2Eligible

Going Global Partnerships

Guidance Notes

**UK-Saudi Challenge Fund**

December 2023

Grant call for UK-Saudi Challenge Fund

Countries: Saudi Arabia. Going Global Partnerships

[Going Global Partnerships](https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/going-global-partnerships) supports universities, colleges and wider education stakeholders around the world to work together towards stronger, equitable, more inclusive and internationally connected higher education, science and TVET.

Through international partnerships, system collaborations and opportunities to connect and share, we enable stronger transnational education, more collaborative research, higher quality delivery, enhanced learner outcomes and stronger, internationalised, equitable and inclusive systems and institutions.

We help to strengthen higher education and TVET in five core areas:

* **Enabling research** – supporting research, knowledge and innovation collaborations to address local and global challenges and promote inclusive growth.
* **Internationalising higher education and TVET** – supporting systems, institutions and individuals to benefit from internationalisation, including enabling transnational education and system alignment.
* **Strengthening systems and institutions** – improving the quality and efficiency of higher education and TVET institutions and systems.
* **Enhancing learner outcomes** – addressing the qualities of the global graduate, including soft skills, employability and community outcomes.
* **Increasing equality, diversity and inclusion** – making higher education and TVET more accessible, equitable and accountable.

See open and upcoming Going Global Partnerships opportunities [on our portal](https://education-services.britishcouncil.org/opportunities?sort_by=created&field_programme_tid%5B%5D=404).

Opportunities are being launched continually, so please check this page regularly.

**UK-Saudi Challenge Fund**

This funding mechanism is part of British Council’s **Going Global Partnerships programme (GGP)**, which supports cooperation between universities, colleges, education policymakers, civil society organisations and industry partners in the UK and around the world. UK and Saudi institutions are invited to bid under the UK-Saudi Challenge Fund for grants to support research collaboration, internationalisation of higher education institutions and transnational education.

The purpose of this call is to foster further collaboration between the UK and Saudi higher education institutions. It is part of the work of the British Council in higher education, which aims to extend, strengthen, and deepen connections between the UK education sector and governments and institutions around the world.

Eligibility criteria

Proposals must fulfil the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding under this call:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA | Y/N |
| Each proposal must have both:   * one Lead institution from Saudi Arabia; and * one Lead institution from the UK, submitting one joint application |  |
| UK Lead institution must be one of the following:   * Higher Education provider with [degree awarding powers](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/degree-awarding-powers/).   + England - Check the ‘awarding degrees’ drop down section on the specific provider’s entry on the [OFS register](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/#/). The OFS register lists all institutions which offer UK degrees, not all of which have degree awarding powers.   + Northern Ireland – <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/universities-and-colleges-northern-ireland>   + Scotland – <https://www.gov.scot/policies/universities/>   + Wales – <https://www.gov.uk/check-university-award-degree/recognised-bodies-wales> |  |
| Saudi lead institution must be:   * Higher Education provider, as locally defined |  |
| The Lead institution in the overseas country must have the capacity to administer the grant and capacity must be confirmed in the support letter. |  |
| The partnership can include in their proposals Associated Partners (from both Saudi Arabia and the UK) affiliated with:   * Higher Education providers * Not-for-profit research institutions, establishment and organisations * TVET/FE providers * Other education organisations/charities/foundations/membership bodies * Not-for-profit organisations, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) * For-profit/commercial organisations, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) * Branch and satellite campuses of UK Higher Education providers * Government organisations * Employer organisations and industry bodies * Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Social Enterprise organisations |  |
| For-profit non-education organisations are not eligible to receive any grant funds, except to cover travel-associated costs. |  |

Please send an enquiry to [suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org](mailto:suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org) if you are in doubt about the eligibility of your organisation.

Eligibility checks will be applied to all applications after the grant call closes. Those which are not led by an eligible institution will be rejected during these checks. Please see **Annex 1** for the eligibility criteria check list.

Funding

The UK Saudi Challenge Fund expects to support 5- 10 projects of between £20,000 and £40,000 in value each, for a 12-month period, starting from **April 2024**.

Funds will be disbursed directly to the Lead Institution in the UK according to the approved final budget. Applicants may be asked to adjust their budget if their request does not fit within funding guidelines or if this is considered not appropriate by the application reviewers.

For an equitable partnership, the Lead Institution should be able to timely transfer funding to other institutions in partnerships for activities which support the objectives of the collaboration and the overall project, allowing activities implementation to be implemented without delay.

Ethics

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported by this call. Applicants must ensure the proposed activity will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity.

In the application form, applicants must clearly articulate how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and how they will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

Please refer to the Research Councils UK ‘Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research’ (<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-050321-PolicyGuidelinesGovernanceOfGoodResearchConduct.pdf>) , the Inter Academy Partnership report ‘Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise’ (**http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx**) or contact us for further guidance.

Safeguarding and protecting adults at risk

The British Council is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and to upholding their rights in accordance with all applicable legislation and statutory guidance. As part of that commitment, we require that all staff, and those we work with, including partners and suppliers, operate within our Safeguarding Policy which articulates our approach to protecting children and adults at risk and promoting their wellbeing.

