

## **OPERATION OF THE RCUK/ FAPESP LEAD AGENCY AGREEMENT**

### **SECTION 1 – GENERIC GUIDANCE**

#### **Background**

1. Research Councils UK (RCUK) and the State of São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) are charged with fostering and supporting academic research within their own communities in their respective countries. They recognise that the best research in all countries may be delivered by working with the best researchers internationally.
2. To this end the FAPESP and RCUK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to welcome, encourage and support collaborative applications that may cut across their national boundaries and involve international collaborative teams.
3. The MoU provides for a 'Lead Agency Agreement' whereby RCUK will receive and assess collaborative proposals from eligible applicants in both countries on behalf of both organisations. FAPESP nominated experts will be involved with the peer review and decision making process throughout.
4. The views expressed by experts nominated by FAPESP will be formally incorporated into the UK peer review process. The selection processes, as a whole, remain a process of the applicable UK Research Council. FAPESP agrees in principle to accept the results of the peer process and to fund the Brazilian component of successful applications, in accordance with their existing financial processes and procedures.
5. Due to their respective different modes of funding and procedures; individual UK Research Councils take differing approaches to the implementation of the Agreement, these are summarised in Section 2. Details of schemes open to applicants can also be found in section 2. RCUK is committed to the Agreement and each Research Council will periodically review its implementation with a view to streamlining and harmonising as far as possible.
6. FAPESP and RCUK have agreed that the Lead Agency Agreement will principally apply to RCUK's 'responsive mode' schemes. However, under the terms of this agreement it is also envisaged that FAPESP will agree to co-fund proposals submitted in response to particular UK Research Council targeted calls. Where this is the case this will be agreed in advance by both funding agencies and will be clearly advertised in the relevant call for proposals and associated guidance.
7. It is important to note that the Agreement does not represent a separate stream of funding, but enables Brazilian/ UK collaborative proposals to be submitted to existing RCUK competitions.

## Eligible Applications

8. Applications are welcomed in any single or cross-disciplinary area which fits within the remit of FAPESP and one or more of the UK Research Councils. Details on the remits the UK Research Councils can be found [here](#). Details of schemes to which applicants can apply can be found in section 2 below, these may be either responsive mode schemes (covering all areas of Council remit) or through targeted calls.
9. Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary applications which cross the remit of more than one of the UK Research Councils will be processed according to our cross-Council funding agreement for more details click [here](#).
10. Applications can be made from any institution(s) eligible for support from RCUK funding (researchers based in RCUK research institutes should check their eligibility with the relevant Research Council). Information on eligibility of RCUK funding can be found [here](#) or in the guidance notes of the relevant scheme for each Research Council.
11. Brazilian partners (for which costs are being requested from FAPESP), must be from higher education and research organisations, public or non-profit, in the State of São Paulo. Applicants should note that unlike RCUK, FAPESP does not award grants to institutions, but directly to researchers.

## Submission of applications

12. RCUK will accept applications via the Joint Electronic System (Je-S), which has a common format for individual Councils. However, there are some differences between Councils and applicants should ensure that they follow the relevant guidelines and requirements for the individual Council covering the remit of their research.
13. The UK Medical Research Council (MRC) does not currently use the Je-S system. Guidance on making an application to the MRC is provided in Section 2.

## Costing of proposals

14. Costs for the UK based researcher should be requested by completing the relevant finance fields of the Je-S form (except for applications to the MRC). Costs being requested from FAPESP for Brazilian based investigators should **not** be entered into these fields.
15. All costs being requested from RCUK must be eligible under normal Research Funding Rules.
16. The Brazilian applicants should include the following documents in the proposal being submitted to RCUK:
  - a) FAPESP [Research Proposal Form](#) with basic information regarding the proposal.
  - b) FAPESP [Consolidated Budget Spreadsheet](#), for the costs being requested from FAPESP.
  - c) Further documentation may be required by FAPESP, to be supplied by the Brazilian PI in order to complete the analysis of the proposal.

The completed forms should be provided to the UK applicants to be uploaded as attachments to the Je-S form.

