



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Evaluation of the Global Challenges Research Fund: Assessment of Research Quality, Positioning for Use and Results

Synthesis of the evidence from the
assessment of Research Quality plus
Positioning for Use plus Results (RQ++) of
GCRF awards

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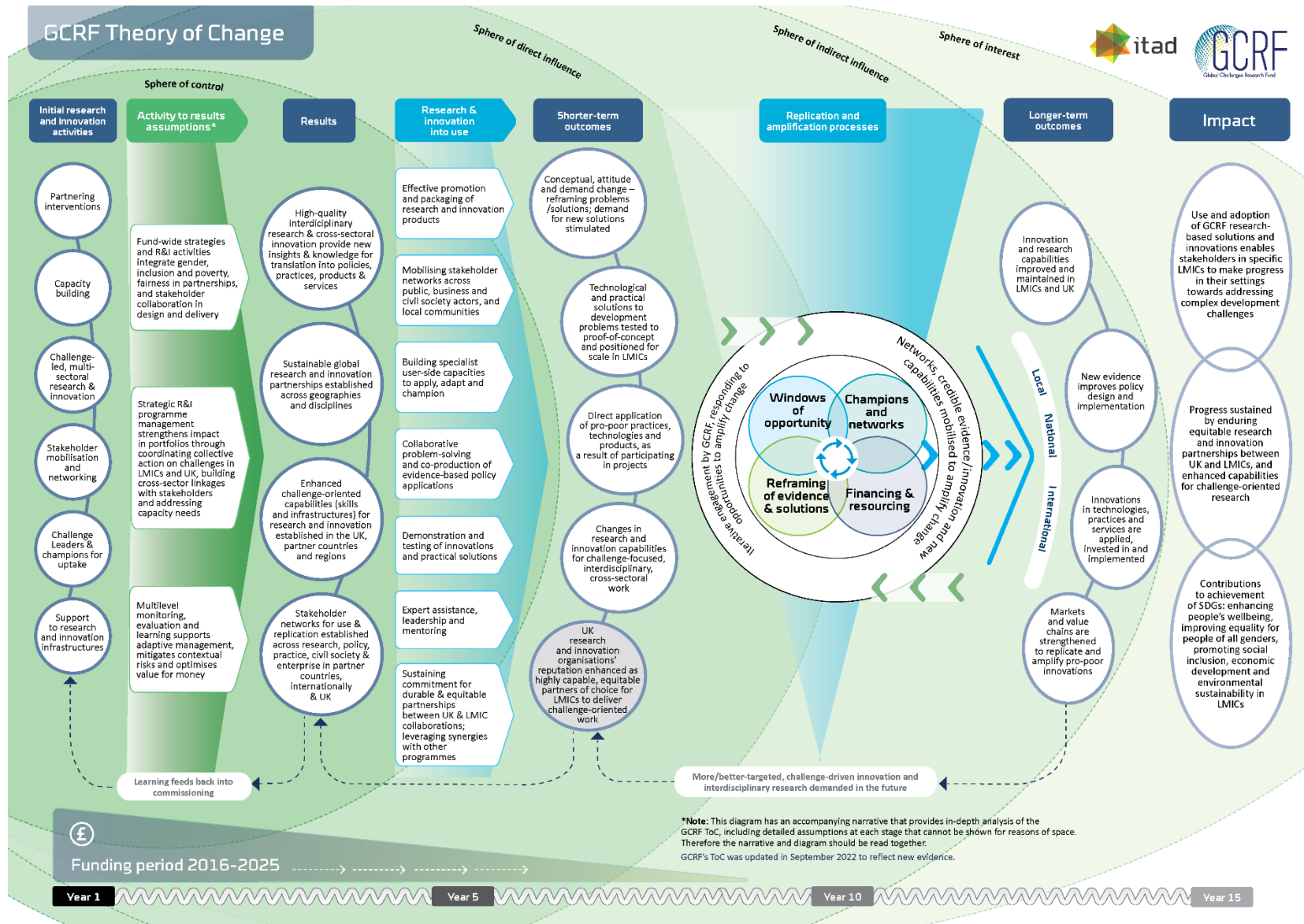
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Annex 1: GCRF Theory of Change



Annex 2: Research Quality++ assessment instrument and rubric

The full RQ++ Assessment Instrument, including purpose and rationale and full guidance for conducting an assessment, can be found in this pdf. The rubric and guide used to make each assessment are included below.



