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Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance for International Science Partnerships Fund – International Collaboration Awards

Introduction

This document provides guidance on Royal Society application finances, cost eligibility and organisation funding rules. This guidance applies to the following Royal Society programmes:

- ISPF – International Collaboration Awards Japan
- ISPF – International Collaboration Awards Brazil and South Africa (ODA)

For other [Royal Society programmes](#) please see the appropriate guidance documents.

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1 General Information

The following funding rules only apply to new applications from January 2025.

The finance section of the application should provide a breakdown of costs associated with undertaking the grant as described in the proposal. These grants do **not** fund Full Economic Costing (FEC). Support may be requested for both the UK and overseas partners. The Royal Society will fund the following costs and rates:

Cost Category	Royal Society Contribution	
	UK Host Organisation	Overseas Host Organisation
Permitted		
Directly Incurred Staff costs * (excluding Principal / Co-Investigator salaries/time)	100%	100%
Other Directly Incurred costs * such as travel, consumables, and small items of equipment (less than £25,000) (excluding specific costs listed below)	100%	100%
Directly Allocated costs * (excluding Principal / Co- Investigator salaries/time and Estate costs)	100%	100%
Not Permitted **		
Principal / Co- Investigator salaries/time	-	-
PhD studentships and fees	-	-
Items of equipment above £25,000	-	-
	-	-
Estate costs	-	-
Indirect costs/Overheads	-	-

* for definitions and more detail on eligible costs under each heading see section 4 and 5 below.

** for definitions and more detail on ineligible costs see section 7 below.

Applicants should consult their organisation's finance department for the appropriate figures to include within their application finances.

Resources requested must be appropriate for the activities proposed, will require justification and must demonstrate value for money.

The Royal Society will fund grant applications from UK based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCI) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs).

Payments will be made to the UK host organisation and the UK host organisation will be responsible for issuing appropriate collaboration agreements and passing on any money due to their overseas partner organisation(s).

Payments will be released in line with the requested annual values within the application. The Royal Society recommends that applicants spread research expenses equally across the grant duration,

although we will consider alternative payment schedules. The Royal Society reserves the right to amend the phasing of payments where it is deemed necessary.

Further itemisation of costs and methods of calculation may be requested to support the application before an award is made.

Appropriate sub-contracts must be put in place for any element of the grant which is to be paid to another organisation.

All applications are expected to have appropriate partner organisation input into the finance section of the application form.

Applicants are to apply the funding rules listed below to anticipated partner organisation costs.

Host organisations, collaborating organisations, and subcontractors are not permitted to earn investment gains on funds received from the Royal Society. The host organisation is responsible for monitoring and reporting on such activity. Any investment gains that have occurred must be returned to the Royal Society.

Host organisations, collaborating organisations, and subcontractors must consider the environmental impact by conserving resources, minimising waste and emissions, using recycled products when feasible, and prioritising sustainable methods to reduce their environmental footprint.

Host organisations and award holders must comply with the UK Government's Grants Functional Guidelines on National Security, ensuring that award activities do not violate them and reporting any related concerns or breaches to the Society promptly.

Host organisations must secure appropriate insurance for individuals involved in overseas activities during the award period and follow host organisation guidelines on travel and fieldwork safety, with the Society not liable for health, safety, or security.

2 Grant Funding Caps and Inflation

Each Royal Society programme will allow a maximum value that may be applied for. The International Collaboration Awards has a total value of £225,000 (£75,000 per year) from the Royal Society.

For applications that include a Least Developed Country (LDC): UK-Brazil or UK-South Africa applications that also include an LDC can apply for an additional £112,500 (£37,500 per year) to cover LDC partner costs (i.e. the maximum grant value that can be applied for is £337,500 (£112,500 per year). Applicants are not limited to only spending £37,500 of the annual maximum grant value on LDC partner if they wish to spend more.

Within this maximum value, a reasonable level of inflation to all grant costings should be applied. The Society reserves the right to reduce the levels of inflation applied if it does not consider the rate applied to be reasonable.

3 Information on different types of organisations

3.1 Host UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), UK Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCIs) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs)

The Royal Society will fund eligible costs for host UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), UK Research Council supported Research Institutes (RCIs) and eligible UK based Independent Research Organisations (IROs). This is the organisation at which some or all of the research funded by the award will be carried out and employs the UK lead applicant. Such costs will be provided at the funding rate of 100% of the direct costs. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove costs that are deemed ineligible or that do not represent value for money.

3.2 Host Overseas Organisations

The Royal Society will fund eligible costs for the host overseas organisation. This is the overseas HEI or not-for-profit research institute at which some or all of the research funded by the award will be carried out and employs the Overseas lead applicant(s). Such costs will be provided at the funding rate of 100% of the direct costs. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove costs that are deemed ineligible or that do not represent value for money.

4 Directly Incurred

Costs may be requested under Directly Incurred if they meet the general requirement that they are grant-specific, auditable costs. Principal / Co-Investigator salaries / time are not permitted as a cost.

