

Going Global Partnerships

UK-ASEAN Institutional Links

Early Career Researchers Scheme

Applicant Guidelines

Version 3.0

1 July 2021

Overview of change(s) from previous version:

Change	Page in version 1.0	Page in version 2.0	Page in version 3.0
Remove 50% cash matched and change to “Matched efforts: both cash and in-kind contribution”	3	3	3
Change key dates for application	3	3	3
Remove “The cash contribution must be at least 50% of the <u>total grant requested</u> .” and change to “The applicants must justify the ratio of cash and in-kind contributions. The award panel will review the justifications.	7	7	8
Change “Each proposal must have matched efforts from the partner country institution; <u>at least 50% of the grant requested in cash and the remaining is in-kind contribution</u> ” to “.....however, the amount of cash matching will be justified by the applicants.”	8	8	9
Remove “The cash contribution must be at least 50% of the total matched efforts.”	11	11	12
Add “Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis to allow more than 30% human resources costs. Please email EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org ” to Section 10: Eligible costs	12	12	13
Change “Matched efforts from the partner country institution and associated partners; <u>at least 50% of the grant requested in cash and the remaining is in-kind contribution</u> .” to “..... both cash and in-kind contributions.”	24	24	25
Add “unless approval has been sought separately from the British Council.” to Appendix 1: Eligibility criteria checklist	24	25	26

Countries included in this call are:
Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand

Call Opens: 1 October 2021
Call Closes: 14 January 2022, 1600 UK time

Type of Grant	Grant Size	Main Eligibility	Thematic Area	Maximum Length of project
Non-ODA	£50,000	Matched efforts: Both cash and in-kind contribution	AI and Cybersecurity: Singapore, Malaysia Agritech and Biodiversity: Brunei, Thailand	Max 12 months starting 1 April 2022

Funding Available:

A total of £250,000 for four countries, matched by partner country institutions. Two grants for Singapore and one each for Brunei, Malaysia and Thailand.

How to apply:

Online submission via the link provided on

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/opportunities/uk-asean-institutional-links-early-career-researchers-scheme>

We invite applications on the selected thematic areas from the above four countries only. Each application requires a Principal Applicant from UK higher education institution and a Principal Applicant from partner country higher education institution. Associated Partners may include government agencies, non-for-profit organisations, businesses and start-ups. We will allow only one application per Principal Applicant, from either country.

Assessment Process:

- Eligibility checking
- Review by 2 external experts
- Panel meeting to finalise the score and select successful applicants.

Contracting and Grant disbursement process:

The British Council will sign Grant Agreement with UK Higher Education Institutions and disburse grants to UK Higher Education Institutions.

Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Call opens	1 October 2021
Deadline for applications	14 January 2022
Assessment and Review Panel	January 2022 – February 2022
Announcement of awards	15 February 2022
Contracting and Grants Release	By 15 March 2022

Contact: EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org

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1. Background

Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the world extensively adding to the global challenges – such as extreme weather conditions, urbanisation, access to affordable health care, food and energy security. Integrated research and innovation approach, bringing together communities from different disciplines, sectors and countries in high-quality collaborations to address these global challenges has never been more critical.

The UK-ASEAN Institutional Links Early Career Researchers (ILECR) Scheme is designed to provide small scale seed funding to senior researchers from UK and partner country's higher education institutions to lead a team of UK and partner country early career researchers for 12 months to work on emerging areas aligning to the Indo-Pacific Tilt and Sustainable Development Goals. The intention is that the Scheme add tangible value to the investment already made by the UK and ASEAN countries.

The UK-ASEAN Institutional Links-Early Career Researchers (ILECR) Scheme is funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through ASEAN Dialogue Partner Grant and delivered by the British Council as part of the Going Global Partnerships Programme.

Going Global Partnerships connects universities, colleges, education policy makers, civil society organisations and industry partners in the UK and around the world. This British Council programme offers you vital international opportunities - the chance to build relationships, to share ideas and good practice, to access grant funding for collaborative partnerships and more. Through this work, the programme contributes to stronger, more inclusive, and globally-connected tertiary education systems which support economic and social growth.

2. Overview of the funding opportunity

We expect the ILECR Scheme to **stimulate new research impact by having senior researchers in UK and partner countries to lead a team of early career researchers (ECRs) in an interdisciplinary partnership on emerging areas while developing and broadening ECRs' professional knowledge, experience and skills in research and translation**. Each proposal is co-led by a Principal Applicant from UK and a Principal Applicant from partner country. Associated Partners like government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, businesses, SMEs and start-ups can be included in the proposal. Participation of ECRs from UK and partner country including their roles in the project, expected milestones and achievements will be planned and identified by the Principal Applicants. The ECRs must have a PhD or equivalent research experience.

The grants must be used to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Contribute to capacity strengthening of early career researchers (ECRs)**
The proposals must include a description of how the partnerships will contribute to the personal and professional development of the ECRs from UK and partner country. Principal Applicants should indicate how they envisage this occurring, including the roles of the ECRs in the partnerships, long term plans such as mentoring of early career researchers (either within each country, or cross-nationally) and how they will continue to benefit beyond the partnerships.
- **Support research and translation partnerships on emerging areas**
The grant can be used build a new partnership between UK Higher Education/Research Institutions and Country Higher Education/Research Institutions either at group, departmental or institutional level in the emerging

areas. It can also be used to further an existing partnership or extend the partnership to work with non-academic organisations and individuals like businesses, SMEs and start-ups to support the exchange of research and innovation expertise and the translation of research knowledge into tangible benefits. For an existing partnership, applicants should demonstrate that the grant will contribute to greater impact realisation.

