they will provide leadership to a potentially diverse group of collaborators and how the proposed programme of activities and its outputs will be managed. Proposals should include details of an Advisory Group that will be appointed to

oversee the development of the grant and to advise on key activities and directions. These arrangements will need to be set out as part of the Case for Support in the proposal and further details provided in the Management Plan.

As part of the funders' engagement, we will expect to receive meeting papers and input to and attend meetings, where possible, with the grant holders and the advisory group.

Research Organisation (RO) support

We will be looking for evidence of strong RO commitment and contributions to hosting a Research Programme, for example, through the provision of grant-associated parallel activities and capacity building. This RO commitment will need to be set out in the Case for Support and the Research Organisation Support statement (see 'Je-S Guidance for Applicants' for further details).

Funding exclusions

Proposals which duplicate work previously supported by ESRC or DFID will **not** be funded. The programme will **not** fund contract research or consultancy work where the results and physical outputs are to some extent already pre-defined and known

Proposals which are not deemed to be within the scope of this call will **be rejected**.

Geographical focus

While ESRC and DFID recognise that many of the world's poor live in middle-income countries, it is a specific objective of this programme to increase the body of research that is specifically relevant to low-income countries. Research focused on middle-income countries not in this list is allowed under the programme - however, these proposals must **explicitly** detail how the research is relevant to one or more low-income countries. It is not sufficient to note only that the area under study is similar to conditions in average low-income countries. The process by which lessons may be drawn for the circumstances of LICs must be made explicit in the proposal. Specific similarities must be articulated and the Pathways to Impact must include clear plans to engage with stakeholders in one or more low-income countries, normally at an early stage in the research process. Proposals lacking sufficient detail in these plans may be rejected by the ESRC office prior to peer review. The funders aim to fund a research programme that focuses on low-income countries, which will come into consideration when making funding decisions on proposals of equal scientific quality. (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>)

Cross-cutting issues

Both funders have a strong interest in a number of cross-cutting issues. As applicants develop their research proposals they must be aware of these cross-cutting issues within the context of their proposed research.

Strengthening governance in fragile states

Strengthened governance in fragile and conflict-affected states. A working definition of fragile states for this research programme is those states in which the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, presenting some of the most urgent challenges facing the developing world. Such states are the furthest from the Post Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and experience significant poverty and human development problems.

Structural inequalities

Structural inequalities including those based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, class, must be addressed within research proposals. Failure to identify and explore the distinctive gender dimensions of economic and social policies and institutions – as well as other structural inequality dimensions such as those relating to ethnicity, age, disability and spatial geography – may lead to bias in interventions and processes, or limit impact and value for money. In order to produce knowledge and evidence to inform more effective policies and programmes and to support transformational changes in structural inequalities, applicants must make a genuine effort to integrate adequate analysis of gender and other structural inequalities in their research design, even where this may not be the central focus of the project. We strongly encourage researchers not only to ensure that relevant data – where feasible – are disaggregated by sex, age and other structural inequalities, but also to analyse the different roles and responsibilities, constraints and opportunities or power differentials between, for example, girls/women and boys/men.

Multi/inter-disciplinary research

ESRC and DFID recognise the need for a new research approach to effectively respond to the complex international development challenges of the post-MDG era. This funding programme is focused on research from across the social sciences, including international relations, anthropology, economics, sociology, and geography, and all proposals **must be at least 50 per cent social science** - our definitions of social science disciplines are available from the Proposal classifications webpage (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/applicants/proposal-classifications-ESRC-disciplines.aspx). Any queries on this aspect of a proposal should be sent to the programme secretariat in the ESRC Office (see the 'Contact details' section).

However, although not a pre-requisite for funding, we strongly encourage multi- or inter-disciplinary research projects. This may involve researchers from different social science disciplines bringing together their perspectives, approaches and expertise, or unite social scientists with those working within the natural, environmental, arts and humanities or other areas. A key requirement is that applicants demonstrate a clear and strong rationale for how their proposed research and approach meets the criteria for world-class and cutting-edge policy relevant research on financial sector development and growth in LICs.

