

# Global Innovation Initiative

*Strengthening global research through multilateral partnerships*

## FAQs

### **Q: Who can apply?**

A: Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK are invited to submit proposals together with at least one higher education institution in the US and one higher education institution in a designated country (Brazil, China, India and/or Indonesia). All partner institutions must be accredited and recognised as a higher education institution in their own countries. In order to apply to the UK grant competition administered by the British Council, the partnership must be led by a UK institution.

For the purposes of this competition, a UK higher education institution (HEI) is a recognised body. Please visit the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [website](#) to determine if your institution is considered a recognised body.

Overseas branch campuses of UK or US universities are ineligible partners.

### **Q: Is there a maximum number of institutions that may be involved in a partnership?**

A: Partnerships of more than three post-secondary educational institutions from eligible countries may apply. Partnerships must meet the minimum requirement of having at least one UK HEI, one US HEI and one HEI from a designated country. There may be institutions from more than one designated country involved in the partnership.

### **Q: Must partnerships involve only higher education institutions?**

A: Partnerships must include at least one recognised higher education institution from the UK, US and at least one designated country. Other institutions such as research institutions, private sector companies, non-profit organisations and similar organisations may be involved in the partnership as long as the minimum requirement is met.

### **Q: Can you tell me if a particular institution is considered a recognised higher education institution?**

A: We recommend checking first with the relevant country's Ministry of Education webpage for a list of HEIs. If you are still unsure, please contact us at [GII@britishcouncil.org](mailto:GII@britishcouncil.org).

### **Q: Can an institution not located in the UK, US, Brazil, China, India or Indonesia be eligible as an additional partner?**

A: Institutions located out of these countries may be considered as additional partners, but may not receive any of the GII funding. None of the proposed activities may take place in countries outside of the GII countries.

### **Q: What are the designated countries?**

A: The designated countries for the Global Innovation Initiative are Brazil, China, India and Indonesia. Partnerships must include a higher education institution from at least one of these countries in to be eligible. A partnership may include institutions from more than one designated country.

**Q: What type of research is eligible for funding?**

A: The Global Innovation Initiative supports multilateral research collaboration on STEM-related issues of global significance. The themes for the competition include:

- Energy, environment and climate change  
Proposals in this category should address issues related to preserving the environment, mitigating and preventing the effects of climate change, and changing the way energy is produced and used through alternative sources.
- Urban development  
Proposals in this category should address issues connected with rapid global urbanisation and solutions to the challenges of human population density including economic, social, and environmental effects. Proposals can address, but are not limited to, topics related to infrastructure, smart cities, and green and sustainable buildings.
- Agriculture, food security and water  
Proposals in this category should address issues related to innovative farming and cultivation techniques and practices, the ongoing access to and stable availability of sufficient and nutritious food, the availability of potable water and water pollution.
- Global health  
Proposals in this category should address significant issues impacting human health in the global context, with an emphasis on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Proposals should investigate innovative solutions which prevent disease, promote healthy and fulfilling lives, and reduce global health disparities. In this category, the UK competition also encourages proposals which address either antimicrobial resistance or aging populations.

Interdisciplinary approaches to the research proposal, including the humanities and social sciences, are welcomed provided that the research foundation lies within STEM disciplines.

**Q: How do I submit my application?**

A: Applications may be submitted via the British Council's IHE [website](#) by clicking 'Submit your application.' All required attachments must be submitted via the web-based form. When attaching documents, please make sure each file is submitted as one complete file. For example, one document containing all the CVs should be submitted. One document containing all letters of support should be submitted, etc. Attachments may be submitted as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF formats. The budget template may be submitted as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Submissions must follow the guidelines (font, margins, format, length) or will be rendered ineligible.

**Q: What must be included in the application?**

A: To be deemed eligible, applications must have the following documents:

- Completed web-based application
- Proposal narrative
- Work plan
- Budget proposal
- Budget narrative
- Letters of support
- CVs of principle investigators (PIs)

**Q: Can an institution or researcher submit multiple proposals?**

A: Institutions and researchers may be involved in multiple, distinct proposals. There is no limit to the number of distinct proposals that an institution or researcher may submit.

**Q: Can the same partnership team apply to both the UK and US competitions under the same theme but with distinct proposals (i.e. different research activities, the research focuses on different areas within the theme)?**

A: While this is technically permissible, partnership teams are strongly discouraged from submitting two proposals within the same academic area of priority. Rather, partnership teams are strongly encouraged to focus on preparing one strong proposal, bearing in mind that approximately 16 grants will be awarded in total. The British Council and its US implementing partner, the Institute of International Education, review applications in both streams following the closing date to ensure there are no duplicated proposals.

Proposals submitted to both the UK and US competitions by the same research team and addressing the same research topic will be ruled ineligible.