17. All costs requested from FAPESP should be eligible under the general rules and procedures for FAPESP research grants. In general terms, costs which can be claimed from FAPESP can include:
  - Equipment and long-term materials (bought in Brazil or imported);
  - Consumable materials and supplies (bought in Brazil or imported);
  - Third-party services (national or foreign);
  - Travel expenses and travel allowances for activities directly related to the development of the proposed research, including sponsorship of visiting investigators;
  - Scholarships and Fellowships: post-doctoral fellowships, Doctoral students, undergraduate research (scientific initiation), and technical training scholarships.
18. Wages of any nature, third-party services other than those of a technical and occasional nature, construction works, purchase of publications, travel (except for field research and presentations in scientific conferences) and administrative materials or, services of any type are **not eligible** from FAPESP.

### **Processing of applications**

19. Applications will be submitted to the relevant UK Research Council for processing. The UK Research Council will lead on the processing and assessment of the application on behalf of both organisations. By submitting the application, all applicants and individuals named on the application agree that any personal information on that proposal can be shared with officers of FAPESP and their nominated experts. FAPESP agrees to treat such information in confidence and according to UK Data protection rules and Brazilian Law n.9.279/96, as well as any other law applicable to the protection of intellectual property rights.
20. On receipt of the application the UK Research Council will forward a copy of the completed application to FAPESP, for eligibility checks, confirmation of the availability of funds should the proposal be recommended for funding and the nomination of peer reviewers. These will be sent to FAPESP within two weeks of receipt. FAPESP will complete eligibility checks and forward names of peer reviewers within a further two weeks.
21. Once these have been completed the UK applicants will be notified whether the application has been accepted for processing. The UK Research Council will approach the relevant number of peer reviewers (at least one of which should be nominated by FAPESP) according to normal scheme rules and procedures. It is anticipated that reviews will be obtained from a minimum of three reviewers, unless the scheme involves a streamlined assessment process.
22. Once peer reviews are completed the proposals will be submitted to the decision-making/advisory body of the UK Research Council. The proposals will be sent to FAPESP in advance of the RCUK panel meeting and a FAPESP nominee/ representative will be invited to participate in the decision-making process either via correspondence or in person depending on the nature of the scheme; and the

### **Criteria of Assessment**

23. RCUK funds research on a competitive basis employing independent expert peer review. This system is regarded as an international benchmark of excellence in research funding, and this provides a guarantee of the quality of UK research.
24. The actual criteria of assessment will depend on the individual UK Research Council and scheme to which the application is made. These are normally detailed in the relevant scheme applicant guidance notes.

### **Announcement of Decisions/ Issuing of Awards**

25. The relevant UK Research Council will notify FAPESP once a decision has been made. FAPESP will then confirm funding and agree award start dates with the UK Research Council. Under the terms of the Agreement FAPESP agrees in principle to accept the results of the peer review process as presented by the relevant UK Research Council.
26. Once the UK Research Council has confirmation from FAPESP they will then issue a decision letter to the UK applicant on behalf of both organisations. A copy of this letter will be sent to FAPESP. This will confirm the proposed start date and state that FAPESP will be in contact with their Brazilian partner about issuing an award for the Brazilian component of the project.
27. The UK Research Council will issue an award for the UK component to the UK applicant's institution according to normal processes and procedures.

### **Post Award Management**

28. Award holders should contact both FAPESP and the funding UK Research Council concerning any changes to any of the award holders' institutional affiliations or other aspects of the grant during its life-time. If necessary, the funding UK Research Council and FAPESP may consult with each other before agreeing any changes to the grant's status. This will normally be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

### **Progress and Final Reports**

29. Where these are required by the UK Research Council/ FAPESP they will be submitted according to the normal procedures of those organisations. The required reports will cover the development of the whole project (and not only of the national party), will have a specific section describing and commenting on the effectiveness of the international cooperation and will be detailed in each of the Research Councils and FAPESP's guidelines for applicants.

### **Intellectual Property**

30. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the outcomes obtained in the course of the research, whether patentable or not, are used to the advantage of society and the economy. Research outcomes should be disseminated to both research and more widespread audiences - for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.

31. Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of intellectual property, and responsibility for its exploitation, rests with the organisation that generates it. Where the grant is associated with more than one research organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations, including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with FAPESP's and RCUK's terms and conditions.
32. Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practice. A temporary delay in publication is acceptable in order to allow commercial and collaborative arrangements to be established.
33. RCUK and FAPESP may, in individual cases, reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the Research Organisation involved. This right, if exercised, will be set out in an additional grant condition.
34. Where the exploitation of research generates revenue, there should be suitable recognition and return to the Research Organisation, individuals and funding agency. The Grant Holder should, subject to the procedures laid down by the Research Organisation, publish the results of the research in accordance with normal academic practice. Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from RCUK and FAPESP, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.
35. The Research Organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept, these arrangements.

### **General Contact Points**

36. General UK enquiries concerning this Memorandum of Understanding should be addressed to:  
  
Sarah Verth, Policy Manager International, RCUK  
Tel: +44 (0)1793 444338  
Email: [sarah.verth@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.verth@rcuk.ac.uk)
37. Enquiries concerning individual UK Research Councils implementation of this agreement should be address to the contact points given in Section 2.
38. Enquiries to FAPESP should be addressed to:  
  
Glenda Mezarobba, Director for Human and Social Sciences  
Tel: +55 11 3838 4354  
Email: [glenda@fapesp.br](mailto:glenda@fapesp.br)  
or  
Alexandra Ozorio de Almeida, Manager of the Scientific Directorate  
Tel: +55 11 3838 4010  
Email: [alexandra@fapesp.br](mailto:alexandra@fapesp.br)

## SECTION 2 – SUMMARY GUIDANCE NOTES FOR INDIVIDUAL UK RESEARCH COUNCILS

### Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

[www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

Transnational teams (UK and São Paulo-based researchers) are invited to apply directly to the AHRC under the Research Grants Scheme. AHRC are now accepting proposals under this initiative.

The group of scholars should prepare a single application which must be submitted electronically by the UK-based Principal Investigator's Research Organisation to the AHRC Research Grant scheme via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System. If you need any assistance to use the system, please contact the JE-S helpdesk on 01793 444164 or on [JesHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JesHelp@rcuk.ac.uk).

The [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) provides an overview of the Research Grants scheme. It details the eligibility criteria, information on how to apply and terms and conditions of awards. In addition to the guidance outlined in the Funding Guide, the following guidelines apply:

#### **Eligibility for UK-based element of project**

##### Investigator

*UK:* The UK Principal Investigator must meet the AHRC's current eligibility criteria for standard AHRC Research Grant proposals. Please consult the *AHRC's Research Funding Guide* for further information on eligibility.

*Brazil:* Please note, only researchers formally associated to institutions within the São Paulo state are eligible to act as a Brazilian researcher under this initiative. For details of institutions supported by FAPESP, please contact FAPESP.

Brazilian researchers contracted to institutions outside of the state of São Paulo are not eligible under this scheme.

Co-Investigators are permitted under this initiative. Please note, it is expected that the UK and Brazilian side of the project should demonstrate fair balance.

##### Research Assistants

Research Assistants employed by the UK organisation need to meet the AHRC's threshold of being of postdoctoral standing (either having a PhD or equivalent research experience).

##### Project studentships

*UK:* Funding may be sought for one or two full-time (three years) PhD project studentships whose work will contribute to the project as a whole. PhD Project Students must be supervised by a Principal Investigator named on the proposal. The supervisor must be based at the HEI where the project student is registered.

The studentship must fall completely within the duration of the project. Funding cannot be sought to complete a PhD which has already started or will start prior to the start date of the Research Grant project.

Each studentship must provide added value to the project, but also allow the student sufficient independence to make their own original contribution to scholarship. The project

should be a viable project without the contribution of the project student (i.e. it cannot be using the PhD student as a de facto research assistant), but the student(s) should benefit from working within the structure of the project as a whole. Project studentships may, on the advice of reviewers, be removed from a project before funding is confirmed.