We have robust systems and procedures in place to both prevent incidents (covering, for example, the recruitment of appropriate staff, training and support given so that staff can work safely, and standards regarding the way in which we carry out activities) together with responsive actions necessary to address situations where we become aware that a child or an adult at risk may have been harmed. As part of our policy, all countries have a named Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP) who is supported by a Regional Safeguarding Manager (RSM) and the British Council Safeguarding Team.

For further information please see: https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/policies/safeguarding

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Applicants are encouraged to ensure equal opportunities in the teams implementing their proposed activity. Applicants may apply for additional funding to cover any specific requirements necessary to ensure full participation.

Please make additional costs in the ‘human resources’ section of the budget request within your application. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please contact us for further information on the British Council’s approach. See our Equality Policy here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/our-values/equality-diversity-inclusion>

Gender Equality

To comply with the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014, applications must outline how they have taken meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how the project will contribute to reducing gender inequalities in the Gender Equality Statement section of the application form.

**Gender Equality Statement**

Applicants are required to consider the impact their project will have on gender and provide a gender statement. It should not be a re-statement of your Institution’s policy; you may refer to the policy but should show how the policy will be implemented in terms of the project.

Below are the project aspects that can be taken into consideration for the gender statement but not limited to.

* Outputs
* Outcomes
* Make-up of the project team; participants, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project
* Processes followed throughout the project.

The statement is part of the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) assessment criterion in this call. The following questions should be answered when writing the statement.

* Have measures been put 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 activities.
* The expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond.
* The 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.
* How will any risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality be avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?
* Are there any relevant outcomes and outputs being measured, with data disaggregated by age and gender (where disclosed)?

Not all questions will be applicable. If a question is not applicable, you will need to articulate the reasons why.

British Council reserve the right to reject the application if no consideration has been given to gender equality or if the proposal is assessed to result in a negative impact for gender equality.

Impact on the Environment

The British Council is committed to minimising its environmental impact. For this call, we have developed a set of questions [ as seen on the **Environmental Impact** Sectionof the Grant Application form which will enable us to understand the expected impact of a proposed project on the climate (and environment more broadly). We welcome information from Applicants regarding environmental considerations such as reducing carbon emissions for their projects (for example, alternatives to national or international travel such as virtual delivery), minimising waste or promoting resource efficiency.

Please note, responses to these questions on **Environmental Impact** section seen on page 4 of the grant application form will not form part of the grant assessment criteria and will not be subject to peer review. The British Council collects this information for internal purposes only. Please contact us via email [suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org](mailto:suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org) , if you have any queries about the environmental impact section.

Applicant screening

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process, carry out searches of relevant third-party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant institutions nor any of the applicants’ employees, partners, directors, shareholders are listed:

* + as an individual or entity with whom national or supranational bodies have decreed organisations should not have financial dealings;
  + as being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime;
  + as being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body;
  + as being subject to export, trade or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director; and/or
  + as being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.

If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call.

The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches.

Please read the text to this effect on the application form and tick the box to show that you understand this.

Covid-19 guidance

Should COVID-19 impact global travel, we would advise that applicants consider, and put in place, contingency plans for remote working and digital collaboration where possible, for example utilising video conferencing in place of face-to-face meetings.

The British Council’s Global Information Security Policy has banned Zoom usage for the British Council and for contracted suppliers and grant award holders. The British Council recommends using Microsoft Teams to deliver virtual activities. Should you be successful in securing a grant, and if you require a Microsoft Teams licence, you will need to discuss this with the British Council. Applicants who want to use other online tools or online platforms, must follow British Council safeguarding and security protocols. Online tools or platforms other than Microsoft Teams must be discussed with the British Council and requests to use a different platform or tool would need to be approved for successful grant recipients.

Please consider flexible and technological solutions to progress activity for planned work where feasible.

British Council contractual requirements

* The contracting authority is the British Council which includes any subsidiary companies and other organisations that control or are controlled by the British Council from time to time
  + (see: [www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status](http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status)).
* The Grant Agreement Holder for the partnership will be the UK Lead Institution
* The successful applicants will be expected to undertake activities in the UK and in the overseas countries listed in these guidelines.
* The British Council is subject to the requirements of the UK Freedom of Information Act, (“FOIA”). Please indicate in your application whether FOIA also applies to your organisation, so that we can reflect this in the Grant Agreement should you be successful in your application.
* (Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement) (“Grant Agreement”). **By submitting a response to this call for applications, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of these guidelines and the Grant Agreement without further negotiation or amendment.**
* In the event that you have any concerns or queries in relation to the Grant Agreement, you should submit a clarification request to [suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org](mailto:suzan.mozher1@britishcouncil.org) in accordance with the provisions of this call for applications by the application deadline. The British Council reserves the right not to make any changes to the Grant Agreement.
* The British Council is under no obligation to consider any clarifications / amendments to the Grant Agreement requested following the application deadline.

