Grand Challenges and Global Engagement Office Joint Small Grants Call:
The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Pathways to Achievement
Eligibility & Guidance for Applying

1. What is the **SDGs: Pathways to Achievement** call?

The current global pandemic had brought into stark relief the interdependencies that make the achievement of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals essential over the next 10 years, but also makes 2020 the start of the COVID-19 challenge decade. UCL has been strategically proactive in addressing global challenges through cross-disciplinary interaction and global collaboration which was recently highlighted at the Beyond Boundaries: Realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals virtual conference held in October 2020 by UCL's Grand Challenges and Global Engagement Office (GEO).

Discussion at the conference highlighted the centrality of the SDGs in addressing the challenges human societies currently face, and the importance of partnerships at local, national and global scales across disciplines and sectors to achieve these goals. The conference brought into focus the importance of transforming these goals into clear pathways for action in academia, government and industry and inspired the creation of a joint small grants funding call, managed collaboratively by GEO and Grand Challenges, to support pathways to achievement.

The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets interact and blur beyond sectoral, disciplinary or geographical boundaries with multiple interdependencies. In their 2015 book, *Thinking Beyond Sectors for Sustainable Development,* Jeff Waage *et al* proposed a framework for classifying and clustering goals and their interactions, as a means to identify different problems and potential solutions. Applicants to this call are encouraged to submit proposals that address the positive and negative interactions between goals at Waage's three levels, grouped by intended outcomes: **Wellbeing** (SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 16); **Infrastructure** (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12) and **Natural Environment** (SDGs 13, 14, 15). [NB Goal 17, 'Partnerships for the Goals', cutting across all three levels and geographical locations, was highlighted in the Beyond Boundaries conference as a key factor in interventions designed to produce target success in the goals.]

1.1 Project proposals should focus on one or more of the following and consider these under the prevailing Covid-19 conditions:

a) a **principal target or targets** at one of the three levels (either Wellbeing, Infrastructure or Environment),

b) opportunities for synergies ('win-win scenarios') with a single or multiple SDG target(s) at other levels, and what actions are needed to facilitate progress to principal target success,

c) trade-offs ('win-lose scenarios'), illustrating where principal target success may depend on slowing or compromising progress towards targets at (an)other level(s), and how the risk of such negative effects could be mitigated,

d) attention to target attainment at one of three exemplar geographical scales: **Local/London, National/UK**, or **Global**.

Applicants can apply for between **£5000-£10,000** for activity between **1st March – 31st July 2021**

2. Who can apply?

Applications are open to UCL staff members with the following roles and must be led by a UCL academic staff member*:.(the '**First Applicant**'). The optional **Second Applicant**, based at UCL, can be based in an Academic or Professional Services department. **External partners / collaborators** may be from either by an academic or non-academic organisation in the UK or overseas.

2.1 First (lead) Applicant (required)

1. Professor/Professorial Teaching Fellow or equivalent
2. Associate Professor/ Reader or equivalent
3. Senior Lecturer/Principal Researcher/Principal Research Associate/Senior Teaching Fellow or equivalent
4. Lecturer/Senior Research Associate/Teaching Fellow or equivalent
5. Post Doc/Researcher/Post Doc Fellow/Research Associate or equivalent

*Note: First Applicants can be UCL staff holding academic posts in categories 1-4, or holders of a fixed-term contract of employment with UCL that runs to July 2021 (e.g. as per category 5). If a First Applicant holds a fixed-term contract covering the dates of the activity in the project/initiative but not extending beyond 31 July 2021, the Second Applicant should be a permanent UCL staff member who will be responsible for reporting on the activity's outputs and further outcomes.

2. 2 Second (Co) Applicant (optional)

- Honorary academic staff member
- Professional services staff member (must be agreed with department)
- Academic staff member (as per First Applicant categories)

2.3 External partner / collaborator (required)

- Academic staff member at another **UK university or,**
- A '**global partner'** that is, one or more colleague(s)/research team(s)/department(s), based at an **overseas** HEI, research institute or international public/corporate/charitable organisation. Global partners in LMIC's are particularly encouraged, or,
- Non-academic organisation staff member

The collaborator should have similar contract lengths as the UCL First Applicant to ensure they can collaborate for the duration of the activity.