A mixed methodological approach may also contribute to the quality and potential impact of social science research in LICs. Proposals which effectively and rigorously combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address a research question are likely to strengthen their case for funding. However, superficial or token inclusion of either quantitative or qualitative elements in a research project is inadequate.

Applicants must ensure that their proposed methodology is appropriate to addressing their research questions. These factors will be taken into account by the commissioning panel.

International dimension and partnership/collaborative relationships

This programme is concerned with international co-operation to address issues of global importance. Underpinning the programme and all funded projects must be a strong research ethic based on mutual respect and understanding for different cultural, ethnic, social and economic beliefs and practices.

Projects with developing country leads or partners are strongly encouraged. Principal investigators can be based anywhere in the world, and funding is **not** dependent on the involvement of a UK-based research organisation. Formal partnerships and collaborators in the research process are **not** a prerequisite for support under the programme. Sole applicants are acceptable and may be based in any country (subject to eligibility requirements explained below).

However, we strongly encourage partnerships and collaborative relationships where these are substantive and meaningful. The programme allows academics from developing and developed countries to work together in any configuration of their choosing, and partnerships may build on existing relationships or represent the development of a new collaborative relationship. The intellectual challenge should be the determining factor when configuring appropriate partnerships and collaborations. The principle requirement is for meaningful quality collaborations or partnerships, demonstrated through clear leadership roles across the proposed partnership, and balance and proportionality in partners' roles and responsibilities. These factors will be taken into account by the commissioning panel.

We also expect non-academic stakeholders, potential research users and intermediary organisations with a mandate to communicate research that are included in the proposal, to be involved in both the early design and on-going conduct of research projects. This is especially the case where research is taking place within government systems, without compromising the independence or integrity of the research. There is recognition that the exploitation of new knowledge does not just occur at the end of a research project, but rather is embedded throughout the research process itself. The commissioning panel will consider the plans for involvement of non-academic stakeholders in the research process.

Research capacity

ESRC and DFID recognise three key aspects of capacity development: building the research capacity of **individuals**; building **organisational** capacity (eg management, financial, communications); and **institutional** capacity building (eg the incentive structures, the political and regulatory context, and the resource base within which research is undertaken and used by policymakers). The capacity to undertake and maximise the impact of research depends on a combination of human capacity, the availability of research resources (including data), and the political and incentive context for policy and decision-making. We are not seeking to fund capacity building per se through this programme. Both sponsors fund capacity building activities through other mechanisms. However, we expect as a minimum that all proposals identify capacity building activities as part of, and not separate to, the stated research approach. Applicants are encouraged to consider the diversity of opportunities and contexts for capacity building within their proposed research. Capacity building elements should be set out in relation to the core intellectual agenda of the research proposal and not treated separately; the focus should be on the quality and impact of the research, and how increasing research capacity contributes to this.

Good examples of capacity building include co-design of research and implementation, field-based research methods training for developing country partner staff, and opportunities for developing country partner staff to author/co-author journal and conference papers and participate in national and international conferences. Support and mentoring for more junior team members may also contribute importantly to building future research capacity. Successful proposals will also demonstrate a strong understanding of the local research

context and ensure the research programme does not undermine local research capacity. These factors will be taken into account by the commissioning panel.

This programme does **not** provide support for standalone doctoral students. Standalone masters and ad hoc courses for UK students will also **not** be funded. Applicants who are considering including an associated studentships in their research project must refer to the document 'How to include an associated student' on the call web page (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx) for eligibility requirements.

Research impact

We expect researchers funded under the programme to have identified the potential impacts of their research on policy and practice, and to actively consider how these can be maximised and developed. This emphasis on research impact will be reflected within the assessment process and will be taken into account by the commissioning panel.