2. GCRF RQ++
Assessment Instrument

GCRF Research Quality Plus Plus Assessment Template

This template should be used to make an assessment of each award.

Project information	
Grant ID/ref. number	
Project title	
Countries	
Institutions	
Location of principal investigator	
Brief description of project	<i>Please include one brief paragraph</i>

RQ++ assessment summary

When you have completed the whole assessment, please complete this table, giving an overview of the ratings.

Contextual factor	Rating	Strength of evidence
Maturity of the research and innovation field		

Organisational research and innovation environment		
Operating environment		
Data environment		
Dimension 1: Scientific Rigour	Rating	Strength of evidence
1.2 Methodological integrity		
Dimension 2: Research Legitimacy	Rating	Strength of evidence
2.1 Mutuality in partnership		
2.2 Fairness		
2.3 Equity, diversity and inclusion		
2.4 Addressing potentially negative consequences		
Dimension 3: Research Importance	Rating	Strength of evidence
3.1 Originality		
3.2 Relevance		
Dimension 4: Positioning for Use	Rating	Strength of evidence
4.1 Knowledge accessibility & sharing		
4.2 Actionability and timeliness		
Dimension 5: Research and Innovation Results	Rating	Strength of evidence
5.1 High-quality research		
5.2 Sustainable partnerships		
5.3 Enhanced capabilities		
5.4 Networks for use		

Contextual factors

Maturity of the research and innovation field			
1. Mature field	2. Established field	3. Emerging field	4. New field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-established and recognised theoretical and conceptual frameworks in use - A substantial body of conceptual and empirical research or innovation - Discernible knowledge-sharing outlets (journals, conferences, curriculum) - A vibrant community of experienced researchers/innovators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theoretical and conceptual frameworks are in development but generally recognised - A body of conceptual and empirical research/innovation that reflects significant growth - Discernible knowledge-sharing outlets (journals, conferences, curriculum) - An ample community of active researchers/innovators who easily associate with the field and who are connected to each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theoretical and conceptual frameworks gradually being recognised and still debated - A growing but not ample body of conceptual and empirical research/innovation - Discernible knowledge-sharing outlets are emerging - An emerging group of active researchers/innovators associate naturally with the field and are starting to connect to each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very limited theoretical or conceptual frameworks are being debated or are rapidly changing and largely unrecognised - Scarce empirical or theoretical body of research/innovation - Few dedicated journals or academic programmes - Few active researchers/innovators are seeking to be recognised and connected
<p>Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>			
Mature	Established	Emerging	New

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Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.*

Strength of evidence: *Select one of the options below.*

Strong evidence

Some evidence

Limited evidence

No evidence

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice*

Data environment

1. Flourishing

2. Developed

3. Limited

4. Weak

- Instrumentation and measures for data collection and analysis are widely agreed upon and available

- The necessary instrumentation and measures for data collection and analysis are generally available

- Few instruments and measures for data collection and analysis are available

- Instrumentation and measures for data collection and analysis are generally unavailable

- Body of data is well developed, stable and with significant open data resources

- Body of data has reasonable availability and is generally credible

- Limited quantities of data and/or some credibility gaps

- Data scarcity, with lack of credibility

- Abundance of national and international data sources

- Diversity of international data sources, but few at the national level

- Few national and international data sources

- Data sources are scarce

Assessment: *Select one of the options below.*

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Flourishing	Developed	Limited	Weak
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>			
Strength of evidence: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice</i>			

Organisational research and innovation environment

1. Empowering	2. Supportive	3. Unsupportive	4. Restrictive
Research/innovation environment (organisational priorities, infrastructure, norms, incentives, etc. related to research) is fully established and enabling for researchers	Research/innovation environment is well developed and generally supports researchers with their needs	Research/innovation is not an organisational priority, but the organisation tends to comply with acquired commitments or external requests	Research/innovation environment is weak or largely under-developed, not supportive of researchers, or possibly even works against them
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Empowering	Supportive	Unsupportive	Restrictive

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Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.*

Strength of evidence: *Select one of the options below.*

Strong evidence

Some evidence

Limited evidence

No evidence

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice*

Operating environment

1. Stable

2. Moderately stable

3. Unstable

4. Volatile

Stable operating environment, with solid governance practices, lack of significant social conflicts, and no personal risks to researchers/innovators

