



LESSONS LEARNED FROM ODA RESEARCH FUNDS

A synthesis report of GCRF and
Newton Fund evaluations

2023



**Making research
work for development**

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Expert Group

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (historic, now succeeded by DSIT)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (part of OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (historic, now merged into FCDO)
DSIT	Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
GEDI	Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
GNI	Gross National Income
HMG	His Majesty's Government
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HICs	High-Income Countries
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IDS	International Development Strategy
ISPF	International Science Partnerships Fund
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MICs	Middle-Income Countries
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFC	National Funding Council
NFIS	Newton Fund Impact Scheme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QR	Quality Related (funding)
RCS	Research Capacity Strengthening
SCOR	Strategic Coherence for ODA-funded Research
ToC	Theory of Change
UKCDR	UK Collaborative on Development Research
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
VfM	Value for Money

Introduction

In 2023, two of the existing UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds, the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the Newton Fund, will be discontinued and a new International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) will be launched, as announced by the then Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in 2022. The GCRF and Newton Fund were the result of increased investment in development research following the 2015 Aid Strategy and commitment to 0.7% GNI.

The GCRF aimed to support researchers when taking on key issues affecting Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). It provided a framework of 12 Challenge Areas,¹ to deliver multidisciplinary research, strengthen capability for research and innovation and deliver an agile response to emergencies. The Newton Fund entailed building bilateral research and innovation partnerships with 17 Middle-Income Countries (MICs) to support economic development and social welfare, tackle global challenges and nurture talent and careers through capacity development. Resources provided by the UK were matched by partners to build collaboration.

Final evaluations of the Newton Fund were published at the beginning of 2022 (although an impact evaluation is planned for 2023). Evaluation activities for the GCRF are ongoing and will continue until 2025. In this report, UKCDR aims to distil lessons learned from the funds' evaluations and outline key policy pointers arising from them. This is to ensure that their legacy is passed on as the GCRF and the Newton Fund come to an end in 2023. This synthesis will support discussions on the future of ODA research funding in the UK among policymakers, research funders and the broader research community.

The findings presented in this report are the result of a synthesis of 11 publicly available evaluation documents² published before July 2022, which were analysed to highlight key messages in a concise and accessible manner. Findings from the evaluations are not integrated with further research insights (i.e. primary data collection), which means any gaps and limitations in the evaluations synthesised here apply to this report as well.³

This report, and the activities it refers to, were undertaken while both funds were operated by the then Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Following changes in departmental structures, the relevant responsibilities now sit with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

1. See the 'Background on the GCRF and the Newton Fund' section for further details.

2. These include four reviews by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). See the Annex for the full list of documents analysed and a detailed description of the methodology applied to produce this synthesis report.

3. The Annex describes the limitations and caveats of this report, arising from the methodology applied.

➤ Background on the GCRF and the Newton Fund

This section provides background information on the main features of the GCRF and the Newton Fund to put the lessons summarised in the following section in context.⁴

	GCRF	Newton Fund
Timeframe & budget	2016-2021, £1.5bn	2014-2021, £735m ⁵
Countries/ Partners	<p>LMICs: countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Least Developed Countries and Other Low-Income Countries and OECD DAC Lower, Middle and Upper Middle Income Countries.</p> <p>The GCRF did not prioritise individual countries, but supported UK universities and research organisations to undertake challenge-led research, which added greatest value and had the greatest potential for impact.</p>	<p>MICs: 17 countries on the OECD DAC list of Lower Middle and Upper Middle Income Countries: Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam and Chile.⁶</p>
Fund's aims	<p>The aim of the GCRF was to ensure UK science took the lead in addressing the problems faced by LMICs, while developing the UK's ability to deliver cutting-edge research.</p> <p>The ambition was to generate innovative solutions to development issues and to identify practicable pathways to healthier and safer lives, sustainable development and prosperity for all, equal and effective education, social justice and human rights, and stable institutions.</p>	<p>The primary aim of the Newton Fund was the economic, sustainable and social development of partner countries. This was achieved through bilateral partnerships that centred research and innovation collaborations around each country's development needs and aimed to strengthen their research and innovation capacity.</p> <p>Alongside this, programmes funded through the Newton Fund contributed to the continued strength of the UK's research and innovation system and supported the UK's wider prosperity and global influence.</p>

4. The information presented in this section refers to what the two funds intended to deliver and is based on:

- [GCRF website](#)
- [UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund \(GCRF\) \(2017\)](#)
- [Newton Fund website](#)
- [Newton Fund Operational Framework \(2020\)](#)
- [GCRF and Newton Fund Theory of Change \(2020\)](#)

5. UK investment, which was then matched by Newton Fund partner countries.

6. Although Chile graduated from the DAC list in 2017 and was no longer eligible for ODA support from 1 January 2018, it remained an unfunded Newton partner, focusing on regional projects across South America until the end of the Newton Fund period in 2021.

	GCRF	Newton Fund
Fund's aims cont.	<p>Shared objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Primary objective: to promote economic, sustainable development and welfare of LMICs. Specifically, as research and innovation ODA, the funds worked to maximise the practical impact of research and innovation to improve the lives and opportunities of the global poor and strengthen research and innovation capacity in LMICs; and Secondary objective: to contribute to the continued strength of the UK's research and innovation base and its wider prosperity, security and global influence <p>Intended development impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-informed solutions that contribute to progress towards development goals; and Progress sustained by ensuring an equitable partnership between the UK and partner countries 	
How the aims were achieved	<p>The GCRF supported the UK and international researchers and innovators to take on key issues affecting LMICs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge-led multidisciplinary research; Strengthening capability for research, innovation and knowledge exchange; and Providing an agile response to emergencies 	<p>The Newton Fund built research and innovation partnerships with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to support economic development and social welfare, tackle global challenges and develop talent and careers. It did this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable partnerships with MICs; Multidisciplinary research based on agreed national strategies; and Nurturing talent and careers with capacity development
What was funded and how it was delivered	<p>GCRF research was UK-led. BEIS mostly allocated funding (80% of the GCRF) to a range of UK delivery partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy of Medical Sciences; British Academy; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; Northern Ireland Executive; Royal Academy of Engineering; Royal Society; Scottish Funding Council; UKRI (and its constituent councils);⁷ and UK Space Agency 	<p>BEIS allocated funding through a bilateral and regional partnership model (with a bespoke approach for each partner country) characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of equitable research and innovation partnerships with selected MICs; A strong focus on bilateral technical cooperation with the development of government-to-government and funder-to-funder relationships and joint agreement on funding priorities; and A requirement for matched resources from partner countries

7. As the largest delivery partner, UKRI's international development team provided central leadership and capability on GCRF strategic management and evaluation functions, managing many of the GCRF's large investments, in collaboration with the individual research councils. The GCRF's overall fund management function, while part of BEIS, was also hosted within UKRI.

