

WHAT WORKS?

MAXIMISING THE VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH & INNOVATION FUNDS



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Evidence-based approaches that enhance development impact



Equity, diversity & inclusion

Funds should integrate equality & inclusion to ensure that groups vulnerable due to gender, disability, sexuality, age or other status have the autonomy to succeed



Collaboration & networks

Complex R&I challenges need to involve civil society, business, communities & government from design to catalyse impact

FIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE IMPACT

These need to be prioritised & integrated by fund leadership, not only at commissioning but during implementation to ensure full value



Context

On-the-ground insight is crucial for relevant, locally-aligned R&I with impact



Capacity strengthening

Careful planning ensures long-term learning & skills for individuals & institutions in the UK & abroad



Partnership

Equity in R&I investment promotes outcomes with longevity



Use & uptake

Focusing on use & uptake from design onwards promotes greater impact



Fairness

Equal power over resources & decisions leads to greater partner country impact

WAYS OF WORKING: COMMISSIONING → IMPLEMENTATION

Context

Use partner country expertise to tailor fund design

Capacity strengthening

Develop an explicit strategy to guide the exchange of knowledge & skills between the UK & its partners

Partnership

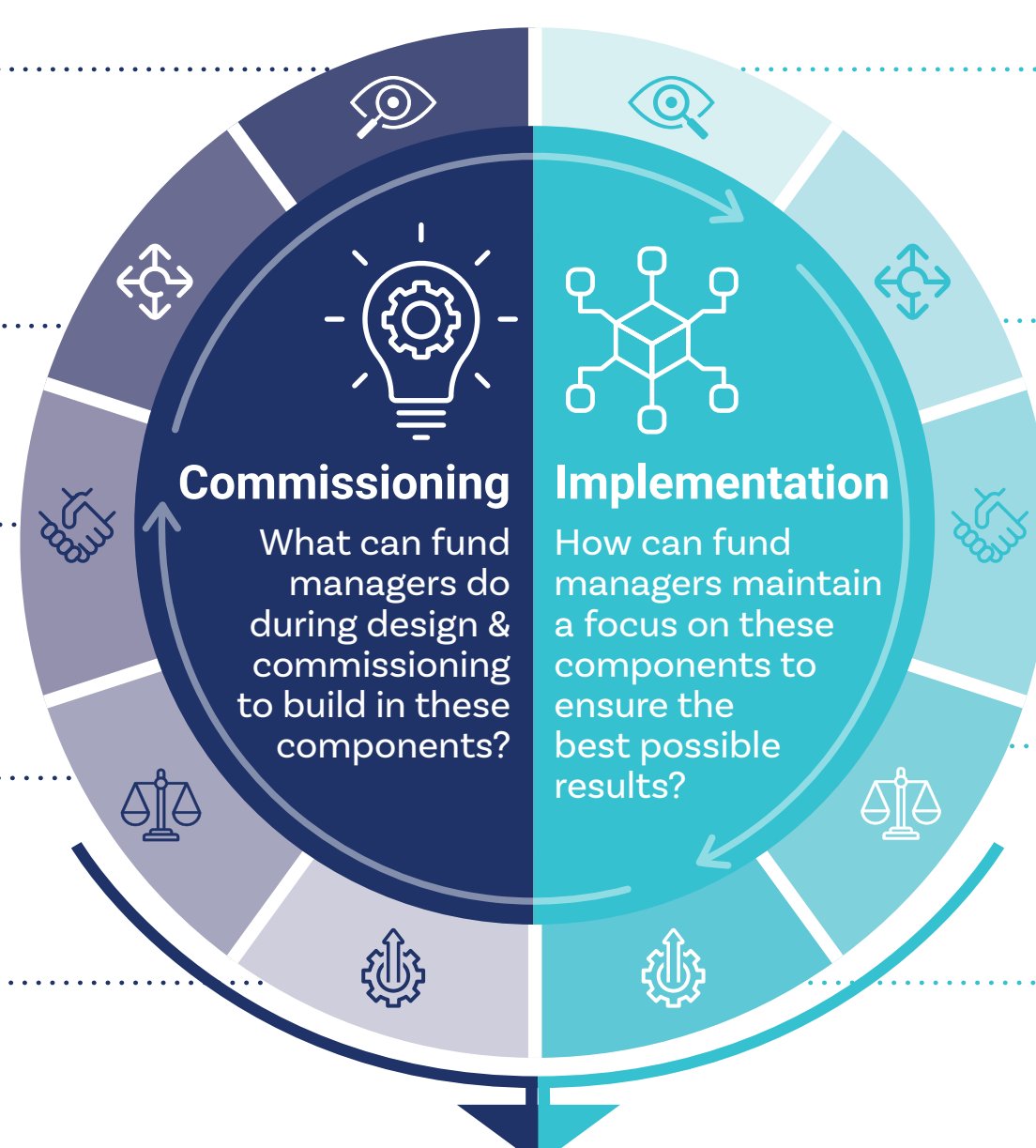
Dedicate resources to setting up novel partnerships through seed funding & pump priming