- **Establish new research links or significantly develop existing links, with the potential for longer term sustainability**

Principal Applicants must outline the specific impacts anticipated from the partnerships. The aim of the partnership is to stimulate longer term links between the UK and partner countries. The proposals should include an explanation of the mutual benefits to the UK and partner country. They should also explore any potential longer-term benefit that might arise, thinking about who might benefit and how they might benefit and describing the actions that will be taken to ensure that potential impact is realised.

The grant size is £50,000 and any proposal that request for budget more than that will not be considered. The partner country institution and associated partners must match the funding in a **combination of cash and in-kind contributions**. The applicants must justify the ratio of cash and in-kind contributions. The award panel will review the justifications.

Principal Applicants awarded Researcher Links (RL) grants previously are encouraged to apply to this grant and engage the ECRs from the RL project in continuing the work or realising ideas resulted from the project.

3. Scope of the programme

This grant allows Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to expand their work and continue deepen their knowledge, experience and skills as well as unlocking higher achievements and connections in their career through the existing partnership or achieving that through a new partnership under the lead and mentoring of the Principal Applicants. It also allows ECRs who are interested to navigate research and translation career in the emerging areas to develop their knowledge, experience and skills, and build local and international connections through a partnership research and translation project led by the Principal Applicants. The applications must be submitted by the Principal Applicants.

The scope for individual activities is broad and flexible. However, it will be expected that all proposed activities are:

- Evidence-based
- Responsive to experience and lessons learned through preceding projects
- Beneficial to clearly defined stakeholders

Applicants are encouraged to plan and deliver activities remotely considering the carbon footprints of travel and its consequences on climate change as well as the travel requirements and restrictions that maybe imposed in UK and partner countries. Please bear in mind the time differences when planning for remote activities.

Suggested activities include but are not limited to:

- Professional development and capacity strengthening for early career researchers such as mentoring, workshops, internship/attachment.
- A wide range of relevant stakeholder engagement activities such as knowledge brokerage, debates, seminars, round-table discussions, exhibitions and workshops involving researchers and practitioners; policy makers; businesses; industry bodies; civil society leaders; public sector representatives; journalists, government/parliamentary intermediaries and other non-academic dissemination professionals; service providers; or investors.
- Development and dissemination of impact-focused knowledge products, publications or other media: guides to making practical use of research outputs, evidence synthesis products, policy white papers or other specific recommendation papers that put the evidence into the wider context, translation of key information, creative packaging of research results and recommendations for public engagement.
- Capacity strengthening in techniques or practice relevant to specific impacts or aimed at reducing current barriers to impact.
- Commercial outputs, prototyping, demonstrations, field-trials, on-site testing/verification to meet regulations, collection of results/data vital to recommendations.

4. Eligibility

Proposals must fulfil the following criteria to be eligible for funding under this Programme:

- Each proposal must be matched with cash and in-kind contribution from the partner country institution and associated partners; however, the amount of cash matching will be justified by the applicants.
- Each proposal must have one Principal Applicant from the UK **and** one Principal Applicant from the partner country.
- Both Principal Applicants must be Leading Researchers or Established Researchers¹.
- Individuals may only act as Principal Applicant on one application. Multiple applications from the same individual will not be accepted.
- Principal Applicants must be employed by one of the following types of organisations and have a contract that extends beyond the period of the grant i.e., April 2022 – March 2023 (Emeritus and Honorary Professors may not charge for their time).
 - A not-for-profit higher education institution with the capacity to undertake high-quality research, unless specified otherwise.
 - A UK higher education institution (all UK higher education institutions that receive grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies are eligible).

¹ For an indication of profiles for the different categories of participants, we suggest applicants refer to the European Commission's "Towards a European framework for Research Careers" https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_researchcareers_final.pdf ". Principal Applicants and mentors should be at 'R4 – Leading Researcher' level or 'R3 – Established Researcher' level, and early career participants at 'R2 – Recognised Researcher' level or at the beginning of R3 level.

- A not-for-profit research organisation with the capacity to undertake high-quality research² and a UK Catapult Centres³
- Both of the Principal Applicants' Institutions (the 'Lead Institutions) must have the capacity to administer the grant.
- The ECRs recruitment process and timeline must be identified. Please see 7.0 Recruitment and Role of the Early Career Researchers.
- Institutions based in the partner country affiliated to institutions in the UK or any other country, such as an overseas campus or research organisation must apply for the grant as Partner Country's Lead Institution and must include at least one eligible higher education institution or research organisation in the partner country as Associated Partner. Institutions cannot apply in conjunction with their own affiliates in UK.
- Institutions or Individuals with active sanctions against them from partner country will not be eligible for this Call.
- For-profit organisations like businesses and not-for-profit organisations can participate as Associated Partners (please see 6.0 Associated Partnerships) but are **not** eligible to apply as Lead Institutions. A business is defined as an organisation undertaking commercial activities.
- For-profit organisations and not-for-profit organisations can participate but are **not eligible to receive any grant funds except to cover travel associated costs.**

Eligibility checks will be applied to all proposals on receipt. Proposals which are not led by a recognised not-for-profit higher education institution or a publicly funded research organisation will be rejected during these checks.