GCRF	Newton Fund
<p>What was funded and how it was delivered cont.</p>	<p>Decisions on individual research priorities and excellence were made independently from BEIS.</p> <p>Delivery partners received funding from the GCRF in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The largest share was given to them individually as annual allocations, from which they awarded grants to research institutions, industry or non-profit organisations (individually or in consortia) through a competitive process; and • Most of the remaining 'unallocated pot' was placed in two Collective Funds – one for the research councils and one for the academies. The Collective Funds accepted joint bids from all the research councils or all the academies, bringing together different sectors and disciplines. <p>In addition to delivery partners, part of the funding (20% of the GCRF) was allocated through National Funding Councils (NFCs). Each NFC funded its respective Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through the Quality Related (QR) funding or an equivalent route.</p>
	<p>The fund was delivered through UK partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Medical Sciences; • British Academy; • British Council; • Met Office; • Royal Academy of Engineering; • Royal Society; and • UKRI (and its constituent councils) <p>UK and international partners worked together to devise and deliver Newton Fund programmes in each partner country (including issuing funding calls for research proposals).</p> <p>Resources provided by the UK were matched by partners, building in collaboration from the beginning. The 'match' could be in the form of funding, in kind (e.g. facilities or equipment), effort (e.g. labour) or a combination of the three. The partnerships were framed by an overarching government-to-government agreement and underpinned by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that set high-level direction. They were complemented by close working relationships between the UK and in-country delivery partners to design programmes that met specific development needs.</p>

	GCRF	Newton Fund
Fund priorities	<p>Challenge Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable access to sustainable development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure and resilient food systems supported by sustainable marine resources and agriculture; 2. Sustainable health and wellbeing; 3. Inclusive and equitable quality education; 4. Clean air, water and sanitation; and 5. Affordable, reliable, sustainable energy • Sustainable economies and societies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Sustainable livelihoods supported by strong foundations for inclusive economic growth and innovation; 7. Resilience and action on short-term environmental shocks and long-term environmental change; 8. Sustainable cities and communities; and 9. Sustainable production and consumption of materials and other resources • Human rights, good governance and social justice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Understand and respond effectively to forced displacement and multiple refugee crises; 11. Reduce conflict and promote peace, justice and humanitarian action; and 12. Reduce poverty and inequality, including gender inequalities 	<p>Priority areas:</p> <p>In the context of the Newton Fund, research priorities were determined individually by each partner country. The core role of the partner country in setting objectives and designing and delivering joint programmes was key to achieving impact focused on national development challenges and building capacity with the potential to address national and global development needs.</p>

> Synthesis of lessons learned and policy pointers

This section summarises the lessons learned from the GCRF and Newton Fund evaluations in seven thematic areas and provides policy pointers relating to those lessons across the two funds. We have also mapped the implementation of the pointers against three different areas: fund design, fund delivery and research activities.⁸



1. Fund-level strategy and governance

Lesson from the GCRF:

A predominantly decentralised oversight model allowed flexibility to incorporate on-the-ground knowledge into programme design, but lacked clarity on who should drive priorities forward

The review of the GCRF carried out by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) in 2017 found that 15 months into its five-year award cycle, the fund did not yet have a comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC) in place. The issue was addressed a year later, when a ToC was developed as part of the final report of the GCRF foundation stage evaluation in 2019.

Evaluations described the GCRF's oversight model as 'decentralised'. This indicates that it was based on a framework of fund-level strategic priorities against which programmes aligned their work, while lower management levels (especially delivery partners) retained a considerable degree of decision making. Management of the fund remained flexible enough to allow on-the-ground knowledge to inform programme design and to respond to unforeseen changes (e.g. COVID-19). This created a shared sense that the fund was at least partly owned by the research and innovation community.

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

The lack of an overarching strategy and oversight across the portfolio contributed to the fund's secondary objective (UK benefitting from bilateral research partnerships) being prioritised over its primary one (development and welfare of partner countries)

Evaluations found a lack of clarity of purpose in the Newton Fund, compounded by the lack of an overarching strategy and strategic portfolio management. The Newton Fund's ToC was only developed in 2016, two years after the fund's launch. This resulted in poor tracking of outcomes and weak coordination within and across country partners.

For the second round of Newton funding, beginning in early 2016, the country-based approach was strengthened, with UK delivery partners working to jointly identify their shared priorities with a higher number of partner countries by producing country strategies. This led the Newton Fund to operate more cohesively as a fund, rather than through parallel initiatives managed by separate UK delivery partners. However, country strategies were not found to be precise enough to provide specific objectives to drive activity in priority areas and the consultation process was perceived to be too UK-driven.

8. Researchers and research institutions alone will have limited influence over some of these pointers, but the report flags areas where they need to take some action together with delivery partners and funders.

Lesson from the GCRF (continued)

However, this approach led to a loss of strategic coherence across the portfolio. Contributing to this was the splitting of roles between BEIS and UKRI: while BEIS retained a strategic decision-making function, much of the strategic implementation and administration fell to UKRI.⁹ Evaluations found a lack of clarity on whose responsibility it was to drive priorities forward.