2.4 Further eligibility guidance:

- First or Second Applicants whose disciplinary expertise is in the Arts and Humanities are under-represented in SDGs-related projects at UCL; their participation is welcomed
- First Applicants are not required to have a doctorate to apply, but do need to hold one of the roles above.

- PhD students are not eligible to apply as lead applicant but can contribute to the project as research assistants.
- In line with UCL's commitment to equality and diversity, we strongly encourage applications from a range of backgrounds regardless of career stage, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion.
- Previous recipients of Global Engagement Office or Grand Challenges funding may choose to apply again. If the funds are for a project related to one for which have previously been awarded by either department, applicants should explain how the proposed project (i.e. the subject of the new application) builds on previous outcomes.

3. What can be funded?

- These funds are intended to support academic staff undertaking projects focused on pathways to achievement of principal SDG targets at one of the three levels outlined in section 1: Wellbeing, Infrastructure or Natural Environment, and should seek to involve a partner/collaborator based in one of the three geographic zones: Local/London, National/UK and/or Global.
- Given the uncertainty surrounding international travel and Tier measures nationally, we strongly encourage applicants to explore methods of remote collaboration, within the limits of what is permissible by the financial regulations of UCL and aligned with your own departmental guidelines. Activities that rely solely on international travel – meaning they cannot be delivered remotely if travel restrictions were to be imposed – will not be considered for this call.
- **Applications will be considered by a single academic panel. The strongest proposals focused on London, on other UK 'local' exemplars of target success, or at a UK national scale, will be supported by Grand Challenges. The strongest proposals focused on overseas and global-level exemplars of target success will be supported by Global Engagement.**
- Communication is a key part of ensuring impact from research and we therefore encourage applicants to think about activities or costs that relate to communications within the grant. For example, a professional designer fee, podcast production, website design/editing, videographers, exhibitions, art installations, social media campaigns etc. Find out more here how communication of work on the goals is important here.

4. Examples of eligible activities (non-exhaustive):

- We encourage applicants to be creative and innovative in their projects and do not therefore provide an exhaustive list of eligible activities. All activities will be considered carefully by the panel.
- As an example, activities can include:
  - Developing joint research and/or education or industry projects
  - Organising a joint seminar/workshop (remotely or in person, with travel restrictions in mind) including costs for any external or internal services required to facilitate the event e.g. professional moderation or technical support
  - Subsistence or stipends for research assistants, interns or PhD/postgraduate or undergraduate students. Discuss with your department the logistics for payment.
  - Comms costs as suggested above

- o Virtual Event costs
- o Doctoral student mobility
- o Services to disseminate results
- o Some international travel and associated costs as part of the project, taking into consideration travel restrictions and including a backup remote option if restrictions are imposed. Insurance that covers cancellation should be included in this and applicants must justify why international travel is necessary for the impact of the project.
- Examples of previously funded projects from each department can be found here for GEO and here for Grand Challenges

5. What cannot be funded?

- Activity that has already happened.
- Work for which there is already a significant existing funding stream
- Costings should be appropriate and relevant to the activity, for example the provision of alcoholic beverages for partners is not considered a valuable use of funds, unless it can be described how hospitality is critical for the building of this relationship or necessary/culturally significant for an event, e.g. a public exhibition
- Projects which rely solely on international travel due to unpredictable restrictions

6. What outcomes are expected?

- Successful applicants will be expected to submit a short report outlining the outcomes, challenges and account of their projects in late 2021.
- Successful applicants will be expected to acknowledge the support that they have received from both departments in any promotional materials related to their projects, and in published outputs. Please see branding guidance here and here. Please contact vpi.global@ucl.ac.uk for a GEO logo to use.
- Examples of outputs:
  - o Peer reviewed articles or publications
  - o Lay publications for public engagement
  - o Videos, communications tools, campaigns
  - o Reports focused on policy or teaching curriculum development
  - o Mobility exchanges