Generally stable operating environment, with established governance practices, no unusual major social conflicts, and no personal risks to researchers/innovators

Operating environment features some levels of instability and recurrent change, some major social conflicts, and minor risks to researchers/innovators

Very unstable or unpredictable operating environment, with weak governance practices, social conflict, and/or potentially significant risks to researchers/innovators

Assessment: *Select one of the options below.*

Stable

Moderately stable

Unstable

Volatile

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.*

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Strength of evidence: *Select one of the options below.*

Strong evidence

Some evidence

Limited evidence

No evidence

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice*

Dimension 1: scientific rigour

SUBDIMENSION 1.2: METHODOLOGICAL INTEGRITY (implementation)

Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Data collected did not satisfy research/ innovation needs (i.e. match the questions). The analysis was deeply flawed. Conclusions are weak, largely unfounded by the data, and bear little relevance to the development problem. The results are presented inaccurately. The research work did not exhibit logical consistency.*		Data and information collected left some gaps. The analysis performed left some important aspects unexamined. Some conclusions are not consistent (with data, hypothesis, etc.) or present little value. The presentation of results needs improvement and/or clarification. The logical consistency of the		Data and information collected were sufficient. The analysis was adequate overall. Conclusions are useful, pertinent and linkable to the data and evidence. The presentation of results is overall satisfactory, with little improvement needed. The work exhibited a clear logical consistency.		Data and information collected covered all research/innovation objectives and could be used in other studies. The analysis was comprehensive and well matched to the questions. Conclusions are relevant to objectives and have the potential to stimulate further debate and/or action. The results are presented	

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	research left some important gaps.		accurately and are clear to the intended user. The work exhibited a clear/precise logical consistency.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>			
Strength of evidence for dimension 1 overall: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>			

* Logical consistency of implementation establishes a clear path connecting objectives, hypothesis/questions, data collected, findings and conclusions.

Dimension 2: research and innovation legitimacy

SUBDIMENSION 2.1: MUTUALITY IN PARTNERSHIP

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Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	Power imbalances in the partnership were not addressed. Benefits were not mutual. The partners demonstrated little or no experience in managing partnerships.		There is some evidence the partnership was negotiated in a transparent and equitable manner, with a degree of clarity and mutual recognition over management capacities, roles, responsibilities, and benefit sharing. Problems were encountered over the life of the partnership, and these are not adequately addressed. Other forms of knowledge are considered to a limited extent. Learning was not mutual.		There is evidence the partnership was negotiated in a transparent and equitable manner, with a good degree of clarity and mutual recognition of management capacities, roles, responsibilities and benefit sharing, and freely agreed by the partners. Other forms of knowledge are considered and usually taken into account. Benefits accrue to most partners. Structures and processes to sustain the partnership throughout were largely implemented throughout the project,		There is clear evidence the partnership was negotiated in a transparent and equitable manner, with a high degree of clarity and mutual recognition over management capacities, roles and responsibilities. Evidence of fair sharing of benefits, costs and outcomes, and freely agreed by all partners. Evidence of significant co-design, where all forms of knowledge are taken into account. Benefits clearly accrued to all partners. Structures and processes to sustain the partnership throughout were	

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			and benefits were mutual.	effectively implemented, and there is evidence of benefits to all partners.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 2.1: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

SUBDIMENSION 2.2: FAIRNESS

Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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<p>Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.</p>	<p>Engagement with appropriate contexts has been neglected during the research process. Several major weaknesses can be found, related to how research/project needs and questions were identified, partners, communities, stakeholders or populations engaged, effects of the project on contexts and knowledge systems considered, and fair benefit sharing from the research process assured.</p>	<p>Contexts and engagement have been considered during the research process, but some weaknesses remain related to how research needs and questions were identified, partners, communities, stakeholders or populations were engaged, effects of the project on contexts and knowledge systems were considered, and/or fair benefit sharing from the research process was assured.</p>	<p>Context and engagement have been appropriately considered in the research process. Few, if any, minor weaknesses remain related to how research needs and questions were identified, partners, communities, stakeholders or populations were engaged, effects of the project on contexts and knowledge systems were considered, or fair benefit sharing from the research process was assured.</p>	<p>Context and engagement have been carefully and systematically considered in the research/innovation process. Research needs and questions were clearly identified, partners, communities, stakeholders or populations were effectively engaged, contexts and knowledge systems were considered and respected, and fair benefit sharing from the research process was assured.</p>
<p>Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>				
<p>IIA</p>	<p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Less than acceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable/Good</p>	<p>Very good</p>
<p>Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i></p>				
<p>Strength of evidence for subdimension 2.2: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>				