Evaluations acknowledged that actions were put in place to provide additional structure and oversight. Additionally, in 2018, UKRI selected six strategic Challenge Pillars¹⁰ to guide its work, starting from the twelve Challenge Areas identified in the 2017 strategy.¹¹ Challenge Leaders were then appointed to ensure coherence across the portfolios of the twelve Challenge Areas.¹² Opinions on the Challenge Leaders' effectiveness were mixed. The portfolios of work in which they were involved were informally rather than formally structured. These informal mechanisms were perceived to be delivering benefits, but those benefits were difficult to capture. Furthermore, awards were concentrated in a few Challenge Areas.¹³ Delivery partners allowed applicants to pick any challenge(s) in their applications and did not attempt to focus on specific underserved Challenge Areas.

Lesson from the Newton Fund (continued)

Furthermore, the country strategies refresh, which was due to take place in 2019, was never completed, delayed by changes and constraints in the political environment¹⁴ and COVID-19.

Evaluations noted that the fund lacked a strategy to pursue its primary goal of developing bilateral science and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and welfare of partner countries. This is because the Newton Fund was initially conceived as the Emerging Powers Opportunities Fund, a non-ODA fund focused on promoting the benefits to the UK of collaborating on research and innovation with MICs. By late 2013, it was decided that the fund should be entirely ODA-funded and in January 2014, it was renamed as the Newton Fund. However, this conceptual repurposing¹⁵ did not effectively re-direct the fund towards promoting development objectives. The 2019 ICAI review of the Newton Fund found that it was not designed with the delivery of development goals as its primary objective and that in reality its secondary objectives (benefits to the UK) were often the main driver of its choice of partnerships, research themes and approach.

9. As the largest delivery partner, UKRI's international development team provided central leadership and capability on GCRF strategic management and evaluation functions, managing many of the GCRF's large investments, in collaboration with the individual research councils. The GCRF's overall fund management function, while part of BEIS, was also hosted within UKRI.

10. Conflict, Education, Food Systems, Global Health, Resilience and Sustainable Cities.

11. See the table in the 'Background' section, under 'Fund priorities'.

12. Their role was to bind development needs and the priorities of LMICs to the most innovative research in their Challenge Area. This includes shaping investment strategy, scoping calls and providing support for interdisciplinary working.

13. According to a 2018 evaluation, 'Equitable access to sustainable development' was by far the most commonly addressed challenge with 61% of awards, followed by 'Sustainable economies and societies' at 35% and 'Human rights, good governance and social justice' making up only 4%. For further details, see: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810137/GCRF_Evaluation_Foundation_Stage_Final_Report.pdf

14. Resulting from the Spending Review and Integrated Review preparations.

15. See the table in the 'Background' section for more details on the current Fund's objectives.

Cross-cutting:

Evaluations noted BEIS's progress on improving joint governance, accountability and programme tracking structures for the Newton Fund and the GCRF, including creating an ODA programme pipeline (a live document that scheduled ODA work and associated activities), updating risk registers, the ODA Reporting Transformation project (an online platform that captures programme activity) and fund-level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Newton Fund and the GCRF. While these efforts promoted complementarity between the two initiatives, the evaluations found they added limited value beyond encouraging the sharing of learning.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
1.1. Funds should have a clear overarching strategy from the onset that indicates fund objectives and priority areas			
●			Designing a fund-level strategy should be complemented with the setting up of a fund-level ToC from the outset. This should include a diagram complemented by a supporting narrative that draws on rigorous evidence, where available, and details a set of assumptions that constitute a clear basis for implementing the fund. These documents should serve as a reference point for rolling out projects and initiatives, as well as a basis for developing effective monitoring tools. This would ensure coherence within the fund's portfolio. Funds should also articulate the trajectory from research and innovation to impact on development objectives.
●			A fund's strategic priorities should be identified in collaboration with LMIC partners and governments ¹⁶ and in line with the UK government's International Development Strategy (IDS). ¹⁷ They should be translated into the fund design, addressing the fund's primary and secondary purpose and objectives and how they interact with each other strategically.
1.2. Funders should establish clear principles of accountability across a fund's portfolio			
●	●		Funders should ensure a fund's portfolio is directed by a comprehensive oversight structure, which maps lines of responsibility and ownership among the parties involved (i.e. decision makers, delivery partners, award holders). This should also set out the accountability processes in place across different aspects of the fund.
●	●		The design of the governance structure should aim to increase coordination among the parties involved and therefore overcome the risk of siloed working. The governance structure should balance the provision of clear fund direction and oversight, with enough flexibility for on-the-ground knowledge to inform programme-level decision making.

16. As per UKCDR and ESSENCE guidance on supporting equitable research partnerships, 'LMIC governments can play a key role in ensuring that their research priorities are adequately represented and that research resources are equitably allocated. HIC and LMIC governments could also work together [...] and improve LMIC institutions' negotiating positions in relation to their HIC partners' (p. 11). For further details, see: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKCDR_ESSENCE_Equitable_Research_Partnerships.pdf

17. See the UK government's 2022 strategy for international development: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-strategy-for-international-development>



2. Approach to funding

Lesson from the GCRF:

A mixed portfolio of funding instruments (small- and large-scale) allowed flexibility and the creation of ‘funding ladders’ for initiatives to grow and expand. However, the quick launch of funds hindered delivery partners’ ability to create synergies across the research landscape

The GCRF’s funding portfolio included instruments of various sizes, from small pump-priming initiatives to large strategic investments.¹⁸ This meant the fund was able to respond to a diversity of challenges and contexts and created the opportunity for a funding ladder, where relationships could be built using seed funding before progressing to more substantial collaborations. Small awards proved to be a suitable vehicle for funding less established research groups (or groups less familiar with ODA funding), while ensuring that research institutions with experience in international development and collaboration with LMIC institutions were entrusted with larger awards.

The main drawback identified by the evaluations was that GCRF was launched with little prior notice and with instruction that the money had to be spent quickly. The speed of the initial allocation made it difficult for delivery partners to collaborate on programmes and larger joint programmes between academies only happened during later funding allocations. Similar concerns were raised at HEI level, as time pressure to quickly allocate funding limited opportunities to develop new overseas relationships, build internal ODA capacity and develop new activities with other UK HEIs.