As a key component of this research programme is to build evidence within financial sector development and growth in LICs, and it is expected that researchers will already have engaged with key stakeholders in the research countries in developing the proposal.

It is recommended that a minimum of 10 per cent of the overall budget should be dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the Pathways to Impact. Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the kinds of user engagement, knowledge exchange, communications and research uptake activities they plan to undertake during and beyond the period of research funding. It is important that applicants appreciate that outreach and engagement activities in themselves do not constitute impact. The development of a clear impact strategy will be important to ensuring research impact is achieved. When completing the Pathways to Impact section of the form, applicants may find it helpful to refer to ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy⁶.

To support appropriate stakeholder involvement it is a **requirement** of this call that at the earliest opportunity each programme **holds a seminar with key stakeholders** in the country or countries where the majority of the research is taking place, to set out the aims of the Research Programme and fully ground it in the local context. This will facilitate the potential co-production of knowledge and will also allow researchers to 'reality-check' their plans. If this kind of activity is not appropriate for your project we would expect you to set out the reasons why in your application.

Open Access policy

RCUK (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/datapolicy/>) and DFID (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Research-and-evidence/DFID-Open-Access-Policy/>) have both published policies on open access to publications and data. Researchers funded under this programme will be expected to comply with the requirements outlined in these

⁶ www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/developing-plan/index.aspx. Further information on ESRC's guidance for Pathways to Impact for Je-S applications: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/pathways/index.aspx>. DEGRPs Evidence and Policy Group (EPG) has also developed helpful guidance for researchers, see DEGRP Impact and Communications Strategy <http://degrp.squarespace.com/impact/>.

policies. Where the policies differ from one another, we would expect researchers to comply with the more stringent policy.

Funding will be available for all associated legitimate and proportionate costs but the route to funding will depend on the researchers' institutional affiliation. UK institutions are no longer able to apply for Article Processing Charges (APCs) as part of a research proposal, but instead funds are provided to research organisations at an institutional level as block grants in order to set up publication funds. For those researchers not covered by the RCUK block grant mechanism, ESRC and DFID will work to ensure that you are not disadvantaged. If APCs cannot be covered by block grants (ie if there is no UK researcher on the proposal or involved in the article in question), applicants should include the APC costs and justify these fully in their proposals. Applicants should seek advice from the programme secretariat as to whether publication costs should be requested (see 'Contact details' below).

What can applicants apply for?

Proposals are invited for projects with a full economic cost (fEC) value of between **£1.5million** (minimum) and **£2 million**. The fEC value refers to the total cost of the project, and is not the actual contribution paid by the ESRC and DFID. The funders' contribution for UK applicants is 80 per cent of fEC. Funding arrangements for non-UK institutions are set out below. If applicants or their host organisations have any doubts about the costing basis of their proposals they should contact the programme secretariat.

For non-UK institutions

The programme will support in full (100 per cent) all the directly incurred costs of the research. In addition, indirect costs may be charged on staff salary and other staff-related costs (ie statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions). Indirect costs may **not** be charged on non-staff related direct costs, eg equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences etc. The following rates for indirect costs should be applied:

- For applicants from developing countries, the overhead rate is 50 per cent
- For applicants from developed countries, the overhead rate is 20 per cent.

Further information is provided in the document 'Costings Guidance for Non-UK Institutions and Partners' - available to download from the call webpage (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx).

Proposals from a non-UK institution or which include any non-UK partners **must** refer to this document before completing the Je-S proposal. ESRC will ask for adequate evidence of the costing basis for all direct and indirect costs. If a grant is recommended for funding, budgets may be reduced if considered excessive. All applicants are strongly advised to consult their institutional finance/research offices regarding the financial aspects of their proposal in good time before the call deadline. All costs should be broken down and fully justified.

The duration of grants should be up to a maximum of four years, and applicants should note the specific rules for duration of projects involving doctoral students. (See 'How to include

an associated student': http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx).

Eligibility to apply

The principal investigator **must** be based at an RO that possesses an existing in-house capacity to host a grant and to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the national or international research base, and is able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes.