**Privacy Notice**

The British Council and UK partners comply with UK GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and data protection laws in other countries that meet internationally accepted standards. The British Council will use the information that you provide for the purposes of processing your application, making any awards and the monitoring & review of any grants. The legal basis for processing your information is agreement with our terms and conditions of application (contract).

We may share all application data with the UK partner(s) institution(s)] and with [Saudi partner(s) institution(s)] our funding partner(s) in Saudi Arabia in order to assist with management of the application process. We may share selected non personal data with agencies responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the UK Saudi Challenge Fund.

Your information will not be used/shared beyond the partners listed above for any other purpose without your specific consent. British Council and its partners reserve the right to publish and share anonymised aggregated information with stakeholders.

Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information and country of origin, where collected, is used solely for statistical purposes. If we need to contact you, we will do so using the contact details you have provided.

Under UK Data Protection law, you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this, please contact your local British Council office or see our website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection>. We will keep your information for a period of seven years after the project.

Annex 1 – Eligibility criteria checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The application has been submitted by the applicant by the published deadline. |  |
| The application is completed in full. |  |
| The application form and supporting documents have been completed in English. |  |
| Lead institution is:  Higher Education provider with [degree awarding powers](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/degree-awarding-powers/). (See links above for the UK) |  |
| The applicants have included 2 supporting letters, one from each of the 2 Lead Institutions, on headed paper, signed by the Head of Department or other person with appropriate delegated authority, giving specific commitment to the project. Supporting letters must be in English, and not be signed by Lead Persons. As stated in these guidelines, email versions of letters are acceptable. |  |
| Lead Persons must have the capacity to administer a grant and satisfy British Council requirements to prevent bribery, fraud and professional misconduct. Applicants confirm that they comply with British Council requirements by responding to Pre-submission Confirmation in the application form. |  |
| Applicants have submitted a detailed budget request using the budget spreadsheet provided with the grant call documents on our funding call page. |  |
| Applicants have submitted a CV for both Lead Applicants. |  |
| Where relevant, Associated Partner letters have been uploaded |  |
| Human resource costs: Staff costs for personnel working directly on the grant funded project limited to 30% of the grant to be awarded. |  |
| UK expertise costs: Limited to 20% of grant to be awarded. |  |
| Travel costs: Limited to 20% of the grant. |  |

**Annex 2 – Eligible and ineligible costs**

**Eligible costs**

The following costs are eligible for funding:

* Travel: Travel (economy class) and subsistence costs to the UK/partner country, visa fees, vaccinations, quarantine costs (not exceeding GBP800 per person for 14 days), medical insurance, and roaming charges during travel essential to the project, to the UK and partner country.
* Local travel in the UK and overseas (public transport to and from the airport and for meetings/visits is encouraged where possible).
* Reasonable accommodation and subsistence costs for staff when visiting their partner organisation in the UK or overseas
* Reasonable hospitality costs (excluding self-entertaining costs).
* Reasonable production costs (such as for the development of materials but excluding time spent by staff in relation thereto).
* Consultancy fee (for external procurement and up to 30% of the total project costs).
* Essential equipment for use in the project including consumables, specialist software licences essential to the collaboration, access fees for facilities or library services. Equipment must be essential to project delivery and beyond the scope of institutional provision.
* Cost of meetings, training events, workshops, public engagement events, and seminars integral to the proposal. Translation and interpreter fees.
* Publication costs directly related to the collaboration, including web page development by external providers, if appropriate. Open access publication is encouraged.
* Online platform and relevant costs for digital delivery can be included.
* Attendance at conferences or other events in the UK, partner countries, or virtual events to present the outputs and outcomes of the project.
* Monitoring and evaluation costs.
* All the foregoing activities must be directly related to the development and delivery of the agreed project. Partners will be asked to provide the British Council with information on expenditure, supported by receipts for monitoring and auditing purposes.
* The cost of staff time for full-time personnel working directly on the project, plus the costs of temporary personnel and other temporary staff recruited to work solely on the project

**Ineligible costs**

The following costs are ineligible for funding:

* Full economic costs (FECs).
* Promotional activities solely concerned with the recruitment of overseas students.
* Institutional overheads including administration fees and other indirect costs.
* Costs associated with Master’s and PhD scholarships (including stipends).
* Purchase or rental of standard office equipment (except specialist equipment essential to the research). This includes IT hardware – laptops, personal computers, tablets, smartphones, Mac workstations, computer parts and peripherals, etc. Any standard hardware routinely used by researchers and academics will not be funded.
* Office software and office equipment including desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, printers, and fax machines.
* Mobile phone costs including rental or purchase, and monthly phone bills.
* Exchange rate costs/losses and other banking-related costs.
* IP costs, patent, copyright, licensing, or other IP-related costs.
* Costs relating to the construction, procurement, or rental of physical infrastructure (e.g., office buildings, laboratory facilities). Rooms and facilities essential for routine collaboration are provided as an in-kind contribution by participating institutions. These can be detailed as an in- kind contribution in the budget breakdown.
* Entertainment costs such as gifts, alcohol, restaurant bills, or hospitality costs for personnel not directly participating in the project, excessive restaurant costs, and excessive taxi fares.
* No profit or fees must be charged to the grant.