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

‘Matched funding’ propelled innovative research collaboration and increased the fund’s Value for Money (VfM). However, requirements to invest the same amount of resources as the UK excluded countries and institutions that would have benefited the most from investments to strengthen their research landscape and posed concerns in terms of tied aid

The ‘match’ (of money, in-kind resources or efforts) was a strategic advantage and unique selling point of the Newton Fund. Evaluations agreed that this approach enabled leverage of additional resources from partner countries’ funding agencies and therefore increased the Newton Fund’s VfM. This model encouraged co-ownership and was flexible and adaptable to each partner country’s needs. However, the complexity of this matching mechanism was a downside. The fund covered countries with different institutional systems and in each context it focused on different thematic areas, partnering with very different national research institutions. Evaluations found that practical challenges created by the complexity of the match requirement could have been reduced through more explicit mapping of processes and reference documents.

Only partner countries able and willing to match the UK funding with the same amount of money could participate in the Newton Fund Impact Scheme (NFIS).¹⁹ This precluded the participation of partner countries and institutions with less established research infrastructure, perpetuating inequalities in the global research ecosystem.

18. According to the final report of the GCRF foundation stage evaluation, while ‘small awards’ (less than £50,000) make up the majority of items funded under the GCRF in numerical terms, it is ‘large awards’ (more than £1m) that account for by far the largest share of total money invested by the delivery partners (around 70%).

19. NFIS provides additional funding with the aim of maximising impact from previous Newton Fund activities. This scheme was introduced in 2019 to further the fund’s primary purpose, with a budget of £25 million: £5 million for an initial round of funding in Mexico, Malaysia, Kenya and Brazil and £20 million for the remaining countries.

Lesson from the Newton Fund (continued)

Evaluations expressed concerns about the limited focus on institutional capacity building for countries where these investments would have been crucial for strengthening the local research ecosystem.

Furthermore, ICAI stressed that the Newton Fund’s funding model was in contrast with the spirit of the UK’s commitment to untie all aid, endorsed since 2001.²⁰ The fund channelled UK aid through UK delivery partners, which then funded UK research institutions, while partner countries used their own resources to support their institutions’ participation.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
2.1. To achieve greater impact, funding portfolios should include a variety of projects in terms of both scale and life cycle stage			
●	●		<p>There is value in developing a fund portfolio of different sized projects, by creating a range of increasing funding opportunities for projects as they grow – ensuring continuity within the same funding scheme. The same approach could be taken to develop a range of funding opportunities targeting projects at different stages (i.e. research, dissemination and impact).</p>
2.2. Funding mechanisms should be designed with principles of equity²¹ in mind and aim to untie all government aid			
●	●	●	<p>Funders should reflect on the notion of equity and how it should apply to research funds that involve collaboration with LMICs. For example, considering which aspects of equity are most relevant and how they relate to one another:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity between funders in terms of financial inputs; • Equity in terms of intellectual and agenda-setting inputs; • Equity of research processes; and • Equity of outputs/outcomes

20. As per OECD definition, 'tied aid' is aid that is subject to the condition that it be spent on goods or services from the donor country. For further details, see: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/untied-aid.htm>

21. See pointers 3.1 and 3.2 for a discussion on practical actions to build an equitable relationship with LMIC countries in the context of ODA research funds.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
2.2. Funding mechanisms should be designed with principles of equity²¹ in mind and aim to untie all government aid (continued)			
●	●		Matched funding can encourage HIC and LMIC governments to work together to support research ecosystems. The co-funding element should take different forms in different contexts, adapting to different country needs (i.e. different partners investing different amounts of resources, proportionately to their spending capacity). ²²
●	●		Another option to support more equitable research collaborations with LMICs is to provide direct funding to LMIC-based institutions and researchers, without the intermediation of HIC institutions. ²³ This approach can help reduce power imbalances between HIC- and LMIC-based institutions working together, as the latter do not have to rely on the former to access funding.
2.3. Funds should be announced with adequate prior notice and enough time given for money to be spent effectively²⁴			
●	●	●	When a new funding stream is announced, adequate time is needed to allow delivery partners and researchers to set up effective, well-thought-out and well-planned programmes and build collaborations across the research landscape, especially with actors in LMICs. ²⁵
●	●		Funders' and delivery partners' policy-influencing activities should convey the importance of funds being set up with adequate prior notice and reasonable timelines. This would help ensure policymakers are well-equipped to make decisions on funding allocations and communicate them promptly to the sector.

22. This could be defined, for example, at government or institution level.

23. Here are three potentially viable options: (i) require joint lead applicants (one from an LMIC institution and one from an HIC institution), with contracting occurring via the HIC applicant; (ii) appoint an LMIC applicant as the administering institution and choose a joint lead from another LMIC or an HIC; and (iii) encourage LMIC institutions to apply without requiring the involvement of HIC institutions. For further details, see: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKCDR_ESSENCE_Equitable_Research_Partnerships.pdf

24. This is in line with Recommendation 14 from the 2022 Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy: 'Funders and recipients should ensure there is adequate time for the completion of all necessary tasks (including providing assurance information) between the issue of the award letter and the start of the project' (p. 9). See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-research-bureaucracy>

25. As per UKCDR and ESSENCE'S guidance on supporting equitable research partnerships 'Prior to a call being announced and a research proposal developed, time and resources are needed to bring potential collaborators together to develop a shared vision and agree on ways of working that give all partners a stake in decision-making' (p. 25). For further details, see: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKCDR_ESSENCE_Equitable_Research_Partnerships.pdf



3. Partnering with Low- and Middle- Income Countries

Lesson from the GCRF:

Tight timeframes²⁶ hindered delivery partners' and applicants' capacity to set up new research partnerships, meaning that the funded initiatives mostly relied on pre-existing channels of collaboration with well-established research institutions

The pattern of GCRF funding was concentrated in MICs and in more established research institutions. Due to the short funding timeframes (especially for the early rounds of funding), delivery partners relied on pre-existing and well-established international development networks and funding streams in the UK and MICs. This also meant that there was limited time for many applicants to establish their networks and collaborations with partners in LMICs.