Applicants that are not based in a higher education institute (for example work for an NGO or other third sector organisation) should consider whether their organisation is best placed to host a grant and can meet the stringent expectations of RCUK eligibility. It is essential that institutions with minimal research capacity collaborate with a credible research organisation who would host the project

Eligibility checks will be applied to all proposals on receipt at ESRC. Peer reviewers will also be asked to comment on the credibility of the host institution. If you are unsure about your organisation's eligibility, please consult the programme secretariat. Proposals which are not from a credible research organisation will be **rejected** by the ESRC office.

Recognised research institutions

Research Council recognition of institutions eligible to hold grants is a longer and more involved process that will be undertaken once a proposal has been recommended for funding, after the full peer review and commissioning panel assessment. This must be completed before a grant can be issued to the grant holder's institution. The following paragraphs outline this process.

All grants will be awarded to the institution of the principal investigator, and this institution will be responsible for the proper disbursement and accountability of all monies received. In order to be eligible to hold ESRC grants, institutions must be recognised as meeting specific criteria relating to mandate, research infrastructure, governance and accountability. Most UK higher education institutions and some other independent UK research organisations are already recognised institutions, and hence are eligible to apply for, and hold, Research Council grants.

Most non-UK institutions and some UK organisations will not currently be recognised to hold UK Research Council grants. Lead institutions which are not recognised to hold UK Research Council grants will have to obtain Research Council recognition before any grant can be confirmed. In order to minimise administrative burdens and costs to both applicants and ESRC staff, formal recognition will **only** be pursued if the grant is successful.

No grant can commence until full RCUK eligibility has been granted following this process.

Further details of the recognition process for research organisations are available from the secretariat, but in broad terms it covers:

- Research infrastructure, intellectual capacity and critical mass of researchers to undertake high-quality social science research
- Institutional governance and accountability structures
- Audit and accountability procedures

- Sources of core funding and other funding.

This process takes some time. When setting proposed start dates, applicants in host organisations not recognised to hold UK Research Council grants should allow a minimum of two months beyond the earliest grant start date for the recognition process to be completed.

Principal investigators and co-investigators

The programme is open to researchers based in higher education institutions, research organisations or other organisations with a credible research capacity (see above). Researchers may be based in either UK or non-UK organisations with demonstrable research capacity.

Under the programme rules an individual is permitted to be involved in multiple bids to this call, but **cannot** be the principal investigator on more than one bid. No applicant (PI or co-I) can exceed 37.5 hours per week time commitment across current proposals to ESRC and/or ongoing ESRC grants.

All grants will be made to the institution hosting the principal investigator, and that institution will be subject to standard terms and conditions for ESRC grants with regard to the disbursement of funds to co-investigator at other institutions, and with additional programme-reporting requirements.

Important note: In addition to a formal recognition process explained above, all applicants and their organisations must register to use the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system before submitting a proposal. Je-S will be used to receive and process all proposals under this call. The section 'How to apply and the decision-making process' below contains full information and guidance on this registration process. All applicants intending to submit a proposal are strongly advised to read this section carefully. All applicants and co-applicants **must** register to use the Je-S system.

Other collaborators (including consultants)

It is possible to name other specific collaborators in the proposal - for instance public, private or NGO sector experts who could provide invaluable stakeholder input and advice to the project. These must be fully costed on the proposal and their role on the project must be made clear.

Consultants can also be included on a proposal, but clear justification must be provided to explain why a consultancy is the most appropriate way to staff this aspect of the project.

Studentships and visiting fellowships

Doctoral students may be included on proposals, provided the research project duration is three years or more and the student will be based at an ESRC-accredited Doctoral Training Centre (DTC). Applicants who are considering including a doctoral studentship in their proposed research project should refer to the document 'How to include a grant-linked student' - available to download from the call webpage (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx).