In order to be eligible, the student must meet certain conditions relating to residency and academic qualifications. Please refer to the *AHRC Postgraduate Studentships: Guide to Student Eligibility* for detailed information.

You should contact the AHRC if you are unsure about your eligibility.

*Brazil:* FAPESP encourages requests for PhD project studentships within the project framework. For more information, please contact FAPESP.

## **How to apply**

Once the applicants have decided that the AHRC is the most appropriate UK Research Council, a single integrated project proposal should be submitted according to the procedures and processes used in applying to the AHRC's Research Grants scheme. The group of scholars should prepare a single application which must be submitted electronically by the UK-based Principal Investigator's Research Organisation to the AHRC Research Grant scheme via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System.

To prepare a proposal form in Je-S, log-in to your account and choose '**New Document**', then select **AHRC** as the Council, **Standard Proposal** as the Document Type, **Research Grants - Standard** as the Scheme then select **Research Grants AHRC FAPESP Open Call** as the Call/Type/Mode and then 'Create Document'. Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form. Applicants do not need to apply additional to FAPESP.

### Case for Support and Justification of Resources

The case for support and justification of resources should outline all elements of the project and provide justification of all resources that are requested.

### Proposal Language

Applications should be written in English.

### How to identify the proposal is submitted under this scheme

Each application should be identified clearly as a collaborative proposal under the AHRC/FAPESP bilateral scheme by indicating this in the project title field. The text "**AHRC-FAPESP MoU**" should precede the project title.

### How to identify the details of the Brazilian researcher involved

The applicant will need to complete Brazilian details in the "project partner" section of the form. Under Name of Partner Organisation, please state the name of the Brazilian Institution. Under Name of Contact, please indicate the Brazilian researcher's details.

## **Costing**

AHRC will accept proposals with a total full economic cost (fEC) of between £20,000 and £1,000,000 for the UK component of the project. If the application is successful, the AHRC will contribute 80% of these costs. FAPESP will accept proposals of up to the Brazilian equivalent of £1,000,000 for the Brazilian component of the project; bringing the total of the whole proposal up to an equivalent maximum of £2,000,000. Please note, only the UK component is costed under fEC.

The UK applicant must detail the UK component (the costs being incurred by the UK Research Organisations) of the costs according to AHRC financial guidelines on the appropriate section of the form.

The applicant must submit the Brazilian breakdown of costs as an attachment to the application. The Brazilian breakdown of costs (the costs being incurred by the Brazilian/São Paulo organisations) must be attached to the application using the attachment type: Non-UK Components. The following FAPESP budget template must be used in this section: [FAPESP consolidated budget form](#).

Applicants must also attach a summary of the proposal for FAPESP purposes. This document must also be attached to the application using the attachment type: Non-UK component. The following FAPESP Proposal Form must be used: [FAPESP Proposal Form](#).

In addition the UK applicant must attach a Letter of Support from the Brazilian institution agreeing to the Brazilian partner's involvement. The document must be attached to the application using the attachment type: Project Partner's Letter of Support.

### **Duration**

Projects can be up to a maximum of 60 months.

### **Closing Date**

This scheme operates to open deadlines.

### **How the application is assessed**

In line with current AHRC practices, the assessment of application is a two-stage process: a written peer review followed by moderating panel.

All applications submitted to the AHRC will be assessed by peer reviewers selected by AHRC. In addition, for each application, FAPESP will nominate at least one peer reviewer to provide a written assessment. Peer reviewers will use the criteria and procedures applicable to AHRC. These comments will be formally incorporated in the AHRC's peer review processes. For the second stage, applications will be sent to an AHRC peer review moderating panel. The peer review moderating panel will determine a final grade for each application and will rank proposals in order of priority for funding. The panel will consider only the expert peer reviews, technical review (where applicable) and the PI's response to these reviews to reach its decision. Final funding decisions for UK-Brazilian applications will rest with the AHRC and FAPESP.

Applicants should be aware that this will require that applications are processed by both AHRC and FAPESP officers. Applicants should provide written consent to the joint processing of the applications by AHRC and FAPESP at the end of the Case for Support under the heading of "Consent to Joint Processing".