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Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>			

SUBDIMENSION 2.3: EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very Good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	EDI issues were not considered in design or implementation of the research/innovation. Data on EDI was not collected. Representational balance within project teams was not considered.		EDI was considered to a degree but was not an operative concept in the design and implementation. Data disaggregation and balanced teams were features, but there was limited consideration of EDI in implementation beyond this.		EDI was considered in the project's rationale and is addressed in the project design and methodology, but some aspects of it in design or implementation could be improved. Beyond data disaggregation, EDI considerations are present in the questions, methods, analytical frameworks and approaches to sharing findings.		All relevant EDI issues were fully considered throughout the project and adapted as necessary during implementation. Beyond data disaggregation, the issues are well represented in the research/innovation questions, methods, analytical frameworks and approaches to sharing findings during	

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				and after completion of the work.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 2.3: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

SUBDIMENSION 2.4: ADDRESSING POTENTIALLY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES AND OUTCOMES FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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<p>Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.</p>	<p>There has been no apparent effort to address what could be serious negative consequences from the process or results. The researchers appear to have been insensitive to this aspect of the work.</p>	<p>The research/innovation was sensitive to this issue. Some efforts were made to address what could turn into negative consequences or outcomes, but they were not as comprehensive or thorough as they should have been. Informed consent was not adequately assured, and coercion of vulnerable populations was not adequately avoided.</p>	<p>The research/innovation was sensitive to this issue. Appropriate and timely measures have been taken in almost all instances to eradicate or mitigate foreseeable negative consequences or outcomes of the work. Measures have been taken to ensure compliance with the free, prior and informed consent processes and privacy of participants and to address potential negative risks to the environment. There is no sign of coercion of a vulnerable person, community or population.</p>	<p>Appropriate and timely measures have been taken to eliminate or mitigate foreseeable negative consequences or outcomes. There was a systematic effort by the team to mitigate negative consequences and outcomes. Measures have been taken to ensure participants' free, prior and informed consent and to ensure their privacy. There are no signs of coercion of a vulnerable person, community or population. Measures were put in place to address unanticipated consequences for individuals as well as the environment.</p>
<p>Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>				

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IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 2.4: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

Dimension 3: research/innovation importance

SUBDIMENSION 3.1: ORIGINALITY								
Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The research/innovation fails to build on and extend existing knowledge. It does not break new ground of		The research or innovation marginally adds to what is already known in the field. The research is not innovative and is not		The research or innovation presents fresh ideas, brings an innovative approach to solving existing challenges, and/or		The research/innovation is innovative and groundbreaking. It builds on existing knowledge in a	

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	make improvements in existing technologies and/or methods.	well connected to what is already known.	deals with a new, emerging issue worth pursuing. It challenges taken-for-granted assumptions, builds on existing knowledge, and is well connected to what is already known.	substantive way, making significant advancements to technologies and techniques.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 3.1: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

SUBDIMENSION 3.2: RELEVANCE

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Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The research/innovation does not contribute to a key development priority or an emerging area that might demand solutions in the foreseeable future. Justification for the work is absent or unconvincing. No contribution to theory or practice is evident.		The research/innovation makes little contribution to a key development priority or an emerging area that might demand solutions in the foreseeable future. A justification for this area of work is not well substantiated. Little contribution is made to theory or practice (VfM is not evident).		The research/innovation contributes to a key development priority, or an emerging area of some significance that might demand solutions in the near future. This area of work is justified. The research advances new or existing theory or practice in important ways.		The research/innovation makes an important contribution towards a key development priority, or an important emerging area that is highly likely to demand solutions in the near future. The work makes significant contributions to theory or practice. This area of work is well justified.	
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>								
IIA	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>								

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Strength of evidence for subdimension 3.2: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>			

Dimension 4: positioning for use

SUBDIMENSION 4.1: KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBILITY AND SHARING								
Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment	The research/innovation was not initiated and conducted with use in mind; there is no evidence of understanding of the context(s) within which the results are likely to be used; no evidence is seen of stakeholder		There was insufficient effort to map, understand and engagement stakeholders or key potential user groups, and limited engagement with understanding the larger context within which they operate.		The project research mapped, understood and engaged stakeholders and potential user groups. Researchers appear to have a credible understanding of the context within which key potential users/user groups operate.		The research was initiated and conducted with use in mind and with an emphasis on engaging with the contexts of potential users. The research included sophisticated/highly differentiated stakeholder mapping	