Visiting fellowships, both professorial and lecturer/researcher level, may also be included in a research project. In this case the proposed fellow working on the grant should be known and named on the proposal. A rationale for their role and contribution to the project must be included in the proposal.

Decision-making process and assessment criteria

Eligible proposals will be peer reviewed by a pool of expert assessors. Applicants whose proposals are assessed as of sufficient quality to merit consideration by the Commissioning Panel will be given the opportunity to respond to reviewers' comments. The Commissioning Panel of academic and non-academic experts will then assess the proposals and make funding recommendations. Funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in December 2015 and successful applicants will be invited to interviews in January 2016. Final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants at the end of January 2016. The earliest start date for the successful grant is 1 March 2016.

- Deadline for submitting proposals - **16.00 (BST) 2 July 2015**
- PI response– October 2015
- Decisions to applicants – December 2015
- Interviews for successful applicants- January 2016
- Earliest grant start date – 1 March 2016

Peer reviewers and the commissioning panel will be asked to comment on the following criteria, and therefore applicants are advised to consider all these criteria in preparing their proposals. Assessors and panel members will consider whether proposals are of a world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically sound), and whether the research has the potential to have a real impact on improving understandings about financial sector development and growth in developing countries.

Research agenda

- Is there a clear understanding of how the proposal responds to at least two of the overarching questions?
- Is the conceptual framework of the proposed research appropriate to address the issue?
- Is there clarity and coherence in the research design between research questions, research methods and anticipated intellectual outcomes?
- Are the research methods clearly specified, appropriate to the questions set, and robust? Where mixed methods are used, are quantitative and qualitative methodologies effectively, rigorously and appropriately combined? Are issues of validity and reliability of data appropriately addressed?
- Does the proposal integrate adequate and appropriate analysis of gender and other structural inequalities?
- Do data management plans follow best practice, and adhere to ESRC data policy?
- Does data collection build on country data systems and/or secondary data sources where available, to reduce duplication and increase sustainability?
- Have appropriate ethical considerations been addressed in the proposal?

Research team

- Does the proposed research team have relevant experience in this area of study?
- Does the P-I have demonstrable experience of managing research programmes of a similar size and complexity?
- Does the research programme research team/consortia have relevant geographical expertise and experience?
- Does the research team have experience of working with multiple stakeholders?

Project management

- Is there a robust management structure with clear arrangements for co-ordination and management of the strategic direction of the programme?
- Are the project management plans and configuration of roles and responsibilities reasonable, appropriate and credible for the given project?
- Are the credentials of the investigators and host institutions appropriate to deliver the project?

Capacity building

- Are any identified capacity building activities set out in relation to the core intellectual agenda of the research?
- Is there an understanding of the local research context, and have steps been taken to ensure the research programme does not undermine local research capacity?
- Where a proposal includes a linked doctoral student:
 - Does the proposal demonstrate sufficient evidence of an appropriate research environment and infrastructure for doctoral work?
 - Are the arrangements for the supervision of students adequate and appropriate (including the suitability of the proposed doctoral supervisor/s)?
 - Is the research conducted by a doctoral student a discrete piece of work which is clearly of a standard to be submitted as a doctoral thesis, but will also produce synergy and add value to the main research project?

Research impact

- Has full consideration been given to the contribution the programme will make to:
 - Scientific, economic and social impact
 - Policy and practice
 - Involvement of potential users of research within financial sector and growth in LICs
 - Innovation in social science theory, methods or application
 - International collaborative opportunities?
- Does the project have real potential for impact on financial sector development and growth in LICs?
- Does the 'Pathways to Impact' statement present a set of clear, well-funded activities for genuine collaboration with a variety of stakeholders throughout the life of the project?

- Does the proposal appropriately address demand for research, either by demonstrating effective demand from policymakers and other stakeholders beyond the academic community, or by setting out a feasible strategy to raise awareness of the significance of the research among relevant stakeholders?
- Is there appropriate analysis of who the stakeholders/potential users of research outputs are and the processes and means for engaging with them at all stages of the research process?
- Are there clear plans to make findings available to target audiences and to maximise research uptake?