Please see **Appendix 1** for the list of eligibility criteria.

If you are unsure about your organisation's eligibility, for UK see the link at Footnote 2; for partner countries, please contact us at EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org

5. Gender Equality

To comply with the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014, applications must outline how they have taken meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how the project will contribute to reducing gender inequalities in the Gender Equality Statement section of the application form.

Applicants are required to consider the impact their project will have on gender. Gender equality is an assessment criterion for this call. This should be about the project specifically – the outputs and outcomes; the make-up of the project team; participants, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project; and the processes followed throughout the programme. It should not be a re-statement of your Institution's policy; you may refer to the policy but should show how the policy will be implemented in terms of the project. The Gender Statement **must address the below criteria**, with an understanding that, depending on the nature of the

2 Please see the list here

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/eligible_uk_research_organisations_v18_jun_2020.pdf

for a list of eligible UK research organisations.

3 <https://www.innovateuk.org/-/catapult-centres>

research and innovation, not all questions will be applicable. **If a question is not applicable, you will need to articulate the reasons why.**

- Have measures been put in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project? This includes the development of the project, the participants of the research and innovation, and the beneficiaries of the research and innovation.
- The expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond.
- The impact on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender. For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc.
- How will any risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality be avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?
- Are there any relevant outcomes and outputs being measured, with data disaggregated by age and gender (where disclosed)?

UKRI provide useful guidance on Gender Equality Statements for their grant applications. You can find this at: <https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research-fund/gender-equality-and-international-development-research-and-innovation/>

Applicants are **encouraged to propose projects with gender and inclusion as cross-cutting themes**. It will be a value-added to the programme which will be given substantial consideration during application assessment.

The British Council reserves the right to reject the application if no consideration has been given to gender equality or if the proposal is assessed to result in a negative impact for gender equality.

6. Associated Partnerships

To support the realisation of outcomes, Principal Applicants are encouraged to include associated partners in their proposals. An associated partner is defined as a collaborating organisation or individual that will have an integral role in the project and from which you have secured a commitment (other than that from British Council) to provide additional resources for this project. This may include in-kind or cash contributions such as expertise, staff time, use of facilities, etc.

These can include:

- Other research or higher education institutions
- Technology transfer offices
- Not for-profit organisations (including NGOs)
- For-profit/commercial organisations (including SMEs)
- UK Catapults

A letter of support from each associated partner confirming the level of support specific to this proposal must be included as an attachment. This must be signed, dated within three months of submission and on headed paper.

7. Recruitment and Role of the Early Career Researchers

Early career researchers (ECRs)⁴ for the project must have a PhD or equivalent research experience. We would expect ECRs to have been awarded their PhD not more than 10 years prior to the project (or to have equivalent experience), but allowances can be made for career breaks or other extenuating circumstances. If a researcher does not hold a PhD but has research experience equivalent to a PhD holder and works in a field where a PhD is not a prerequisite for established research activity, they can still be considered eligible.

Early career researchers (ECRs) for the project can be recruited by Principal Applicants either through an open call or can be identified during the application if candidates are available for instance from an existing partnership. Principal Applicants must take into consideration the time taken for the ECRs recruitment as not to affect the project delivery which starts on 1 April 2022. The recruitment process and timeline must be stated clearly in the proposal.

Roles of the ECRs, expected milestones and achievements made by the ECRs must be elaborated in the proposal. Mentoring and long-term plans for the ECRs beyond the project must be provided as well. Principal Applicants will be responsible to monitor and evaluate the progress of the ECRs and establish process for the ECRs to report their progress.

At least one ECR must be recruited by the UK lead institution and one by the partner country's lead institution. The project team is made up of a UK principal investigator, partner country's principal investigator and at least two ECRs, each from UK and partner country.

8. Role of the Principal Applicants

Principal Applicants submit the online application form along with a budget request, determine the research content and outcome of the research project. Principal Applicants will also decide on the roles of the early career researchers, set the milestones and be responsible for selecting early career researchers to participate in the project if the proposal is successful.

Under this call for proposals, Principal Applicants will be responsible for all organisational aspects of the project. The grant agreement will be signed by the UK Principal Applicant's home institution which will be responsible for the management of the grant (including financial reporting).

The Principal Applicants will act as mentors to the early career researchers during the project delivery. Ideally, they would oversee the early career researchers in completing the milestones that are set for them and remain in contact with them after the project has been completed.

9. Funding

Each grant is £50,000. **The proposed budget must not be more than £50,000 and it must be matched by the country institution and associated partners in a combination of cash and in-kind contributions.**

Please complete the **budget spreadsheet** as provided on the call website with details of all costs:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/opportunities/uk-asean-institutional-links-early-career-researchers-scheme>

Please also complete the **budget summary** on the online application form with the totals from your budget spreadsheet and provide justification for the amounts applied for (e.g. why consumables or equipment are needed, why travel is necessary). Where you do not provide

⁴ Definition of Early Career Researchers

https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_researchcareers_final.pdf

explanation for an item that requires justification, or include an ineligible cost, it may be cut from any grant made.