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	mapping. There has been no attention or engagement to making research findings available in formats and through mechanisms suited to well-targeted audience(s). Potential users will struggle to know about and access these knowledge products.	Insufficient attention has been paid to making research findings available in appropriate formats and through appropriate mechanisms to well-targeted potential user groups.	Research findings were made available to different potential user groups in user-friendly formats.	and engagement. Research findings were appropriately available to well-targeted and influential potential user groups in highly accessible and user-friendly formats. Mechanisms for use have been explored.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 4.1: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

SUBDIMENSION 4.2: ACTIONABILITY AND TIMELINESS

Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The R&I did not include any relevant analysis of user environment, including institutional, political, social or economic contingencies. The plan to support use was inadequate, and the team was not responsive to emergent opportunities.		There is evidence that some analysis of the user setting was undertaken; however, consideration was incomplete and did not adequately inform the translation of R&I to user groups. The strategies or plans to move the knowledge to policy or practice were weak, unresponsive and not fine-tuned.		There is evidence that the user environment and major contingencies have been examined and reflected upon and connected to strategies and plans for moving the R&I into policy or practice in an effective and timely manner.		The analysis of the user environment and contingencies is exceptionally thorough, well-articulated and dynamic. There is evidence of careful prospective appraisal of the likelihood of success of strategies designed to address contingencies. The R&I could respond to emerging opportunities for influence. There was thoughtful translation of the implications for user groups.	

Assessment: *Select one of the options below.*

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IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 4.2: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

Dimension 5: research and innovation results

SUBDIMENSION 5.1: HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION								
Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The research was not carried out with an interdisciplinary team or lens, where this would have been beneficial to the challenge being		The research/innovation included minimal representation of the disciplines that should have been represented		The research/innovation was carried out by an appropriate interdisciplinary team. It produced some new		The research/innovation was carried out by a strong interdisciplinary team. It provided important new insights	

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	addressed, and did not provide new insights or advance the field. The research or innovation was not deemed acceptable in the first four dimensions of RQ++. There is little to no likelihood of solutions to significant development challenges emerging.	to address the development challenge. The research/innovation received 'Less than acceptable' ratings on at least two of the first four dimensions of RQ++. Any insights, although potentially novel, were poorly presented and could not be effectively used for policy, practice, product or service development.	insights and knowledge in at least one of policy, practice, product or service development. These were presented in a manner(s) suitable to most key audiences. The research/innovation demonstrated acceptable quality in all the first four dimensions of RQ++.	and knowledge for translation into policies, practices, products, or services. It produces policies, practices, products or services of value and potential use by the intended stakeholders. The research/innovation achieves 'Very good' ratings in dimensions 1–4 of RQ++.
Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 5.1: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice.*

SUBDIMENSION 5.2: SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IIA								
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The teams were unsuccessful in developing R&I partnerships.		Some global partnerships were established, but these were very limited in scale and scope and are unlikely to continue past completion of the project, or are limited to pre-existing partnerships when the challenge calls for a broader dialogue and exchange.		Global interdisciplinary R&I partnerships were established successfully, including many of the key stakeholders. With some effort to sustain collaboration, these show potential to continue to provide value beyond the end of the project (i.e. in terms of policies and/or products to address a development challenge).		Global interdisciplinary R&I partnerships were established successfully, with broad engagement across relevant disciplines and geographies and with focus on important development challenges. They show strong promise for sustainability and continue to seek funding to continue their efforts.	

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Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				
Strength of evidence for subdimension 5.2: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>				
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence	
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>				

SUBDIMENSION 5.3: ENHANCED CAPABILITIES								
Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good	
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.	The research/innovation did not lead to improvements in capabilities for research and innovation among		Attention to improving research and innovation capabilities was inadequate, although some minimal improvement of skills		Attention to research and innovation capabilities enhancement was present in the design and many of the		There was extensive planning for and implementation of activities to enhance capabilities; there is clear evidence of	