Value for money

- Is the budget appropriate and reasonable for the proposed programme of work, including all staff costs, travel, field work, data collection, data analysis tasks and research uptake activities?
- Are there any components of the project costs which appear excessive? (Estates and indirect costs should not be commented on)
- Is the amount of senior staff time on the project appropriate?
- If consultancy costs are claimed, is this the most appropriate mechanism of staffing and are the rates reasonable?
- Are the research impact activities appropriately funded with at least 10 per cent of the overall budget dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the impact summary?

Research partnerships

- Are proposed academic and non-academic partnerships or collaborations appropriate for the proposed research?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of partners and collaborators clear, justified, proportionate and balanced?
- Have all the partners been fully involved in the design of the research and do they have a clear and meaningful role in future activities?
- Have sufficient resources and time been allocated to ensure strong working partnerships across disciplines, organisations and geographic contexts?

How to apply

Proposals must be submitted to Je-S by the call deadline **16.00 BST on 2 July 2015**. Electronic acknowledgements will be sent to the principal investigator and submitting organisation.

All proposals must be submitted in English, costed in pounds sterling and made on the official Je-S proposal using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system.

NB: Proposals can **only** be accepted by electronic submission through the Je-S system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jes2webloginsite/login.aspx>).

Application forms are available on the Je-S system. The proposal has two elements: an online form requesting key information; and a series of mandatory attachments, including the Case for Support, Pathways to Impact, Justification of Resources and CVs for all named

individuals, which are to be completed offline and uploaded as (preferably PDF) attachments in Je-S. Generic guidance on the completion of the structured boxes and sections of the form is available from the Je-S Help screens, which can be found at the top right hand corner of each Je-S screen.

The Case for Support contains the substance of the research proposal, and it is essential that a coherent overview of the proposed project is presented addressing the intellectual and academic case, potential for impact on the finance – growth agenda in LICs, any collaboration or partnership configuration, and an appropriate management plan.

Applicants **must** ensure that they have read and complied with the call-specific guidance set out in the 'Je-S Guidance Notes for Applicants' which is available to download on the call web page http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/34141/DFIDESRC_Growth_Research_Programme_DEGRP_call_3.aspx, as well as the programme criteria set out in this call specification. **Where programme-specific guidance provided in these call documents differs from generic Je-S help, the programme-specific guidance should always be followed.** Care and attention must be given to completing the proposal correctly and complying with all technical requirements. Proposals that are not completed correctly may be **rejected** by the ESRC office.

In order to use the Je-S system, **principal investigators (PIs)** and the **host organisation** need to register on the system. Registration of both the PI's organisation and their own details must be completed before the proposal can be formally submitted to the ESRC.

When setting up a Je-S account your institution will be asked to nominate an **approver** and a **submitter** whose roles are to check and then submit the proposal to ESRC.

The final submission process is the responsibility of the host institution, and the ESRC cannot accept responsibility for any delays which may occur. It is recommended that applicants submit in good time before the call deadline at this stage. We strongly advise applicants to confirm with their relevant administrator that the proposal has been submitted successfully to the ESRC.

Contact details

The ESRC is responsible for the implementation and administration of the joint DFID-ESRC calls. Jointly funded by the two sponsoring agencies, a secretariat has been established at ESRC to develop and manage the programme policies and procedures.

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed in the first instance to the DFID-ESRC email address dfid_growth@esrc.ac.uk any enquiries may also be addressed to:

- Emma Bushell
Telephone: +44 (0)1793 413155
- Petya Kangalova
Telephone: +44 (0)1793 413074

The Je-S Helpdesk may be contacted by email (jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or telephone (+44 (0)1793 444164) and is staffed Monday to Friday 9.00 to 17.00 (UK time, excluding public and other holidays).

Further details on the programme are available at: www.degrp.squarespace.com.