These challenges emerged during the early funding calls and there were attempts to mitigate them through increased involvement of LMIC-based stakeholders in the funding process.

BEIS developed deliberate approaches towards partnering with research institutions in LMICs – for example, by leading a series of global engagement events to provide information about the funding opportunities available through the GCRF and allowing LMIC-based principal investigators on some funding calls.

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

The partnership model embedded in the Newton Fund facilitated effective research collaboration, however due to compressed timelines and lack of strategic guidance, UK delivery partners mostly relied on well-established partners in MICs

The Newton Fund's research partnerships helped establish networks of actors across partner countries – linking research institutions, universities, start-ups and businesses. Evaluations found evidence that these partnerships were set up equitably²⁷ and, in some countries,²⁸ they helped establish similar funding mechanisms and formalise relationships at government levels. Researchers valued accessing partner country expertise and the two-way exchange of skills. The long-lasting effects of equitable partnerships were the advancement and expansion of research agendas, strengthened networks within and outside academia, and potential for continued research partnerships beyond Newton.

However, faced with time pressure to begin allocating funds and in the absence of strategic guidance from BEIS, UK delivery partners mainly made use of their existing fund allocation processes and partnerships, mostly with countries with well-established research and innovation capacity – notably China, India, Brazil and South Africa. Evaluations found limited evidence of a consistent fund-level approach to identifying country needs, leveraging regional influence and aligning activities with intended impacts to maximise the fund's relevance.

26. As described in section 2 'Approach to funding' and policy pointer 2.3.

27. Defined as relationships that demonstrate fair opportunity, process and sharing of benefits and outcomes.

28. Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
3.1. Funds' timelines should be deliberately designed to establish equitable relationships with LMIC partners²⁹			
●	●	●	A truly collaborative research process requires adequate time ³⁰ to be accounted for co-creation, which should be explicitly embedded in funding calls to facilitate working with less established institutions.
3.2. Funds' resources should be deliberately allocated to establish equitable relationships with LMIC partners			
●	●		Adequate budget allocations are required for building and strengthening research capacity at the individual, institutional and ecosystem level in the contexts where this is most needed. ³¹ Funding should be earmarked for researcher training and guidance, drop-in sessions and other similar initiatives for LMIC researchers and research managers ³² to develop the skills and knowledge to access UK funding.
●	●	●	Governments and research institutions from LMICs should be involved in discussions to identify research priorities and needs, as well as defining fund-level objectives and developing funding calls. Addressing power imbalances between HICs and LMICs should be considered central when negotiating research priorities and approaches to research collaborations and should be achieved by ensuring all parties are involved in these negotiations. Questions about the balance of power between partners should be included in proposal documents and equity should be a criterion for programme and project approval. ³³
●	●		Review panels should have adequate representation of experts from LMICs.

29. See UKCDR and Essence's good practice document on supporting equitable research partnerships for further details on selecting the right approach: <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/ukcdr-and-essence-2022-four-approaches-to-supporting-equitable-research-partnerships/>

30. There is not sufficient evidence to suggest a specific timeframe and this will vary depending on the nature of each initiative to be financed. Each funder needs to make considerations about adequate timeframes on an ad hoc basis, as there is no one-size-fits-all formula.

31. The 2022 UKCDR report on Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) identified a long-term approach to funding (5 years+) as a cross-cutting enabler to guide improvements in RCS. For further details, see: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/02069-UKCDR-RCS-Report_Aug22_Final.pdf

32. As per UKCDR and ESSENCE's guidance on supporting equitable research partnerships: 'Vast discrepancies in levels of research support can exist within and between LMIC research institutions when compared to their HIC partners. It is not unusual for HIC research managers to find themselves negotiating partnership agreements with LMIC researchers who have little or no access to managerial or legal support during the negotiation process. Limited research support undermines the ability of LMIC researchers to secure grants, manage projects and negotiate fair terms of agreement' (p. 19). For further details, see: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKCDR_ESSENCE_Equitable_Research_Partnerships.pdf

33. For further details see section '1.3 Address Power imbalances' and respective policy recommendations from ESSENCE and UKCDR's 2022 good practice document on Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/UKCDR_ESSENCE_Equitable_Research_Partnerships.pdf



4. Delivering development impact

Lesson from the GCRF:

There were mixed findings on the degree to which the fund successfully achieved development impact. Decentralised and unstructured pathways to impact acted as a limiting factor in this sense, while the focus on interdisciplinary research was a key enabler

The GCRF's innovative approach to interdisciplinarity was key to addressing complex development challenges. The Collective Funds³⁴ and the Interdisciplinary Research Hubs promoted joint work across the research councils and the academies, supporting interdisciplinary effort.

Some evaluations found that applicants for GCRF awards were asked to illustrate how their research would translate into development impact. Across the portfolio, this led to a high volume and range of outputs beyond academic publications, including creative, policy and technology outputs. This is where the GCRF had the potential to add value, as outputs targeted to policy, innovation and business audiences are more easily accessible by user groups beyond academia.

Conversely, some evaluations found a disproportionate emphasis on building capacity at the individual researcher level, rather than focusing on capacity for research translation and uptake (e.g. targeting policymakers directly, institutional development outside academia, public sector innovation). These contrasting findings suggest a lack of clarity around the type of Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) the GCRF was expected to deliver.

While most delivery partners had established processes for assessing development impact, this was more challenging for partners and research institutions new to the development field. It was also left to individual research institutions to disseminate their research findings to potential users, as opposed to mechanisms being in place to synthesise impact across programmes.

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

While there was evidence of partnerships successfully translating research into impact (i.e. policy, practice, commercial opportunities), issues remained with delivering impact in LMICs (as a large part of UK aid spending remained within UK institutions)

Award holders strongly agreed that working in partnership improved the quality of research; developed capacity to translate research into products, solutions or policies; facilitated establishing new institutional and commercial links; raised the profile of applied research and product development; and improved capacity to commercialise innovative products or solutions.