Please indicate funds applied for from other sources to cover the partnership in the budget spreadsheet and summarise as indicated on the application form. Please clarify the status of the funding applications (i.e. successful; decision pending). Please indicate when you will know the outcome of any pending applications.

Please contact EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org if you are in doubt which costs the grants can and cannot cover.

To ensure value for money, the budget requested in your proposal (including human resource costs) should cover only costs that are essential, appropriate and relevant to the partnership. The proposal should maximise cost share through direct and indirect institutional contributions, in-kind funding, other funding sources, and private sector support.

10. Eligible costs

The ILECR Scheme is intended to contribute to the direct costs of establishing and operating your partnership and ECRs involvement, (i.e. costs directly related to implementing activities contained in the proposal).

The grants **can cover:**

Category	Type	Percentage limits	Notes
Human Resources costs	Staff costs for personnel working <u>directly</u> on the grant funded project: salaries and fees for ECRs and other staff recruited to work <u>solely</u> on the project.	Limited to 30% of grant awarded	This includes on -costs such as superannuation, and national insurance payments. Indirect costs cannot be covered and are assumed to be contributed by the principal institutions. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis to allow more than 30% human resources costs. Please email EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org
Other research related costs	Essential research equipment for use on the project.	Other research related costs are limited to 30% of total grant requested.	If the applicant requests more than 30% of the total budget requested under this category, the project will be considered ineligible. Permission must be obtained from British
	Consumables		

Category	Type	Percentage limits	Notes
	Specialist software licences essential to the partnership. Access fees to facilities or library services.		Council before the purchase of equipment over £5,000 if the application is successful. Criteria are normally: Equipment is essential to delivery of the project and cannot be expected to be provided by institutions Equipment will be used in the partner country and will remain there on project completion.
Operational Costs	Travel (economy class) and subsistence costs to the UK and partner countries.	None	In line with British Council policies and the criteria detailed in Appendix 1.
	Visa fees, vaccinations and medical insurance for travel essential to partnership, to the UK and partner countries.		
	Costs of meetings, training events and seminars integral to the partnership.		This can include short-term room hire, hire of audio-visual equipment (projectors, etc.) and stationery supplies (flip-charts, etc.) Attendance at events which are not part of the project, included in the proposal, will only be funded exceptionally, and only if the collaborators will be presenting about the project.

Category	Type	Percentage limits	Notes
	Basic catering costs associated with events or meetings directly relating to the partnership.		
Communications costs	Publication costs directly related to the partnership.	None	This includes web page development by external providers, if appropriate.
	Use of telecommunications and digital platform such as video / audio / web conferencing.		Virtual delivery costs, which may include but not limited to cost of facilitators and technicians who are recruited to manage the virtual platform, translators and/or digital tools to provide easier access for people with disabilities. We encourage open access publishing, and publication-related costs such as author payment charges (APCs) can be included. The British Council must be notified prior to publication and reserves the right to approve APCs or other publication costs before they are incurred.
Other costs	Bank charges for transfer of funds from the Lead Institution to other Partners.		Note that for-profit organisations are only eligible to receive funds for travel associated costs.

11. Ineligible costs

The grants **cannot cover**:

- Full economic costs (FECs).
- Directly allocated staff costs
- Institutional overheads, administration fees and other indirect costs.
- Costs of staff based in commercial or for-profit organisations.
- Costs of permanent staff in Associated Partner organisations.

- Purchase or rental of standard office equipment (except specialist equipment essential to the research). This includes:
 - IT hardware – laptops, personal computers, tablets, smart phones, Mac workstations, computer parts and peripherals, etc. Any standard hardware which would routinely be used by researchers and academics will not be funded.
 - Office software.
 - Desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, printers, fax machines.
 - Mobile phone rental or purchase.
 - Roaming charges.
 - Tuition Fees.
 - Bench Fees (for example PhD, Masters or Undergraduate study).
 - Costs related to writing up, promoting or disseminating previous research.
 - Attendance at conferences or other events unless this is to present outputs and outcomes of the project.
 - Patents costs.
 - Costs relating to the construction, procurement or rental of physical infrastructure, (e.g. office buildings, laboratory facilities). It is expected that any rooms and facilities essential for the routine operation of partnership are provided as an in-kind contribution by the participating institutions. These can be detailed as an in-kind contribution in the budget breakdown.
 - Entertainment costs such as:
 - Gifts.
 - Alcohol.
 - Restaurant bills or hospitality costs for personnel not directly participating in the project.
 - Excessive restaurant costs.
 - Excessive taxi fares.
 - Other indirect costs not listed in the above table.

Please contact EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org if you are in doubt which costs the ILECR Scheme can and cannot cover.

To ensure value for money, the budget requested in your proposal (including human resource costs) should cover only costs that are essential, appropriate and relevant to the partnership. The proposal should maximise cost share through direct and indirect institutional contributions, in-kind funding, other funding sources, and private sector support.

