**Research Development International**

**Collaboration Awards**

**FAQs and Other Questions 2025-26**

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# Eligibility queries

## I am interested in applying as an International Co-Applicant. I am a lecturer at my university but don’t hold a PhD – am I eligible?

As an International Co-Applicant it is not a requirement that you hold a PhD. Your involvement in the collaboration should be aligned to your research experience and knowledge. To help with planning how you will achieve your research objectives, you and your Bristol Lead Applicant should consider what future funding opportunities are available, and check with the funder directly on what basis you are able to be part of a grant application.

## I am interested in applying as an International Co-Applicant, but I am from a non-academic organisation, can I apply?

The purpose of this funding scheme is to enable sustainable research collaborations that will lead to research grant applications. Therefore, as an International Co-Applicant you should be in the position to collaborate on such funding opportunities. Non-academic organisations can include businesses, NGOs, government departments, schools, community groups, social enterprises, or arts or cultural organisations. Your organisation must have the in-house capacity in terms of staff and infrastructure to support the proposed research programme and have sufficient capacity to deliver research and/or other outputs from the programme. It is the responsibility of the University of Bristol Lead Applicant to consult with our team in advance of submitting the application to check the eligibility of International Co-Applicants. It is your responsibility to provide the necessary detail to them so that eligibility can be determined.

## Can I apply for funding to support the development of my Fellowship application?

This scheme does not support visits that are primarily aimed at training or to support Fellowship applications; the benefits should extend beyond the individual. However, if the project meets all the requirements of the scheme and has the potential to deliver the required outcomes but also includes plans for a Fellowship, that would be acceptable.

## Can I apply for funding to support the development of a proposal for a University of Bristol seedcorn scheme or other internal funding scheme?

This scheme is designed to lead directly to external funding bid(s) which includes research income for the University of Bristol. University of Bristol seedcorn schemes or other internal funding (e.g. through an IAA) would therefore not be considered eligible outcomes on their own; however, they can form part of a wider package of work which also includes external research funding bid(s). The external funding bid(s) should not be contingent on further internal funding being secured first; we would expect all projects funded through this scheme to be delivering external research funding bids as a direct outcome.

## Can I apply for funding to support the development of a proposal for innovation funding?

This scheme is designed to lead directly to external research funding bid(s), which includes research income for the University of Bristol. Innovation funding bids would therefore not be considered eligible outcomes on their own; however, they can form part of a wider package of work which also includes external research funding bid(s). The external funding bid(s) should not be contingent on innovation funding being secured; we would expect all projects funded through this scheme to be delivering external research funding bids as a direct outcome.

## Can I apply to this scheme while also seeking other funding for this project?

Yes. There is space on the application form to list additional sources of funding so if you are successful, we can make awards alongside other funding you may secure. If you have already secured funding from your Faculty/School/Department and/or from the collaborator institution, you must add this to the table in ‘Section 3: Funding’ on the application form and use the formula (A+B+C+D-E-F) to work out the remaining costs you would like the RDICA funding scheme to cover. If you are awaiting the outcome of other funding applications, however, and your ability to deliver the outcomes outlined in your RDICA project is contingent on that other funding also being secured, this needs to be clearly stated and may affect the outcome. The Panel will only fund projects that are likely to achieve the stated outcomes, regardless of whether or not other funding bids are successful; the RDICA project needs to stand alone and achieve outcomes independently. However, where additional funding may provide opportunity for additional outcomes, above and beyond those from the RDICA funded activity, this would generally be looked upon favourably.

## The call specification states that all applications should “serve the University of Bristol’s strategic interests” – how should I address this in my application?

We would like applicants to reflect on how their application serves the University’s strategic interests, demonstrating its value to the University. We would expect applicants to demonstrate active links to the University’s [research strategy](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/research/) and the thematic priority areas identified by the University. We would also expect applicants to reflect on how their research links to and benefits different parts of the University, including the Research Institutes, Faculty Research Groups, Centres, other investments and/or initiatives, as well as their School and/or Faculty’s priorities. Applications are more likely to be successful where they can evidence prior and planned wider engagement which will maximise outcomes, linking in with other activities across the University and beyond.

## Is it a formal requirement for me to submit the Research Compliance Triage Checklist before submitting my RDICA application?

