What is it the GCRF Engagement Fund?
The GCRF Engagement Fund provides funding to support activities to develop productive, sustainable relationships with collaborators and research users in the private, third, or public sector, with the primary aim of addressing specific development issues in our six focus countries of Botswana, Colombia, India, Mexico, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

The Engagement Fund will support activity that seeks to pump prime research, build relationships with research users or to generate impact.

These guidelines are for TRAVEL GRANTS only.
Up to £3,000 is available for travel to support the development of new networks, or advance existing collaborations, with non-academic partners.

Aims of the fund
All projects funded by the GCRF Engagement Fund must be ODA compliant. GCRF funded activities must:

- Address a significant problem or development challenge, as described in the GCRF challenge areas www.ukri.org/gcrf and UN Sustainable Development Goals https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs
- Directly contribute to the sustainable and inclusive prosperity of people in developing countries, especially the six focus countries of Botswana, Colombia, India, Mexico, South Africa and Sri Lanka.
- Ensure the primary benefits of all activity accrue to developing countries (benefit accruing to non-developing countries is of secondary consideration).

All aspects of your application must be ODA compliant.

For more information on ODA compliance, please see the downloadable guide on the UoE GCRF webpages https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/research-funding/gcrf-at-essex.

The fund will accept applications relating to developing countries other than the six focus countries, but only if they have a strong relevance to university strategic priorities.

TRAVEL GRANTS: Travel grants supported by the GCRF Engagement Fund will support the development of new networks in developing countries. Visits will aim to build new connections, or substantially advance existing connections, with non-academic partners, including the public and third sector. Partners will include those who could collaborate on future impact case studies or research funding applications. All visits should include meetings with organisational representatives at multiple levels, particularly senior decision makers who can formally authorise future collaborations. Visits could include supplementary meetings with academics but the fund will not be used to support meetings only with academics, or with single individuals. Up to £3,000 is available.

Selection criteria and eligibility
The fund is open to all UoE academic staff. ODA compliance is mandatory and applications which do not provide evidence of ODA compliance will not progress to evaluation. All successful applicants will be required to complete a report at the end of their activity to assist with the evaluation and reporting to Research England.

TRAVEL GRANTS evaluation criteria are:
- Does the visit have clear aims?
TRAVEL GRANTS

- Is this a new collaboration or does it add value to an existing collaboration?
- How does it relate to a problem or development challenge?
- Is there a clear plan for activities and meetings during the visit?
- Does it include an appropriate range of contacts at suitable organisations?
- Is there a plan for future and ongoing collaboration?
- How appropriate are the follow-up plans?

Reporting

Each award will be subject to evaluation against these criteria and for ODA compliance. Project leads may be required to report on progress against agreed milestones during the award, but must submit a final report within a month of the end of the activity.

A project case study will be required for reporting and promotional purposes and Research and Enterprise Office (REO) staff will be available to assist in its production.

Timetable

Call opening dates and deadlines for applications can be found at GCRF@Essex. Applications can be made at any time. We expect decisions to be made and notified within a few weeks. Projects should take place and all funding must be spent before the end of June 2020.

Advice for the application

1. Make sure you fully address the ODA compliance requirements. This is a mandatory requirement for all GCRF funding and applies to all activities for which you request funding. To answer the questions in section 5 (about ODA compliance) you may find you have to repeat information provided in other sections of the application.

2. Follow-up activities (section 4) relate to follow-up related to your project/event, for example further collaboration, publications or joint activities; longer-term strategy (section 5) should consider the broader and strategic context of your project for example impact case studies or funding applications.

3. Ensure your budget is realistic and under £3,000. If your visit requires more than £3,000 you should contact gcrf@essex.ac.uk first to see if it is worth making an application.

4. You should take the risks and mitigations section seriously: it may include risks related to research, travel or which accrue only to those with whom you are collaborating. Please see the GCRF relevant university policies section on our website.

5. Completed applications should be passed to your department's Director of Impact or Research (as appropriate) and Head of Department, who are asked to comment on the proposal and approve the application (an electronic signature is fine).

6. All applications should be submitted – in Word – via the online application submission portal on Qualtrics by the deadline.

If you have any queries please email gcrf@essex.ac.uk.