4.1 Directly Incurred Staff

4.1.1 Other research staff (non-Principal / Co-Investigators)

Other staff (if applicable) can be charged to a grant as Directly Incurred (DI) if their time spent on the grant is auditable, this includes individuals who are either contracted to work 100% on the award or where timesheets are used.

The Royal Society will cover contributions to other staff salaries and any associated on-costs at the UK or overseas host organisation commensurate with skills, responsibilities, expertise, and experience. It is expected that the requested basic salary contribution will be consistent with institutional salary scales or equivalent departmental posts. Posts may be held full or part time.

All categories of research and non-research staff are eligible but should be appropriately justified including, but not limited to: Postdoctoral Research Assistants, Technicians, Fieldworkers, Project Managers.

4.1.2 London allowance

London allowance is an eligible cost where applicable and should be included where appropriate under the institution's pay policy, and if not included in basic salary.

4.1.3 Oncosts

Oncosts may include employer's National Insurance contributions, employer's pension contributions, Apprenticeship Levy and the Health and Social Care Levy.

For host overseas organisations, this may include medical insurance and social security costs.

4.2 Equipment items valued under £25,000

Equipment may be sought as part of an application where the items of equipment requested are necessary for the successful delivery of the proposed research. This can also include costs for delivery, installation, spare parts, software, and maintenance or refurbishment of new or existing equipment.

The Royal Society will contribute up to 100% of the final purchase price (inclusive of VAT) of any equipment item.

For equipment items purchased under the value of £25,000, the Royal Society does not require host organisations to demonstrate specific procurement procedures. Applicants should, however, adhere to the host organisation's procurement policy when making such purchases.

4.3 Other Directly Incurred Costs

The Royal Society will fund 100% of Directly Incurred (DI) research expenses, primarily categorised as Travel and subsistence, Consumables, items of Equipment under £25,000, purchase of animals. The Royal Society's funding is intended to provide the resources required for successful researchers to achieve their research aims. The following provides a list of eligible costs; this is indicative and other costs may be included subject to appropriate justification. The Royal Society reserves the right to remove any costs considered to be inappropriate:

- Animal costs (may be charged as directly incurred or directly allocated depending on how an institution allocates costs)
- Travel and subsistence
- Consumables
- Open Access
- Visa costs
- Software, software licences and other recurring computing costs dedicated only to the project
- Specialist publications (not expected in institutional libraries)
- Fieldwork fees/subjects/informants
- Technical and non-technical training
- Consultancy fees
- Public and community engagement costs
- Research Data management
- Recruitment and advertising costs for staff directly employed on the project
- Purchase/hire/running costs of vehicles if necessary for the project
- Summer students
- Subcontracting - Research Organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts are subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety
- Access charges to facilities and services which are not recoverable through other sources

- Workshop costs
- Interpretation and translation costs
- Bank charges/fees – associated with transferring funds to international partners

Guidance on some of the above headings is provided below.

4.3.1 Animal costs

Applicants are entitled to apply for animal costs, where the use of animals is required for the delivery of the research objectives set out in the application.

Please note the [Royal Society policy on the use of animals in research](#); implementation of the principles in the following guidance is a condition of receiving funds from the Royal Society:

[Responsibility for the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research guidelines](#)

[NC3Rs Guidelines: Primate Accommodation, Care and Use](#) documents produced by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs)

The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce or remove Animal costs that are not deemed appropriate.

4.3.2 Travel and subsistence

All travel should only be undertaken if necessary and should consider the environmental impact and whether the same objectives may be met without the requirement for travel.

Travel costs may be included as an eligible research cost where it is required for the delivery of the research objectives set out in the application, this would include but not be limited to training of group members, communication of research findings (conference attendance), collaborative visits and fieldwork.

Travel arrangements must also take into account value for money considerations, however, grant holders are encouraged to use the most environmentally sustainable form of transport rather than the most cost effective. Travel by train must be in standard class. For flights travel should be in economy class for flights less than 5 hours and premium economy for flights of 5 hours or more. All other travel and subsistence costs should be consistent with the host organisation's travel policy.

The Royal Society will not pay for the cost of carbon offsetting arising from travel associated with grants.

The costs of travel insurance should normally be covered by the indirect costs of the research organisation. But they may be requested as a separate directly incurred cost where it can be shown that the cost: arises specifically as a result of the project funded by the grant; is not covered by the existing organisation policies; and is separately identifiable and audited.

Travel bookings are expected to be managed through applicants host organisations. This will help ensure that appropriate travel insurance and cancellation coverage are in place in the event of travel

cancellation. The Royal Society should not generally be expected to cover costs associated with travel cancellations, though exceptions may be considered in certain circumstances.

Receipts should be kept where possible, and staff should be reimbursed for actual vouched expenses. Where this is not possible when travelling outside the UK expenses for accommodation and subsistence may be claimed in line with the rates as set by HMRC. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/expenses-rates-for-employees-travelling-outside-the-uk>

The total amount requested for Travel and Subsistence can be entered in the grant application as a single figure.

4.3.3 Consumables

Consumables required to deliver the grant are permissible except where they are otherwise already included within facility and equipment charge out rates.