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	UK or national/ regional/ local stakeholders to drive practice or policy change. Stakeholders continue to lack access to managerial ability, financial, technological and information resources and/or political influence required to bring about change.	and/or infrastructures can be observed among UK and national/ regional/local stakeholders to drive practice or policy change.	activities of the project. Evidence of enhanced capabilities is evident in some partners and UK and LMIC national/regional/ local stakeholders to lead adoption of practice or policy change, but some gaps remain. There is some evidence of improvements in institutional capacity, for example: increased knowledge and skills; improved communication between organisations; greater community engagement with decision making.	enhanced capabilities across the partnership and with national/ regional/local stakeholders to lead adoption of practice or policy change. There is good evidence of durable improvements in institutional capacity, for example: increased knowledge and skills; improved communication between organisations; greater community engagement with decision making; measurement, standards and targets; improved capacity to secure funding resources.
<i>Assessment: Select one of the options below.</i>				
IIA	Unacceptable	Less than acceptable	Acceptable/Good	Very good

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Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i>			
Strength of evidence for subdimension 5.3: <i>Select one of the options below.</i>			
Strong evidence	Some evidence	Limited evidence	No evidence
Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice.</i>			

SUBDIMENSION 5.4: NETWORKS FOR USE							
Insufficient information to assess	Unacceptable		Less than acceptable		Acceptable/Good		Very good
IIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 8

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<p>Not enough information available to make a credible assessment.</p>	<p>There is no evidence that stakeholders external to the research process have engaged with R&I process or outputs. It is highly unlikely that results will make a contribution to addressing a development challenge.</p>	<p>There is limited evidence that stakeholders external to the research process have engaged with R&I process and outputs. Potential for use of the results remains very low.</p>	<p>Stakeholders from a limited range of backgrounds have engaged in networks to develop next steps, replication strategies and/or implementation plans. There is evidence that some of the sought-after results are beginning to emerge in ways that could be used in policies, practices, products or services.</p>	<p>Stakeholders from all relevant backgrounds have engaged in networks to develop next steps, replication strategies and/or implementation plans. There is strong evidence of progress in achieving the intended results of the R&I activities.</p>
<p>Assessment: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>				
<p>IIA</p>	<p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Less than acceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable/Good</p>	<p>Very good</p>
<p>Comment: <i>Give brief rationale for choice, outlining the data sources used.</i></p>				
<p>Strength of evidence for subdimension 5.4: <i>Select one of the options below.</i></p>				
<p>Strong evidence</p>	<p>Some evidence</p>	<p>Limited evidence</p>	<p>No evidence</p>	

Comment: *Give brief rationale for choice.*

Sources

Please include a full list of sources used to make your assessments, including documents and key informant interviews.

Annex 3: Strategic and policy context for GCRF 2022–23 (full version)

As evidence for this stage of the evaluation was collected in 2022–23, it is important to outline the context. The first years of GCRF's evaluation, 2020–23, have seen significant changes in the strategic, policy and economic context of GCRF that have affected the whole fund. In 2023 these have included new policies and strategies governing the UK's international development and foreign policy, as well as a greater role for science and technology in the UK's international policies. In late 2021, the policy decision was made to wind down GCRF by 2025, with a continuation of commitments for existing awards and programmes but no new commissioning.

Over 2022–23, since the last GCRF evaluation synthesis report in 2021, there have been some important changes. These include:

- a refresh in March 2023 of the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy strategic framework (IR2023) that integrates ODA into defence and foreign policy, setting seven new campaigns – areas for priority effort – for the International Development Strategy
- the creation of a new UK government Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), which will be the new funder of GCRF and the evaluation
- the announcement of a new ODA and UK blended fund for International Science Partnerships (ISPF) in science and technology, part of the replacement for GCRF and the Newton Fund
- the continuing effects on awards of significant ODA budget reductions for 2021–22 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic response.

IR2023 was prompted by the pace of geopolitical change since the original review in 2021, including the war in Ukraine and its far-reaching energy and economic effects.¹

IR2023 sets out the vision for the UK's overarching national security and international strategy, bringing together defence, security, resilience, diplomacy, development and trade, as well as elements of economic and science and technology policy.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a long tail of effects on GCRF awards and their impact potential. The Covid-19 response significantly impacted on ODA spending and management across all departments, with subsequent cuts being made to the GCRF budget in 2021–22 as part of the temporary reductions in the UK's ODA commitment from 0.7% to 0.5 % of GNI.² These rather sudden budget reductions, which amounted to around 70% of committed spend in 2021–22, affected GCRF's POs and investments across the board, with grants being