Please indicate in the appropriate budget spreadsheet (and summarise as indicated on the application form) funds applied for from other sources to cover the partnership; please clarify the status of the funding applications, (i.e. successful; decision pending). Please indicate when you will know the outcome of any pending applications.

12. How grants will be disbursed

The grant for ILECR Scheme will be paid 100% within 30 days on signature of Grant Agreement by both parties on condition that the final report and supporting documents submitted by the Principal Applicants are approved by the British Council

The British Council reserves the rights to recover the full payment if the final report and supporting documents are not satisfactory, or the project has not been delivered as planned, or if intended outcomes are less than originally envisaged, resulting in a reduction in spending (50% and less), or the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement have not been adhered.

The Grant Agreement will be signed by and the grant paid to the UK Principal Applicant's home institutions (UK Lead Institution). The grant recipient institution that signs the agreement will then be responsible for the management of the grant including financial reporting. The final terms will be communicated to successful applicants. A copy of Grant Agreement template is available for reference on the call website.

The UK Principal Applicant is responsible to communicate and agree with the Partner Country's Principal Applicant and partner country's institution on the project's grant management and disbursement.

In the case where the Lead Institutions will disburse a portion of the grants to associated partners for the project delivery, a letter of agreement signed by the Lead Institutions and associated partners indicating the arrangement has been agreed prior to the application shall be attached to the application. Principal Applicants who are intended to disburse a portion of the grants to ECRs for the project delivery will need to have a grant management and reporting process in place for the ECRs. The Principal Applicants must take overall responsibility in communicating and ensuring that the ECRs utilise the grants appropriately adhering to the terms of the Grant Agreement.

13. Underspend

In cases where the projects have spent less than the budget awarded, the underspend cannot be used for further activity unless agreed by the British Council. Requests to utilise the underspend should be sent to EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org before additional expenditure occurs. Requests should be submitted **three months before the project end date**.

14. Project duration

The duration of the project is 12 months from April 2022 to March 2023. Funding, if approved, will be transferred to the successful Lead Institution once the Grant Agreement is counter-signed.

Formal project start and end dates will be set out in the offer letter/Grant Agreement. Expenses incurred by the organisation prior to the effective start date or beyond the effective end date, including any costs incurred in the production of the proposal, cannot be charged to the grant.

15. Digital Platform

The British Council's Global Information Security Policy has banned Zoom usage in the British Council and for contracted suppliers and grant award holders. The British Council strongly recommends using Microsoft Teams to deliver virtual activities and workshops. If you require a Microsoft Teams licence, please contact the British Council on the email address below.

Principal Applicants, who want to use other online tools or online platforms, must follow British Council's safeguarding and security protocols. Online tools or platforms other than Microsoft Teams must be discussed with the British Council and requests to use a different platform or tool should be sent to EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org for review.

16. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Monitoring and evaluation will be in line with standard reporting requirements of the British Council and FCDO. Principal Applicants will be required to complete reporting every 6 months. Awards may be required to complete a case study template to enable a case study to be written about the award. The British Council reserves the right to include additional monitoring requirements. More information will be provided to successful award holders.

17. Communication, promotion and publicity

Principal Applicants are expected to plan the communication and promotion of the activities and share the results and outcomes of the project with external parties where appropriate. Branding guidelines will be shared along with the Grant Agreement.

18. Ethics and research governance

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported by this Programme. Applicants must ensure the proposed activity will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity.

It is the absolute responsibility of the Principal Applicants and the Lead Institutions to ensure that appropriate ethical approval is granted and adhered to, and that no research requiring ethical approval is initiated until it has been granted

In the online application form, applicants must clearly articulate how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and how they will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised. Specifically, applications that involve research on animals, human participants, human tissue or patient/participant data must be accompanied by necessary permission certificates from the relevant local ethical review committees/authorities in the UK and the partner country, or an undertaking to obtain this permission in advance of the activity commencing. Failure to do so will result in applications being rendered ineligible and any funding already committed through this Programme being rescinded.

The Lead Institution in the partner country is responsible for managing and monitoring the conduct of medical and health research in a manner consistent with the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research. There must be effective and verifiable systems in place for managing research quality, progress and the safety and well-being of patients and other research participants. These systems must promote and maintain the relevant codes of practice and all relevant statutory review, authorisation and reporting requirements. Applicants are responsible to obtain ethical approval from relevant authorities before the start of activities that require such approval. Applicant must ensure that the work carried out adheres to the local guidelines for best practice.

Please refer to the Research Councils UK 'Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct' <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/grc/>, the Inter Academy Partnership report 'Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise' <http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx> or contact us at EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org for further guidance.

19. Diversity and Inclusion

British Council are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and to continuing to attract and nurture talented people from the widest pool to remain internationally competitive in research and innovation. We believe that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed. This includes avoidance of bias due to disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.

We also recognise, and will seek to maximise, the benefits achieved by diversity of thought and experience within inclusive groups, organisations and the wider community. British Council are therefore committed to ensuring that the best potential researchers from a diverse population are attracted into research careers. Applicants are asked to consider encouraging participation from researchers from under-represented groups in the teams implementing their proposed activities.