Yes, you are required to submit the Research Compliance Triage Checklist and submit this to the Research Compliance team prior to submitting your RDICA application, so the Research Compliance team can discuss any potential issues with you. You can find out more and access the Triage Checklist on the [Research Compliance Sharepoint site](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/red/SitePages/Resources.aspx).

## What is the success rate for applications to this scheme?

We have run two rounds of this new funding scheme so far. Due to high levels of interest and the limits of our awarding budget, we have so far funded an average of 37% of applications submitted, so this is a competitive scheme.

# Project activity queries

## Is this scheme the same as the International Strategic Fund (ISF)?

No, but there are similarities. The RDI Collaboration Awards scheme represents the merging of several of our previous schemes, including the International Strategic Fund (ISF), Bristol International Research Collaboration Activities (BIRCA), and Bristol ‘Next Generation’ Visiting Researcher Awards. We have drawn upon different elements and strengths of each scheme and streamlined our activities. Please therefore ensure you fully familiarise yourself with the guidance document for this scheme before commencing your application, as there are some differences from the former ISF.

## Can I hold a workshop in a third location (i.e. neither in Bristol nor my collaborator’s home city)?

Yes, where this is fully justified and represents value for money. For example, where the activity involves multiple collaborators from across a particular region it may be more practical to identify a third location which acts as a central hub for all collaborators, reducing travel time and costs.

## When should the collaboration activity take place?

Activities should start at least three months after the application deadline, to allow time for the review process, decision panel meeting, communication of outcomes and your own planning. Activities and related spend must be completed by 31st July 2026.

## How long should the collaboration activity duration be?

We would normally expect most activities to be between one and two weeks in total, allowing for active research development work between the collaborators and planning and delivery of any associated activities. We recognise that sometimes more time is needed, so we are open to longer durations (up to one month maximum) where fully justified; however, longer visits or activities may exceed the maximum budget available per award and you may therefore need to secure additional sources of income to supplement your award. As noted above, however, the Panel will only fund projects that are likely to achieve the stated outcomes regardless of whether or not other funding bids are successful; the RDICA project needs to stand alone and achieve outcomes independently.

For all activities, we would expect University of Bristol Lead Applicants and International Co-Applicants to work together before the activity or visit to maximise the outcomes of the time together, and we would also expect all awards to have a longer-term legacy and a development plan for ongoing collaboration.

## In the case for support, what should ‘sustainability’ cover?

In this section you should outline the legacy of the activity, explaining how the collaboration will continue and develop beyond the initial funding award. This includes its financial sustainability (i.e. through securing additional research funding) and the longer-term engagement of researchers and other stakeholders involved in the project. This section is not intended to focus on environmental sustainability; however, we do encourage applicants to consider the environmental impacts of their travel and activities and you may therefore also include comments on the environmental sustainability of your project, where appropriate.

## Can I include footnotes, links and/or a bibliography in the case for support?

No these should not be included and will be disregarded by reviewers. The call specification and application form on the [RDICA webpage](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-research-development/bristol-research-development-opportunities/rdica/) list the areas that you should cover and this should be written in language that is accessible for non-specialists, as it may be reviewed by panel members who are not familiar with your academic field.

## Do we have to stick to the dates of the activity/activities in my application, or can we change them?

All applications need to have specified dates, and the award will be made on that basis; however, we recognise that circumstances can sometimes change unexpectedly. If your project is successful but unforeseen issues arise, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss. Any changes will need approval from the RDI team, and we may not be able to approve all requests. Please be aware that funding for our schemes is based on the University of Bristol academic year which runs from August to July, and it will therefore only be possible to consider date changes within the same funding year

## What details should I include when outlining my plans for grant submissions?

Within your Case for Support and in particular in the “Planned research grant bids” section of the application form you should provide details of the funder(s), scheme(s), and anticipated award value (full-economic cost) and known or estimated submission date. Providing a timeline in the Case for Support provides assurance to the panel that the application is timely and that there is a clear commitment to seek external funding.

# Costing queries

## I am a University of Bristol member of staff who will be travelling abroad for my project. Are my visa costs eligible?

Yes, your visa costs (including travel to/from an embassy for interviews, if required) are eligible provided that the travel is essential to the project. As noted in the call specification, visa costs for international collaborators are also eligible costs.