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-refresh-2023-responding-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world/integrated-review-refresh-2023-responding-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world#iii-ir2023-updated-strategic-framework>

² Dickson, A. (2020) 'Spending Review: Reducing the 0.7% aid commitment'. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/spending-review-reducing-the-aid-commitment/>

delayed, reprofiled or terminated.³ The evaluation has observed over 2022–23 that delays and reprofiling of resources have meant that many awards have not delivered the level of outputs and results that were expected, and impact-oriented activities have been curtailed, with implications for GCRF’s midterm outcomes and impact. GCRF spending is now on a declining trajectory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. GCRF budget allocation 2022–25⁴



Effectively there are fewer than 18 months of R&I activity remaining, as in the final year awards and programmes will be focused on finalising outputs. Award teams – and, potentially, partnerships – will move on. Some will disband, but others have already identified other sources of funding to continue their collaborations. DSIT has decided that it is important that the evaluation continue to track GCRF up to its close in March 2025. In response to the new context, the design of the evaluation and GCRF’s ToC have been reshaped to capture lessons and document GCRF’s accomplishments and legacy. Capturing lessons and establishing GCRF’s achievements are particular priorities for DSIT in 2023, as these provide important foundations for the ISPF and the UK’s wider global partnership ambitions.

IR2023 places a greater emphasis on science and technology in the UK’s international policy, with an uplift in investment into research and innovation by 2024/25, alongside increased defence spending. There is an emphasis on global partnerships, with prioritisation of efforts to drive sustainable development and poverty alleviation and to tackle climate change and other shared challenges. This means that GCRF’s R&I outputs, international partnerships and new capabilities in LMICs and the UK will continue to be relevant as the foundations for future work to tackle these global priorities, and the evaluation can offer important findings to inform future research for development.

Geographically, IR2023 sets out how the pivot to the Indo-Pacific region will deepen in 2023. This means deeper partnerships between the UK and, among others, India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. There will be a continuation of strategic collaborations in Africa, including with, among others, South Africa,

³ UKRI (2021) ‘UKRI Official Development Assistance letter 11 March 2021’. Available at: <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/ukri-oda-letter-11-march-2021/>

⁴ Internal BEIS communication.

Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt. The UK's relationships with countries in the Middle East and the European-Atlantic regions will also deepen. These are all regions and countries where GCRF has supported R&I projects, providing focal points and relationships for future work. The evaluation's work to assess GCRF's impact and contributions in some of these countries will yield relevant insights for building future work.

The International Development Strategy (IDS), launched in May 2022,⁵ continues to guide the work of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and that of all ODA-spending departments, including DSIT (formerly BEIS), which funds GCRF. The IDS continues with its four overarching priorities: investment for sustainable, green economic growth; education, empowerment and protection from violence for women and girls; humanitarian assistance; and global health, climate and nature. Within those four priorities, the IR2023 sets out seven specific initiatives for 2023:

1. 'open science' allowing LMICs access to knowledge for resilience
2. global health crisis prevention
3. food security and nutrition
4. reforming and greening the global financial system, especially the multilateral banks and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
5. global tax reform to make systems fairer and to ensure greater revenue is recovered by LMICs
6. clean green infrastructure and investment
7. defending and extending rights of women and girls.

These are all topics which have been researched and explored within GCRF's portfolio, meaning that GCRF's outputs and achievements, and the evaluation's assessment of them, remain relevant to the new ODA policy context.

In February 2023, the UK government announced the creation of DSIT and the launch of a new International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF). The new dedicated department moves out of BEIS and elevates science, innovation and technology to a Cabinet ministry, reflecting the government's ambition to harness innovation to drive economic growth and global leadership. The new department emphasises future technologies – quantum, artificial intelligence, engineering biology, semiconductors and future telecoms – along with life sciences and green technologies.⁶ DSIT will lead on the implementation of the newly published UK Science and Technology Framework and will coordinate the anticipated uplifts in public and private investment in science and innovation. DSIT also now holds the remaining oversight of GCRF, the Newton Fund and the new ISPF.

⁵ FCDO (2022) The UK Government's Strategy for International Development. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1075328/uk-governments-strategy-international-development.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/science-innovation-and-technology-takes-top-seat-at-cabinet-table>

The new ISPF is the successor fund to GCRF and the Newton Fund; it blends ODA and non-ODA funding.⁷ The first phase of £119 million was announced in December 2022.