Please describe any action you are taking to encourage diversity under “Partnership” on your application form.

Applicants may apply for funding to cover extra costs for such participation, for example, for disabled people who may otherwise not be able to participate, or for additional childcare or purchase of internet data for workshop participants who do not have access to internet at home. **Please contact us at EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org if you are applying for this funding. Please make costs necessary to cover this inclusion clear in the ‘human resources’ section of the budget request within your application.**

For more on the British Council’s approach, see our Equality Policy at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/policies/equality-diversity-inclusion>

20. Safeguarding

British Council condemn all forms of harm and abuse, including bullying and harassment. We take a zero-tolerance approach to harm and abuse to any individual employed through or associated with our programmes in all contexts; whether in humanitarian or fragile and conflict-affected settings, in other field contexts, or within the international or UK research and development community which we fund. We expect organisations to promote the highest standards in organisational culture and have in place the systems and procedures required to prevent and tackle all incidents of harm and abuse. Applications should detail how they will identify and manage safeguarding risks within their projects. **Please describe any action you are taking under “Partnership” on your application form.**

21. Submission process

The deadline for submission of a completed online application including all supporting documentation is:

1600 UK time on 30 November 2021

Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

The deadlines apply to all parts of your application, including the uploading of fully completed supporting documentation. Any applications which are not submitted *in full* by the deadline, with all mandatory supporting documents, may be considered *ineligible*.

Applicants **must** submit a completed online application form **in English** which includes the uploading of supporting information. This application form can be found here: https://britishcouncil-cxobw.formstack.com/forms/institutional_links_early_career_researchers_scheme_application

The online form allows applicants to enter information and save it for a later date until final submission. There are strict character limits for each section which cannot be exceeded.

Once the online application is submitted, the system will generate a unique application ID number. Applicants should note this number and use it in all communications with the British

Council. Applicants who have not received this ID number should contact the British Council at EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org

If you experience problems with the online submission system, please contact EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org before the submission deadline. If you alert us to technical issues after the deadline, we will not be able to take them into consideration when assessing the eligibility of your application.

Application form in word document is available on the call webpage. This is solely to allow you to develop your responses in a convenient format. The final version of your application **must** be submitted using the online form.

22. Supporting documents

In addition to filling in the online form, applicants are required to upload the following documents, by the deadline. As above, **late submission of supporting documents, or submission of documents which do not comply with these requirements, may render the application *ineligible*.** The documents are:

- **Principal Applicants' CVs (up to two sides of A4 each)**

A CV for each Principal Applicant must be included. This should include contact details, qualifications (including class and subject), academic and professional posts held since graduation, a list of the most relevant and recent publications, and a record of research funded by the Research Councils and other bodies. This should be uploaded under the "CV" attachment type and not exceed three pages. Please note publications lists should be submitted within these three pages, not as a separate document.

- **Budget Spreadsheet**

The appropriate detailed project budget form as per guidance on the webpage (templates available on the British Council call webpage)

- **Letters of support**

All Letters of support must be in English on headed paper, dated **within 3 months** of the submission. We recognise that due to the current situation with **Covid-19** it may be difficult to get signed letters on headed paper. Where this is the case, please provide a **less formal version** of the letter including the same content e.g. an email from the head of department (or other relevant person) and state that it was not possible to get a signed version of the letter due to Covid-19.

Institutional Support Letter

From the UK and partner country Principal Applicants' organisations, signed by the Head of Institution, Head of Department or other person with appropriate delegated authority, expressing specific commitment to the proposed project, willingness to receive funding, a description of any in-kind support to be given and describing why the experience and capability of the Principal Applicant is particularly suited to the project content. Please note that supporting letters must not be signed by the Principal Applicants.

Associated Partners Letter

If the proposal includes associated partners, a pdf file **combining together signed letters from each partner containing a maximum of 300 words on their contribution to the project - this could be financial or in-kind, e.g. expertise.** There is only one slot for uploading associated partners letter, so all supporting letters **must** be submitted as a **combined** document. Links to partner websites should be included if applicable. Letters from every associated partner listed in the application **must** be provided.

- **GANTT Chart**

To help understand the timeline for the project to complete its outcomes, it is recommended that applicants submit an outline chart to help understand the feasibility of the project. No more than one sheet of A4.

- **Appointment or offer letter and CV if applicable**

The CV for the early career researchers that will be recruited for this project, if applicable. The early career researchers who are recruited after successful application will have their appointment or offer letter and CVs send to EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org

- **Letter of agreement if applicable**

Lead institutions who plan to disburse funding to associated partners or early career researchers for activities delivery must sign a letter of agreement with them to show a prior discussion and agreement on the funding disbursement, spending and reporting has taken place. The partnership or grant agreement can be signed by both parties after successful application. The letter will also need to indicate that the partners have read and understand the Grant Agreement terms of the Scheme, which maybe serve as the basis of the partnership or grant agreement prepared by the lead institutions and signed by the partners. For-profit organisations and not-for-profit organisations can participate but are **not eligible to receive any grant funds except to cover travel associated costs**.