Fairness

Give equal control of budget & R&I teams to UK & partner country researchers

Use & uptake

Develop programmes & calls driven by the needs of users in partner countries



Context

Adapt programmes & awards based on advice from partner country researchers

Capacity strengthening

Promote early career research exchange & partner country leadership in teams & publications

Partnership

Include all partners in decision-making bodies, encouraging critical questions & joint problem-solving

Fairness

Give equal access to data, intellectual property & follow-on funding

Use & uptake

Go beyond journal articles to produce outputs tailored to user needs

SPOTLIGHT ON GLOBAL IMPACT

The GCRF evaluation shows how integrating essential elements and ways of working promotes positive outcomes



Nurturing talent leads to groundbreaking research

COUNTRIES: South Africa, The Gambia, Ghana, Uganda

VALUE: £6,336,135

PROJECT: The **African Career Accelerator** successfully empowered African scientists by addressing research gaps and fostering global South collaboration.

OUTCOME: Despite challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic, the initiative provided targeted leadership development & training, resulting in the first human genome sequencing in Africa, a biotech startup & 59 published papers. It laid a robust foundation for sustained advancements in health research.



Collaborative innovation creates commercial potential

COUNTRIES: UK, India, Uganda

VALUE: £1,708,769

PROJECT: Researchers & private sector innovators teamed up on a **biotechnology project** to tackle the invasive water hyacinth, utilising it for bioenergy, fertiliser & clean water. A pump priming grant supported the partnership's development.

OUTCOME: All team members contributed from design onwards, with clear roles & responsibilities. The team prioritised peer learning & exchange between researchers & private sector partners. Facilities have been commissioned in India to use the technology produced. UK, Indian & Ugandan team members have secured follow on funding.



User-led research informs post-conflict policy & practice

COUNTRIES: Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo

VALUE: £644,341

PROJECT: The **Art and Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community** award investigated what works in post-conflict reconciliation.

OUTCOME: To address this major gap for academics and practitioners, the team designed their study with advice from UNDP & other funders of reconciliation initiatives to ensure their research was useful. They showcased their work through art exhibitions & youth journalism. Their guidance has been adopted by UNDP, & they have secured follow-on funding for in-country partners.



EVIDENCE BASE: Evidence from Global Challenges Research Fund evaluation, 2020-25
Implemented by Itad Ltd

GCRF:
3000+
AWARDS

4 YEARS'
DATA COLLECTION,
5TH YEAR IN PROGRESS

347 AWARDS
REVIEWED IN-DEPTH,
45 IN PROGRESS

2336
AWARDS
SURVEYED

146
PROGRAMMES
SURVEYED

580+
STAKEHOLDERS
CONSULTED SO FAR