While there is strong evidence that the fund developed the research capacity of individuals and institutions in partner countries and the UK, there is less evidence of strategic activity to drive targeted, systems-level change to capitalise on fund activities. The evaluations conclude that research projects were not designed to focus on learning and knowledge transfer. This led to missed opportunities to address development challenges.

Evaluations noted that the approach to allocating funds was not entirely suited to the primary objective of delivering impact in partner countries. A survey conducted for the ICAI review of the Newton Fund concluded that almost 90% of UK aid spent through the fund stayed in UK institutions.³⁵ The review deemed this to be contrary to the UK government's commitment to untying all UK aid.

To further the fund's primary purpose, in 2019, BEIS introduced the NFIS with a budget of £25 million, which provided additional funding to maximise impact from previous Newton Fund activities. However, at 3.4% of the Newton Fund budget, it could not make up for the lack of a fund-wide strategic approach to maximising development impact.

34. See the 'Background' section, under the heading 'What was funded and how it was delivered'.

35. The 2019 ICAI Review of the Newton Fund noted that 'Only UK delivery partners received allocations in the first instance, which are then "matched" by in-country delivery partners as part of the Newton Fund partnerships. The partner countries thus use their own resources – not UK aid – to support their own research institutions' participation in the partnership. UK aid is instead almost entirely used to fund UK institutions' participation in the partnership.' (p. 26).

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
4.1. To deliver development impact, funds should be designed with transdisciplinarity and research users in mind			
●	●	●	Funds should move away from a model of funding that separates research, dissemination and impact. Continued engagement and co-creation with stakeholders, especially relevant end-users of research, should start from the fund's outset to establish stronger pathways to impact.
●	●	●	Funds should move beyond interdisciplinarity and support transdisciplinarity. Research partnerships should include non-academic actors (e.g. government bodies, professional bodies and associations, and civil society) to support greater research relevance, uptake and, ultimately, development impact.
4.2. Delivery partners play a vital role in ensuring the fund's full potential is translated into impact			
●	●		Funders should carefully assess which delivery partners are best suited to deliver each programme through appropriate and transparent selection mechanisms.
●	●		In-country coordination, learning and dialogue across different delivery partners contributes to greater impact in the research ecosystem. This will help create synergies among delivery partners in a specific context by creating opportunities for collaboration and avoiding duplication.
4.3. Funds should aim to strengthen the whole research ecosystem, rather than individual researchers/research institutions			
●	●	●	Investments in RCS should be aimed at benefitting the whole research ecosystem, beyond the individual award holder. A holistic approach needs to take into account research career progression opportunities in institutions, strengthening the research support system and ensuring funding continuity (i.e. follow-on funding). ³⁶
●	●	●	It is important to amplify two-way knowledge exchanges and collaborations between the UK and LMICs, ensuring that opportunities for capacity development are equitably shared between researchers based in HICs and LMICs.

36. For further recommendations on how to strengthen the research ecosystem, see the 2022 UKCDR report on Research Capacity Strengthening: lessons from UK-funded initiatives in Low-and Middle-Income Countries: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/02069-UKCDR-RCS-Report_Aug22_Final.pdf



5. Long-term sustainability

Lesson from the GCRF:

Difficulties in mid- and long-term sustainability of projects arose from funding allocations being made on an annual basis, while ODA funding cuts had an adverse impact on sustainability

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

Difficulties in mid- and long-term sustainability of projects arose from a lack of clarity around funding duration and exit strategies

Cross-cutting:

ODA cuts and the decision in 2021 to end the funds jeopardised the sustainability of collaborative efforts and partnerships, reflecting negatively on the UK as a partner of choice for LMICs. This aspect was mostly outside the control of the funds' management and dependent on overall government funding allocations. However, evaluations highlighted that the decision to rescind funding after 2021 was not communicated with sufficient prior notice.

Funding timelines had an impact on the GCRF's ability to plan for sustainability. The fund made its allocations annually, which was problematic for delivery partners' medium-term planning and programmes' sustainability. Delivery partners stressed the importance of being made aware of the GCRF's indicative amount over time to be able to commit to long-term projects, without the risk that budgets might be cut due to fluctuations in annual funding allocations.

Evaluations found that there was no formalised fund-level sustainability or exit strategy in place. In-country presence, follow-on funding (given the time lag associated with translating research into impact) and clear exit strategies are important factors for achieving sustainable longer-term benefits.

While there is some evidence of projects securing follow-on funding, continuing to collaborate or producing material research outputs, some projects were at risk of not realising their potential owing to a drop-off in funding. For example, the lack of an exit strategy was a challenge when Chile graduated from being ODA-eligible, which hindered the long-term sustainability of benefits obtained from collaboration.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
5.1. Funds should set out clear expectations for the medium- and long-term impact of their portfolio in a ToC			
●	●	●	Using a ToC for planning and resourcing to determine programme and project objectives would ensure that applicants and delivery partners are well informed about what funds aim to achieve at different points in time.
●			Funds' design and strategy should include contingency plans to guide the programme activities in the case of unexpected budget cuts. This would ensure a roadmap is in place to mitigate the damage to the medium- and long-term sustainability of funds' impact.
5.2. Funders and delivery partners should advise policymakers on the need for a long-term vision for funding allocations			
●	●		Funders' and delivery partners' policy-influencing activities should provide evidence-based strategic advice on where money should be allocated in the short, medium and long term. This would help ensure policymakers are equipped to make forward-looking decisions on funding allocations and mitigate the risk of abrupt budget cuts to the sector.
5.3. Improving LMICs' ownership of projects is an effective way to ensure programme legacy			
●	●		Direct funding to LMIC-led projects and investments that nurture equitable research collaborations with LMICs would allow the fund to leverage additional financial resources and secure buy-in from LMICs governments.
●	●	●	Strengthening research capacity at the institutional and system level in partner countries as part of the funds' strategies can sustain the legacy of their investments.