23. Finalising submission

Before the completed online application form can be submitted to the system, applicants will be asked to confirm on the form that they have:

- obtained permission to submit the proposal on behalf of the UK institution(s) **and** of the partner country institution(s). This must be confirmed by attaching Letters of Support or formal emails from the respective institutions signed by the Head of Institution, Head of Department or other person with appropriate delegated authority.
- confirmed the Principal Applicants' Institutions (i.e. the Lead Institutions) willingness to receive the funds and to sign a Grant Agreement with the British Council, also confirmed in the Letters of Support.
- confirmed the Lead Institutions have discussed with Associated Partners and ECRs on the grant management and disbursement process if they will receive grants to deliver activities.
- complied with British Council policies on prevention of fraud, bribery, money laundering and addressed any other financial and reputational risk that may affect a transparent and fair grant award process. See:
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/anti-fraud-and-corruption>

Once the online application is submitted, the system will generate a unique application ID number. Applicants should note this number and use it in all communications with the British Council. Applicants who have not received this ID number should contact the British Council at EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org.

24. Applicant screening

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process, carry out searches of relevant third-party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant institutions nor any of the applicants' employees, partners, directors, shareholders is listed:

- as an individual or entity with whom national or supranational bodies have decreed organisations should not have financial dealings
- as being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime
- as being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body
- as being subject to export, trade or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director, and/or
- as being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.

If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call.

The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches.

Please read the text to this effect on the application form and tick the box to show that you understand this.

25. Selection process

Selection begins with an eligibility check by the British Council against the eligibility criteria given in these Guidelines. Please see the **Appendix 1 for Eligibility Checklist**. This will include the Gender Statement.

No appeal against eligibility outcomes will be permitted.

Peer review

Eligible proposals will undergo independent expert review based on the potential to impact realisation, quality, fit to programme scope, development needs and country priorities, capacity strengthening potential and likely sustainability of the partnership. There will be no right to reply stage following expert peer review. Please see **Appendix 2 for the Assessment Form and Scoring**.

The proposal will be assigned mainly to the experts from **the environment, agricultural and food sciences panel and the engineering and physical sciences panel** for review. If the application needs to be allocated to other areas, please indicate in the application. Please indicate the subject areas in priority order in the application for the review.

We reserve the right to allocate your proposal to a different area for review.

Panel meeting

Proposals will go to a Panel meeting following the expert review process. The Panel comprising experts from UK and partner countries will determine the final score, rank applications and make recommendations for funding. The Panel considers whether proposals are of high quality (being intellectually innovative, well focused and methodologically sound), and whether the activity has the potential to have a real impact.

Proposals are quality assessed against the criteria at Appendix 2, resulting in a total score between 0 and 60. Those receiving a final score from the Panel meeting of less than 30 will be considered not fundable. However, achieving an average score equal to or above the threshold does not mean that the proposal will be funded. The final funding decision will be made by the British Council and FCDO.

26. Data protection

How we use your information

The British Council will use the information that you provide for the purposes of processing your application, making any awards, monitoring and review of any grants.

We may share all application data with FCDO and will make any decisions on successful grants in partnership with them.

The British Council comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 (EU) GDPR). We process and handle personal information according to these regulations. The personal information that you provide on this form will only be used for the processing of your application. The information will be viewed by British Council, and those who are part of the decision-making process. Your information will not be used/shared beyond the partners listed above for any other purpose without your specific consent. British Council reserve the right to publish and share anonymized aggregated information with stakeholders.

Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information and country of origin, where collected, is used solely for statistical purposes. If we need to contact you, we will do so using the contact details you have provided.

Under UK Data Protection law, you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this, please contact your local British Council office or the Data Protection Team inforgovernance@britishcouncil.org or see our website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection>

27. Contractual Requirements

- The contracting authority for the grants is the British Council which includes any subsidiary companies and other organisations that control or are controlled by the British Council from time to time (see: www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status).
- The successful applicants will be expected to undertake activities in the UK and in the four countries (Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand)
- The British Council is subject to the requirements of the UK Freedom of Information Act, (“FOIA”). Please indicate in your application whether FOIA also applies to your organisation, so that we can reflect this in the Grant Agreement should you be successful in your application.
- The British Council’s contractual approach in respect of the grant is provided to download at:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/opportunities/uk-asean-institutional-links-early-career-researchers-scheme>

- **No changes can be made to proposals at this point unless requested by the panel and proposals will not be reassessed at this stage.**
- **By submitting a response to this call for applications, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of these guidelines and the Grant Agreement without further negotiation or amendment.**
- In the event that you have any concerns or queries in relation to the Grant Agreement, you should submit a clarification request to EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org in accordance with the provisions of this call for applications by the application deadline. The British Council reserves the right not to make any changes to the Grant Agreement.
- The British Council is under no obligation to consider any clarifications/amendments to the Grant Agreement requested following the application deadline.

28. Contact details

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed to the ILECR Scheme email address EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org.