## Does this award cover the costs of carrying out research?

No. We provide funding to cover the costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence to visit or host research collaborators to develop sustainable research partnerships. Reasonable additional costs such as admin support and catering for workshops are permitted, provided that the focus of these is on research development (i.e. progress towards collaborative bids and other outputs such as co-authored publications). We recognise that collaborators may well undertake some research during the interaction, but this is not the focus of the funding scheme, and costs associated with research are not eligible.

## Can I request funding to cover mobile data costs?

We expect these costs to be covered by the subsistence funding rather than being listed as a separate cost.

## What is the maximum amount of subsistence I can request for my visit to a collaborator institution?

Costings for subsistence contributions, as well as accommodation, must be both within the limits set by the UK Government in their [employees’ overseas travel guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/expenses-rates-for-employees-travelling-outside-the-uk) **and** within the limits set in the [University of Bristol expenses policy](https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/finance-services/SitePages/travel-and-expenses-policy.aspx). Please note that these are maximum limits and the reviewers will consider an application’s value for money when making funding decisions. Applicants are therefore encouraged to do their research and consider appropriate funding requests in their application, rather than simply applying for the maximum amount.

## My partners are based in India and China, can I apply for additional LMIC funding up to £5k?

No – the additional LMIC funding available under our scheme is offered in line with UKRI's policy, which excludes India and China. Visit the [UKRI website](https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-project-co-lead-international/ukri-project-co-lead-international-policy/) for more information.

If you feel there is an exceptional case for increased costs to support the involvement of Indian partners, please contact [rd-international@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:rd-international@bristol.ac.uk) before developing your budget.

## Can I employ a Research Associate to support my activity?

Potentially, yes, but it depends on the nature of the work. Some activities, such as full-day workshops, require dedicated support for logistical arrangements such as booking the venue, arranging catering, coordinating attendees, etc. We would normally expect this support to be at an administrative level; however, we recognise that sometimes subject-specific expertise can be beneficial to activity planning. For example, someone with understanding of the subject area who is able to help identify suitable collaborators, design a suitable programme of activities and set an agenda, and provide suitable questions and topics to workshop in order to serve the research development ambitions. This scheme does not, however, support research activity itself, nor buy-out of academic staff time for the purpose of bid or publication writing.

## My International Co-Applicant is not from a Low- or Middle-Income Country (LMIC), but one of the additional collaborators is. How much can I apply for?

We would normally expect most applications to be in the region of £2-3k, however, up to £4k is available per award where fully justified. For applications with an International Co-Applicant from an LMIC, we will exceptionally make up to £5k available per award where fully justified. This is explicitly in recognition of additional/higher costs including flights and visa costs, and the lack of financial capacity within some LMIC universities to contribute to project costs. Any spend above the usual £4k limit must therefore only be due to the additional costs incurred as a direct result of these circumstances and which might otherwise be a barrier to participation.

If your International Co-Applicant is from a non-LMIC but you have other collaborators who demonstrably add value to the project and are from LMICs, you can apply for up to £5k if this is necessary to specifically cover the additional costs incurred by LMIC collaborators (such as visa fees). However, we would normally expect your collaborator’s institution to be making a financial contribution towards the overall project costs. So, in most cases we would not expect an application with a non-LMIC partner to exceed the normal £4k limit. All projects must demonstrate value for money.

## As part of my project activity, we will be running a workshop in Ethiopia with local community organisations and small NGOs to provide vital local insights into our project. They would only be able to participate if we pay them for their time, and in Ethiopia it is conventional for participants such as this to receive a per diem payment. Can I pay them for their time?

Yes, under these circumstances it would be acceptable to pay these participants for their time, as they clearly add value to the project and not paying them would be a barrier to their participation. You would, however, need to consult with relevant colleagues in finance and procurement to ensure that your planned method of payment is compliant with the University of Bristol’s policy and procedures, and consider the potential implications (e.g. for tax or benefits) for the recipients.

## As part of my project activity, we will be running a workshop in Bristol with the NHS and Cancer Research UK. Can I pay them to participate in my workshop?

No, we would not expect to pay for participation from individuals from large organisations where engagement is in their organisation’s interest and falls within the remit of their salaried roles.