7. Key dates:

- Applications open 9th December 2020
- **Applications close 23:59 GMT 13th January 2021**
- Panel convenes (comprising GEO and Grand Challenge colleagues): Mid-February 2021
- Award announcements made by: 19th February 2021
- All PTAE codes collected by: 26th February 2021
- Awards transferred by or before: 1st March 2021
- **Activity period – 5 months from 1st March – 31st July 2021**
- All activity must be completed by **31st July 2021**

8. How to make an application and guidance for your application:

- Before making your application please read all of the guidance in this document and discuss with your department your plans to ensure these are acceptable and do-able within the department and your current commitments.
- Familiarise yourself with [Waage et al (2015)](#) concepts which sets out the three framings for this call and discuss your plans with your local/national/global collaborator.
- This call is seeking proposals that will endeavour to address the UN SDGs, you can find out more on the SDGs [here](#). See [here](#) about the targets and indicators applicants are encouraged to think about in their proposals.

1. **Complete the application form by downloading from the website [here](#).**
2. **Once you have completed your form, convert it to a PDF and upload it to our submissions [here.](#)**

9. How will applications be assessed?

- Applications will be assessed by a representative panel from Grand Challenges and the Global Engagement Office and will be scored against the following criteria:
  - **Extent to which the application addresses the points in Section 1**
  - **Value for money** – the project should consider costings carefully and demonstrate value for money. In addition, value for money extends to considerations of sustainable choices and socio-environmental impact of the project, alignment with UCL's values and potential impact for money.
  - **Extent to which the activity can be delivered remotely** – applicants should consider how to deliver their project in light of the ongoing travel restrictions
  - **Scale of impact and outcomes** - this includes outcomes of the project as well as if funding would facilitate or accelerate a significant outcome like a publication or a more substantial funding application or could be scaled up to longer term, larger collaborations**.**

    *However, we understand the activity window is particularly shorter this year due to Covid delays and we understand some outcomes and collaborations need time to develop. This will be considered by the panel and we hope to make funding available next year for potential new collaborations or follow on work from this call.

- Interdisciplinary applications are particularly welcome
- Applications where a partner or collaborator can match the funding or contribute are also welcome
- Applicants will not receive detailed individual feedback on their application but will be provided with overall feedback once all applications have been assessed.

10. Financial requirements and guidance

- Grand Challenges and GEO cannot manage awarded funds on behalf of awardees. This is the responsibility of the department that receives the funds. Once your award is transferred to your department, for your use, GEO and Grand Challenges will not be able to access the funds or support your use of them.
- Applicants and the department are responsible for processing any expenses or receipts.

- Successful applicants must provide a core Project, Task, Award (PTAE) code by 26th February in order to receive the transfer. A core award acceptable for this grant is Award code 177785, 156780 or 156425
- If no PTAE code is received by 26th February it will be assumed the applicant no longer wishes to accept the award and the funds will be redirected to alternative purposes.
- All costs associated with the awarded activities must be claimed and paid for by 31st July 2021. All activity and costs must be completed by 31st July 2021
- A worktribe costing is not necessary for these funds. All expenses must be calculated according to UCL policy.

11. Ethical approval and due diligence:

Please check UCL's guidelines regarding research ethics. Applicants are responsible for reading these guidelines and ensuring projects adhere to UCL's ethical approval policy and process.

UCL's ethical guidelines can be found here:

- Research Ethics Committee at UCL guidelines
- Overseas Research Roadmap

11.1 Due diligence

We strongly advise applicants to undertake proportionate and appropriate due diligence, relative to the stage and scope of the research collaboration, before collaborating with a partner. We recommend the following steps (in line with the 'Step One' guidance for UKRI due diligence):

- Where possible, speak to other colleagues both within and outside of UCL who have worked with your chosen partner to see what their experiences have been.
- Carry out an online search on the partner, both their official web site and for any news stories. This will reveal their capacity to carry out the research and if they pose any logistical or reputational risks.

12. Queries:

The GEO and Grand Challenges are jointly managing this call, if your query relates to a local or national project please contact James Paskins j.paskins@ucl.ac.uk or if your query relates to a global project please contact Lucy Crick vpi.global@ucl.ac.uk

For general queries or queries about the application process, please contact James Paskins.