4.3.4 Open Access

The Royal Society is committed to the widest possible dissemination of research outputs through the awards it supports. All recipients of a Royal Society award are encouraged to publish peer-reviewed accepted articles and conference proceedings in open access journals. As a minimum, award holders are expected to follow green routes for open access by publishing in a journal which allows deposit of the accepted manuscript version in an institutional or subject repository with no embargo period on access. The Royal Society's preference is for the version of record of peer-reviewed publications to be freely accessible and re-useable on publication to ensure the widest reach and maximum benefit to the scientific community.

In order to support award holders to achieve this, the Royal Society will allow the use of funding to cover fair and reasonable article processing charges (APCs) for articles published in journals or platforms with immediate open access under CC-BY licence. We encourage our award holders to practise due diligence to minimise their risk of using predatory outlets and avoid predatory journals and conferences; broad guidance for researchers can be found in the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) recent 2022 report "[Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences](#)".

The total amount requested for Open Access can be entered as a single figure.

4.3.5 Visa costs

Applicants may request costs to cover visa application fees related to short-term visits for the lead applicants and project participants from each team.

Work visa application fees, including immigration health surcharge costs, can be charged to the grant for all directly incurred staff directly employed on the international collaboration grant for 50% or more of their time. All visa application and immigration health surcharge costs incurred must be a direct result of the person being employed on the grant for 50% or more of their contracted time and are not extended to family members.

All costs must be met within the maximum total grant value. Note that applications are not allowed to request funds for visa costs incurred before the offer of the grant.

The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce such visa costs where they are not considered to be reasonable.

Directly incurred staff requiring a visa to work in the UK may be eligible to apply for a Global Talent Visa under the fast-track process of endorsement. We recommend that applicants review our webpage page for further information on eligibility to the Global Talent Visa category.

5 Directly Allocated

Costs should be requested under Directly Allocated where resources will be used by a project but are also shared by other activities. They are charged to projects based on estimates of usage rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis. Please note that Estate costs and Principal / Co- Investigator salaries / time are not permitted as a cost.

5.1 Other Directly Allocated

Other Directly Allocated includes costs of shared resources, such as Research and technical staff whose time is shared across several projects (such as pooled and infrastructure technicians) and is not supported by an audit record, Charge-out rates for equipment and major research facilities, Charge-out costs for departmental technical and administrative services and animal costs (where there are no auditable records of use).

6 Ineligible Costs

The following are ineligible costs for this programme:

- Principal Investigator(s) salaries / time
- PhD studentships and fees
- Items of equipment above £25,000
- Estate Costs, including building and premises costs, basic services and utilities, as well as clerical staff and operational costs that have not been included under other cost headings.
- Indirect costs/overheads, non-specific costs used by multiple activities, and which cannot therefore be assigned to specific cost objects. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, IT, legal, general laboratory, office consumables, library and some departmental services.

7 Virement rules

Funds must be used to support the objectives of the grant only.

Funds cannot be transferred outside of the grant.

If plans change during the lifetime of the grant, you may be able to utilise some of your funding to be spent elsewhere on the project in line with virement rules in the Royal Society Conditions of Award.

8 Justification of costs

Applicants must provide a full justification of costs. This includes but is not limited to:

All direct costs charged to the grant from the Royal Society – including the costs of other staff contributions, consumables, equipment and other direct costs.

Cost should be added in GBP and within the justification include the exchange rate at the time of application

Inflation rate applied to the grant application, specifying the rate applied in each of the grant years and how the rate applied is reasonable. Please note, the Royal Society reserves the right to reduce the levels of inflation applied if it does not consider the rate applied to be reasonable

9 Costs that can be claimed but should not be included in application finance

The following costs can be charged to the Royal Society under specific circumstances as set out in our funding policies and positions. To ensure confidentiality, the process for administering these costs is managed separately from the main application and these costs must NOT be included in the application finances.

9.1 Additional support costs

Promoting a supportive and inclusive research system is a key priority for the Royal Society. Reasonable adjustments are changes made to remove or reduce disadvantages for individuals who are disabled, have long-term health conditions, are neurodivergent, or have learning disabilities. As the employer, the legal obligation for reasonable adjustments rests with the host organisation, under their 15 employer's obligations in the Equality Act 2010 in England, Scotland, and Wales and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland.

The Society will consider requests for additional support costs for disabled award holders where they are required to fulfil the aims of a Grant. Award holders can only apply for these additional support costs if their host organisation does not cover these costs or covers only part of these costs. In these circumstances the Royal Society will work with you and your host organisation to explore any requirements for additional support on a case-by-case basis.

Any support provided by the Royal Society must not replace the support the host organisation or government must make and the costs they bear in doing so. Royal Society funds must not be used to repay the cost of reasonable adjustments provided by your host organisation. To ensure confidentiality, this process is managed separately from the main application, and costs for reasonable adjustments must NOT be included in the application finances. For more information, please contact the grants team.

9.2 Childcare travel costs

The Royal Society can provide financial support to Award Holders for any additional childcare costs that arise when attending conferences, collaborative research visits or invited talks directly related to their award.

This process is managed separately from the main application, and childcare costs must NOT be included in the application finances. For more details, please refer to the [Royal Society Childcare Travel Policy](#)