Although not envisioned to reach the same levels of investment as GCRF, the ISPF will still mobilise considerable investment in ODA R&I over its lifetime.

The aims of the new fund are to: support UK researchers and innovators to collaborate with partner countries on multidisciplinary projects; tackle global challenges and develop future technologies; enable groups of countries to collaborate in an agile way; strengthen the influence and connections of the UK and UK research and development community domestically and around the world. The fund will be delivered by the same partner organisations as GCRF, and will have four themes under which partner organisations will establish their own programmes and calls:

1. Resilient Planet – leading the green industrial revolution to protect the planet
2. Transformative Technologies – developing responsible technologies to secure our place in tomorrow’s world
3. Healthy People, Animals and Plants – researching and innovating for secure and healthy populations
4. Tomorrow’s Talent – nurturing talent to drive inclusion, research and innovation.

Funded in part by ODA, the ISPF is also likely to play a role in contributing to the priority areas under the IDS (set out above). The broad themes of the ISPF are also reflected in the GCRF portfolio, ensuring that the evaluation will continue to be relevant in establishing how the foundations that have been built by GCRF can support the UK’s new thematic R&I interests.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-science-partnerships-fund-ispf/international-science-partnerships-fund-ispf>

Annex 4: Bibliometric technical note

The technical note detailing the rationale and methodology for the bibliometric analysis is available upon request.

Annex 5: Sampling strategy

This annex details the full sampling strategy used to reach the final sample of 150 awards.

The sample of 150 was drawn from the dataset of responses obtained from the survey of GCRF award holders, conducted earlier in Stage 1b of the GCRF evaluation (n=9755). The approach was designed to select sampled awards with: (a) sufficient data available to apply the RQ++ rubric; (b) a good likelihood of having produced outputs. The criteria applied also ensured coverage of the diversity of award types within the GCRF portfolio, inclusion of Global South-led awards to allow analysis of impacts of Southern leadership on research excellence, and inclusion of all delivery partners. The exclusion criteria applied to the survey data are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Exclusion criteria applied

Criteria	Rationale	Number of records
Exclude awards without matched survey data	To ensure respondents could be matched to awards	2993
Exclude secondary respondents	To avoid awards being included more than once	960
Exclude awards in bottom 2 quintiles (>£127,354)	To ensure availability of data for assessment	604
Exclude awards <12 months long	To ensure sufficient outputs for assessment	592
Exclude grants with end dates in 2023 or later	To ensure award has produced outputs	534
Exclude previously sampled awards	To cover more of the fund & avoid evaluation fatigue	510
Exclude awards with incomplete/missing data	To ensure availability of data for assessment	506

Once this process had been completed, eight Interdisciplinary Hub awards were added back into the sample. They had been excluded due to their 2024 end date. However, since the Hubs are one of GCRF's flagship programmes, representing a significant proportion of the overall spend, it was important to understand their contribution to research quality within the portfolio. This left a sample longlist of 514 awards.

The sample longlist of 514 was then sorted into six broad categories of award, representing different types of investment. GCRF was not designed with a clear typology of awards, so the award types were developed in conjunction with the BEIS GCRF fund manager, drawing on her knowledge of the portfolio:

- early/mid-career awards
- research grants (thematic)
- other research grants
- networks
- applied innovation
- additional support.

We used the following steps to reach the final sample of 150:

- calculated the number and percentage of awards in each broad type category
- assigned number of awards to be sampled from each type category based on percentage of total
- categorised all awards by UK or Global South leadership (based on location of lead institution)
- sampled all Global South-led awards available in each type category
- sampled UK-led awards in each category to reach total.

We then checked that all the GCRF partner organisations were included in the final sample. AMS awards had all been excluded by the award size criterion, since they are all £100,000 or less. Six of these were added back into the sample, to ensure coverage of AMS research. The sample was reviewed by partner organisations, and substitutions were made where needed. Table 2 shows the sampling frame used.

Table 2. Sampling frame applied to reach final sample of 150

Category	# of awards	% of total	# of awards to be sampled	# of Global South-led awards sampled	# of UK-led awards sampled
Early/mid-career awards	62	12%	18	18	0
Research grants (thematic)	239	46%	70	9	61

Other research grants	135	26%	40	4	36
Networks	34	7%	10	10	0
Applied innovation	22	4%	6	0	6
Additional support	22	4%	6	6	0
Totals	514	100%	150	47	103

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