Appendix 1: Eligibility criteria checklist

Eligibility criteria checklist	
The application	
The application has been submitted by the applicants by the published deadline.	
The application has been submitted by a principal applicant in the UK and a principal applicant based in one of the partner countries (Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand).	
<p>Principal applicants are based at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a not-for-profit higher education institution with the capacity to undertake high-quality research • a not-for-profit research institution with the capacity to undertake high-quality research • a Catapult Centre⁵ (in the case of the UK Principal Applicant) <p>For the UK, if the lead institution is not an HEI, the list of eligible UK research organisations is available as a pdf with the call documents on our funding call page. If unsure, please contact EA-ILECR@britishcouncil.org.</p>	
If the partner country's Lead Institution is affiliated in any way with a higher education or research institution in UK, the Institution should not apply in conjunction with their own affiliates in UK.	
If the partner country's Lead Institution is affiliated in any way with a higher education or research institution in another country, (e.g. UK, USA), the proposal includes other eligible higher education or research institutions in the partner country as associated partners.	
The process and timeline for early career researchers' recruitment must be identified.	
The applicants have included two (2) supporting letters, one from each of the two Lead Institutions, on headed paper, signed by the Head of the Institution, Head of Department or other person with appropriate delegated authority, giving specific commitment to the project as described in Section 21 of these Guidelines. Supporting letters are not signed by the Principal Applicants.	
Applicants have submitted a detailed budget request using the appropriate budget spreadsheet provided.	
If there are associated partners, a letter from each partner has been uploaded as required within a single pdf.	
Each section of the application form has been completed in full and complies with instructions given.	
The application form and supporting documents have been completed in English.	
The principal applicants have submitted only one (1) application under this ILECR Scheme Call.	
The budget	
Matched efforts from the partner country institution and associated partners; both cash and in-kind contributions.	
The budget requested under "other research related costs" is 30% or less of the total budget requested.	

5 <https://www.innovateuk.org/-/catapult-centres>

The budget requested for human resources cost is 30% or less of the total budget requested unless approval has been sought separately from the British Council.	
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Appendix 2: Assessment criteria and scoring system

Assessment of the quality and programme scope relevance of the proposals will be performed by expert reviewers, and the funding recommendations will be made by panel members from the UK and partner countries. The British Council and FCDO will make final funding decisions. **Only proposals that have clearly demonstrate impactful outcomes on the early career researchers' capacity and partnership that benefits UK and partner countries mutually will be considered for funding. In addition, only proposals with an average score of 30 points or more are considered fundable.**

Section 1: Relevance to expected outcomes and scope of the programme	Score	Range
	YES/NO	
The proposal clearly demonstrates the expected outcomes and meet the programme scope. Please see guidelines for applicants - section 2 and 3 for details.		

Section 2: Relevance to gender equality	Score	Range
	Sufficient/insufficient	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures are in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project. This includes the development of the project, the participants of the research and innovation, and the beneficiaries of the research and innovation. • The project will have a positive impact on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond. • The potential impact on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender is clearly described. For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc. • Risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality will be monitored, avoided or mitigated against. • Relevant outcomes and outputs will be measured with disaggregated data by age and gender (where disclosed). 		

Section 3: Research/innovation quality and background	Score	Range
		0–20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic importance and timeliness of the research/innovation topic is clearly demonstrated. • The Principal Applicants have sufficient relevant experience to undertake the proposed research partnership and achieve the stated objectives. • The value added – to institutions and/or the wider research and innovation community – by the partnership between the partnering institutions is clearly described. • The collaborating institutions are of appropriate academic standing. • The benefits and relevance of the research to the UK and partner country and their institutions are clearly described. 	<p>20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level</p> <p>16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level</p> <p>11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level</p> <p>6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.</p>
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Section 4: Proposal and Methodology	Score	Range
	0–20	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of the proposed partnership includes clear, feasible and realistic objectives as well as potential for long term impact. • Applicants clearly articulate specific outputs anticipated from the partnership and objectives likely to be achieved • The proposal takes interdisciplinary partnership into account • Applicants clearly state the roles of ECRs, expected achievements and milestones in the proposal as well as a plan to mentor the ECRs and measure the progress and development of the ECRs. • The proposal demonstrates the benefits to both the UK and partner country's early career researchers, innovation practitioners, institutions and end -users of the research or the products and services that will result from the project activity, in particular taking into account who might benefit and how they might benefit. • There is strong evidence of support from the applicants' institutions and Associated Partners (where applicable). • The proposed partnership supports new links or significantly extends and develops existing links. • If the applicants' institutions are collaborating already, there is clear evidence that the grant would add significant value to the partnership. • The proposal includes a clear and feasible description of the arrangements for project managing the partnership and communication between partners. • The proposal represents value for money; all costs are fully justified. 	<p>20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level</p> <p>16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level</p> <p>11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level</p> <p>6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.</p>	

Section 5: Sustainability and capacity strengthening	Score	Range
		0–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential in terms of professional development and career advancement for early career researchers in long run is clearly described. • The proposal includes a clear and feasible description of how the participating institutions/organisations intend to sustain their partnership over the longer-term. • The participating institutions demonstrate a commitment to the partnership through provision of matched efforts (both cash and in-kind contribution). • There is involvement of Associated Partners who will aid in sustaining the activity outcomes (if applicable) • There is a planned mechanism for the dissemination of the results of the activities. 	<p>20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level</p> <p>16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level</p> <p>11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level</p> <p>6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.</p>	
Total score for quality assessment (Section 3 + Section 4 + Section 5)	Score	Range
		0–60