6. Monitoring results and Value for Money

Lesson from the GCRF:

Gaps in ownership and strategic prioritisation of the fund delayed the introduction of monitoring mechanisms, including a framework for assessing VfM. Negative repercussions were mitigated by informal sharing of lessons among delivery partners

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

Efforts to strengthen the monitoring of results and VfM were introduced too late, hampering efforts to derive learning from across the programme

Cross-cutting:

Evaluations acknowledged BEIS's efforts to strengthen joint governance and oversight mechanisms across the Newton Fund and the GCRF; for example, with the creation of a new Programme Management Office that set up an ODA programme pipeline and updated risk registers. Evaluations noted efforts to address weaknesses and gaps in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) by implementing the ODA Reporting Tool (ODART) system and developing KPIs. BEIS also merged the Newton and GCRF Delivery Forums into a new Delivery and Learning Forum, which met bi-monthly to encourage cross-fund information sharing and learning.

Given the rapid development of the GCRF and a lack of portfolio level coordination, both oversight structures³⁷ and a framework for assessing VfM were developed more than 15 months after the fund's launch. This hampered the ability to monitor results at the portfolio level and implement learning at the outset. There were particular difficulties with harmonised monitoring of grants and applications across the fund due to the lack of a comprehensive dataset.

However, even during the initial stages of the fund, when formal mechanisms were not in place, evaluations found that informal learning processes were present and effective. They mentioned good communication between delivery partners and a willingness to share lessons and learn from each other.

In the first years after its launch, the Newton Fund lacked a coherent system for monitoring or capturing development outcomes (i.e. KPIs), as well as VfM. The fund therefore had very limited evidence to demonstrate the results of its initial work, hampering efforts for cross-fund learning.

This was evident in the lack of accurate data capturing the extent to which the UK and partner countries contributed to the initiative. UK delivery partners estimated that in December 2020, the fund's matched contribution from partners was at least £136m, against the £455m of total UK funding until that point. However, this value is likely an underestimate of actual contributions, due to inconsistencies in the data. Several UK delivery partners were not able to report details on matched contributions from their counterparts. This is likely due to the lack of a common calculation methodology of in-kind contributions (i.e. use of facilities and equipment) across the fund. Overall, evaluations found that match effort contributed to the VfM of the Newton Fund; yet, the extent of that contribution is unknown.

37. Such as a fund-wide MEL framework or a ToC.

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
6.1. Prioritise developing a framework for monitoring performance, impact and VfM during the initial phases of a fund			
●	●		A well-designed monitoring framework (including VfM assessment) leads to efficiency gains and enables portfolio management, underpinning the achievement of strategic objectives. It accounts for the significant investments of public money made through funds by routinely capturing results across the portfolio.
●			A fit-for-purpose MEL system should include a uniform set of indicators at fund level, which complement cross-fund ODA KPIs. ³⁸ It is essential that these systems are in place from the onset of a fund to ensure accountability.
6.2. Future funds would benefit from cross-funder coordination mechanisms³⁹			
●			A uniform MEL approach should be implemented at the outset; for example, by being reflected in the announcement of opportunities/projects, to improve coordination and common understanding among all parties.
●	●		A common mechanism across His Majesty's Government (HMG) would entail a reporting system that unifies all ODA investments to monitor spending and gains more effectively and comprehensively. This should account for the fact that not all KPIs are necessarily relevant to all funders.

38. For further details, see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908432/Development_of_KPIs_newton_fund_GCRF.pdf

39. This is in line with findings from the 2022 Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy: 'There is scope for greater harmonisation of digital platforms. However, this will also be limited to a degree by the differing nature and objectives of individual funders' (p. 10). See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1094648/independent-review-research-bureaucracy-final-report.pdf



7. Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Lesson from the GCRF:

The lack of Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) standards embedded at fund level resulted in the GCRF reproducing inequalities within the UK research landscape

Evaluations found that the diversity levels of grant holders (and principal investigators in particular) were skewed towards white men – mirroring the situation in the UK research landscape.⁴⁰ People from LMICs were underrepresented on review panels (4% of the total, according to a 2018 evaluation), which posed concerns about whether panels had the necessary expertise to identify proposals that could adequately address challenges in the target countries.

Additionally, the only mention of GEDI-related elements in the GCRF Challenge Areas was combined with 'education' and 'reducing poverty and inequality', which made up a small proportion of funds awarded (3% and 6% of total awards, respectively). This, combined with the fact that no Challenge Leader was assigned to deal with topics around GEDI, meant that this aspect was unlikely to receive much attention at portfolio level.

Lesson from the Newton Fund:

Despite the lack of fund-level commitment to GEDI, significant and effective steps were taken to address inequalities

ICAI's 2019 review noted that the Newton Fund had no fund-level strategy or guidance on how to address gender equality until that point. ICAI's 2020 follow-up review highlighted that BEIS responded positively to the recommendation to correct this and took significant steps to address the gap, which were implemented across the GCRF as well (illustrated in the 'Cross-cutting' box below).

Cross-cutting:

BEIS commissioned a thematic review of approaches to gender equality across both the Newton Fund and the GCRF, which included an assessment of how other funders approach gender equality in a variety of funds (i.e. Prosperity Fund, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and research programmes funded by the then Department for International Development). BEIS then developed an overarching Gender Equality Policy for the Newton Fund and the GCRF and made it mandatory for grant applicants to include a gender equality statement as part of their bid.