**Q: Is the grant only for new partnerships or are existing partnerships eligible to apply?**

A: Both new and existing partnerships are encouraged to apply. This is not prioritised during the selection process.

**Q: Are there any funding restrictions on the type of proposals that may involve China in the UK competition?**

A: Partnerships that include China may apply under any theme in the UK grant competition.

**Q: Are partnerships that include an institution from Hong Kong eligible for funding?**

A: Institutions from Hong Kong may be included in a partnership.

**Q: What does 'Appropriate costs for fieldwork and for temporary project staff in country' include?**

A: These costs may include laboratory consumables, costs and stipends for non-permanent staff and research assistance, and any other activity that is deemed necessary to conduct the research.

**Q: Who needs to submit a letter of support?**

A: Letters of support must be submitted by all partners to show institutional commitment. At the minimum, there must be a letter of support from the UK, US and third country higher education institution. Letters from additional partners are not mandatory, but are highly recommended to show their commitment and importance to the partnership. Letters of support should come from a senior official that is authorised to make institutional commitments for partnerships.

**Q: What are the guidelines for the optional additional letters of support?**

A: In addition to the required letters of support from each partner institution, partnerships may submit letters of support from private or public sector organisations or individuals who can provide solid evidence of an investigator's ability, experience and research capacity, or in support of the partnership as a whole.

**Q: Can my proposal include several of the thematic areas?**

A: While we recognise that the themes are interdisciplinary in nature applicants should choose one thematic area which best fits the overall proposal. In the Tier 1 review, proposals will be scored against other proposals in the same thematic area.

**Q: Does each partner institution need to make a financial contribution to the partnership?**

A: There are no strict regulations regarding financial contributions, nor is there a minimum or maximum level of commitment. However, proposals that demonstrate significant cost sharing will be viewed favourably in selection. Institutional commitment should be seen as mutually beneficial and should be as equally shared as befits institutional capacity.

**Q: How are the funds disbursed?**

A: All UK funds will be directly awarded to the UK-lead institution and will cover a period of two years. The UK-lead institution is responsible for transferring funds to partner institutions for activities that support the research and overall initiative.

**Q: Can my US partner receive funding?**

A: It is up to the partnership to decide how the lead institution should distribute funds amongst its partners. We encourage the majority of activities to take place in the UK or the designated third country.

**Q: When will the results be announced?**

A: Successful applicants will be notified mid to late February 2015 with grants being disbursed in March 2015. All applicants should be notified of their application status by 31 March 2015.

**Q: If there are more than 3 partners in a partnership, is it possible to get more than £150,000?**

A: No, the maximum of grant that will be awarded is £150,000 regardless of the number of partners involved.

**Q: Is the primary emphasis of this initiative research?**

A: GII supports innovative research by funding the activities needed for successful research cooperation: student and faculty mobility and people-to-people collaboration. Scientific merit is a review criterion and all applications will be peer-reviewed by experts in the thematic areas. However, strengthening international partnerships through the activities listed above is an important goal of GII, and the potential of each partnership will be assessed during the selection process.

**Q: What activities are eligible for funding?**

A: In addition to pure research collaboration, we encourage activities that promote student/faculty mobility, the convening of panel discussions as well as collaboration on degrees and other approaches to learning. Partnerships are not limited to these suggestions; all activities should promote the STEM-related priority areas, sustainable partnerships, as well as the overall initiative. Although we strongly encourage the majority of activities to be conducted in the UK or designated country, we would consider any proposal that makes a strong case as to why it is absolutely necessary to conduct the research activities in the USA.

**Q: How many grants will be awarded in this cycle?**

A: Approximately 10 grants from the UK and 6 grants from the US will be awarded in this year's competition – approximately 16 grants in total.

**Q: How many applicants are you expecting?**

A: We expect this grant cycle to be very competitive based on the quality and number of proposals we received last year. This year we expect between 150 – 200 applications to be submitted through the UK competition.

**Q: Does the partnership need to spend the entirety of the funds over the full two year grant period?**

A: We encourage activities to take place over the course of the two-year period. If the funds are not spent by the conclusion of the grant period, you are required to return the unused portion of the grant to the British Council. This is a condition of the grant agreement.

**Q: What kind of equipment funding falls under the eligible funding 'Essential project equipment up to a limit of £15,000 per project'?**

A: Across the four themes, it is difficult for us to specify the kind of equipment this may include. We set a limit as the purchase of expensive laboratory equipment is not the purpose of this grant.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of staff/student exchanges between GII partner institutions?**

A: No

**Q: For subsistence allowances for travelling researchers, what are the British Council's standard rates for each country? Or should we use our university's rates?**

A: You should use your university's rates.

**Q: Will there be future grant opportunities?**

A: At this moment, we are only focusing on the current grant cycle.