40. According to the 2018 'She figures' report by the European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, women made up 38.6% of researchers in the UK (Figure 4.1). For further details, see: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>. AdvanceHE in 2021 disclosed that staff working in UK Higher Education is predominantly white (84.6%), with even lower proportions of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff than white staff on open-ended/permanent contracts, in senior management positions, in professorial roles and on higher salary bands. For further details, see: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/equality-higher-education-statistical-reports-2021>

Fund design	Fund delivery	Research activities	Policy pointers
7.1. GEDI principles should be embedded in the fund's strategy and MEL approach			
●	●		To ensure greater accountability, data collection on GEDI should be part of the MEL mechanisms and additional evaluations should be commissioned looking specifically at this aspect.
●	●		Funders should focus on improving equality and equal opportunities in relation to the ways in which grants are awarded to ensure greater participation in ODA-funded research of underrepresented groups. For example, GEDI audits would provide an excellent opportunity to identify and target any problem areas regarding the processes used by delivery partners to design and launch programmes/calls and select and award projects.
●	●	●	GEDI should be prioritised as a research topic within fund portfolios. Specific programmes/calls addressing issues around GEDI, designed with experts from the LMICs, would provide an opportunity to fund projects in this area.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this report are a synthesis of lessons learned from the GCRF and Newton Fund evaluations, complemented by forward-looking policy pointers arising from these lessons. The policy pointers are summarised graphically in a diagram presented in the Appendix. This work is based on 11 publicly available evaluation documents, all published before July 2022.⁴¹

This report distils existing evaluation documents and no additional research was conducted. Despite the different frameworks and timeframes used, these evaluations proved to be valuable sources for starting to take stock of learnings from the GCRF and the Newton Fund.

The main findings that emerged from the synthesis are:

- It is essential to **formulate an overarching vision** for what a fund wants to achieve, how it wants to achieve it, how progress towards objectives will be measured and who is accountable for driving priorities forward. This should include a clear prioritisation of a fund's primary and secondary objectives. These key components should be clearly detailed at the outset in a **fund-level Theory of Change**, which serves as a guide for planning and resourcing in the short, medium and long term.
- A failure to account for **adequate timeframes** for money to be allocated and spent and for programmes to be rolled out seriously hinders a fund's ability to deliver its intended impact. Similarly, insufficient prior notice that budget allocations will be amended or discontinued is likely to damage the long-term impact and legacy of what has already been funded.
- Decision making around timeframes is often outside the control of those responsible for designing and managing a fund. It is likely to be influenced by changes in the political landscape. Therefore, funders and delivery partners have a role in **supporting evidence-informed decision-making processes in establishing future large funds**, which should be guided by lessons learned during the delivery and conclusion of the GCRF and the Newton Fund.
- The UK research funding landscape is historically complex. This calls for consistent efforts to provide **coherence within large-scale investments** like the GCRF and the Newton Fund, as well as among the wide range of organisations involved in managing and delivering other funding schemes. There is scope for greater alignment among funders around the **development of a shared set of Key Performance Indicators for monitoring and learning across the Official Development Assistance landscape**. Cross-funder dialogue is essential to ensure lessons learned from the experience of the GCRF and the Newton Fund are translated into future decision making across His Majesty's Government.

41. See the Annex for the full list of documents analysed.

- There are three cross-cutting approaches that, if adequately implemented, can boost a fund's ability to deliver its intended impact. These are **equitable partnerships with Low-and Middle-Income Countries** (including LMIC ownership of the research being funded and addressing power imbalances); a deliberate focus on **transdisciplinarity to maximise research impact and uptake beyond academia**; and investments to **strengthen the capacity of research ecosystems as a whole**.
- Embedding **Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles** in a fund's design and delivery (as well as being a topic area for research) and establishing a **framework for monitoring the fund's performance, impact and Value for Money** are core pillars that should shape future initiatives from the onset. They are essential to ensure learning is in place throughout the life cycle of a fund.

There are gaps in the evaluations as they currently stand, which are reflected in this synthesis.⁴² Some of the gaps will be partially addressed by the remainder of the evaluations that are due to be published after 2022, but additional research is needed to understand the effectiveness and long-term impact of specific initiatives and funding streams within the GCRF and the Newton Fund.

42. The Annex describes the limitations and caveats of this report, arising from the methodology applied.

➤ APPENDIX: Summary of key policy pointers

The diagram below summarises the policy pointers identified in the report.

The first horizontal section of the table (1. Strategy and governance) sets out the elements that should be prioritised at the very beginning of all funds' activities, when defining the fund's strategy and governance structure. The second section (2. Approach to funding; and 3. Partnering with LMICs) focuses on the following steps, which relate to establishing the funding mechanism and the ways in which the fund will set up collaborations with LMICs. The first three thematic areas are united under a common label, as they all fall under 'fund design'.

The third horizontal section (4. Delivering development impact) focuses on the key components of delivering development impact, which is the direct result of decisions made around the fund's design. The fourth section (5. Sustainability) sets out the aspects that determine the long-term sustainability of the outcomes and impact delivered by the fund. These two sections fall under 'fund delivery'.

The four horizontal sections (that comprise the fund design and delivery) are complemented by two cross-cutting elements (vertical boxes on the right and left side of the diagram), which should take place in parallel to all the activities described: embedding GEDI principles in the fund design and implementation, and establishing a framework for monitoring the fund's performance, impact and VfM.



FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE, IMPACT AND VFM



7.

EMBEDDING GEDI PRINCIPLES



FUND DESIGN

FUND DELIVERY

Define An Overarching Ambition: Socio-economic Development, Challenge-led

1. STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

Develop a fund-level ToC from the onset

- Primary v secondary objectives
- Priority areas (in line with IDS*)
- Fund coherence
- Principles of accountability
- Decision-making process
- Oversight structure
- Exit strategy
- MEL

2. APPROACH TO FUNDING

- Direct or matched funding
- VfM
- Mix of size and scale of funded projects

3. PARTNERING WITH LMICs

- Representation on review panels
- Research training and guidance
- Addressing power imbalances

- Adequate timeframe and resources allocation
- Equitable research partnerships (including co-creation and co-delivery)

4. DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

- Selection of suitable delivery partners for each programme
- In-country coordination of delivery partners
- Investments in RCS at research ecosystem level
- Two-way knowledge exchange with LMICs

- Ongoing engagement with stakeholders: continuum or research, dissemination and impact
- Transdisciplinarity: inclusion of non-academic stakeholders

5. SUSTAINABILITY

ToC to guide planning and resourcing in the long-term

- Policy influence for long-term fund allocations
- Improving LMIC ownership
- Contingency plans

*UK government's International Development Strategy (2022)

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