For enquiries concerning the AHRC implementation of this Agreement please contact: Julie Warrington: [J.Warrington@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:J.Warrington@ahrc.ac.uk)

## **Biotechnological and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**

[www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk)

The BBSRC accepts applications for funding under the terms of this Agreement. For more details on BBSRC funding schemes click [here](#).

Before making an application under the terms of this Agreement, applicants should contact the BBSRC, **BEFORE** submitting an application in order to discuss eligibility and handling an application under the Agreement.

For enquiries concerning the BBSRC implementation of this Agreement please contact BBSRC at [inca@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:inca@bbsrc.ac.uk).

For submitted proposals, FAPESP nominated peer reviewers, and panel members will be approached by the BBSRC as part of the normal peer review process.

## **Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)**

[www.epsrc.ac.uk](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk)

EPSRC, as part of RCUK, is a signatory to the Agreement. However, EPSRC currently focuses international effort on its chosen strategic regions of USA, Europe, India, China and Japan. Therefore, EPSRC at present does not have plans to promote further engagement with Brazil under this Agreement and is currently not accepting applications that wish to make use of this route for research partnerships with Brazil.

## **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**

[www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)

The ESRC accepts applications under the terms of this Agreement to its Research Grant Scheme.

For projects requesting funding of more £100,000 (FEC) (ESRC plus FAPESP costs), applications will be considered under our **Standard Research Grants Scheme**. The majority of decisions under this scheme are announced with 22 weeks. For more information click [here](#)

For **Standard Grants**, FAPESP nominated peer reviewers will be approached by the ESRC as part of the normal peer reviewing process.

A FAPESP nominated panel member will also be invited to comment on proposals which are not rejected at the Peer Review Stage. As well as the application the FAPESP Panel member will receive copies of the peer reviewer comments and any response from the applicants to them.

For applications of less than £100,000 (100% FEC), we offer the streamlined **Small Grants Scheme**. Funding decisions under this scheme are usually made within 14 weeks. Applications to the **Small Grant Scheme** are not subject to the full peer review process. Applications will be individually assessed by both an ESRC and FAPESP nominated Panel/ College member before being put the Chair or Vice Chair of the ESRC Grants Board for a funding recommendation.

Both schemes operate under the ESRC's 'open dates' scheme, so applications can be made at any time.

Applications made to the ESRC under this Agreement will be made and will be assessed according to our International Common Application Process (ICAP). Applicants are **strongly** advised to consult this guidance before making an application. For more information see [here](#)

Applications to the ESRC should be made on the ESRC Je-S forms Bilateral Grants (Open Call) Standard or Small.

For enquiries concerning the ESRC implementation of this Agreement please contact the ESRC International Office:

Samantha McGregor  
Email: [international@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:international@esrc.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1793 413146

### **Medical Research Council (MRC)**

[www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)

The MRC will accept applications under the terms of this Agreement to its Partnership, Programme and Research Grant Schemes. For more information on these schemes please click [here](#).

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU applicants should contact Jill Jones: [jill.jones@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk](mailto:jill.jones@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk)

### **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)**

[www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)

NERC accepts applications under the terms of this Agreement to its Standard Grant and Consortium Grant Schemes. Details of these schemes can be found here <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/responsive/>

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU applicants should contact the NERC Research Grants Team Leader **BEFORE** submitting an application in order to discuss handling an application under the scheme. The contact details are:

Mr. Jim Aland, Team Leader, NERC Research Grants  
Email: [jeal@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:jeal@nerc.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1793 411629

Applications received to the Standard Grant scheme are subject to an [initial review stage](#) that makes decisions on which proposals should proceed to external review. FAPESP (and the subsequent involvement of Brazilian reviewers) will only be engaged for proposals that pass this initial review stage. Moderating Panels meet annually in June and December to grade the applications and make recommendations for funding.

## **Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)**

[www.stfc.ac.uk](http://www.stfc.ac.uk)

STFC will consider applications under the terms of this Agreement for any of its schemes. For more information on these schemes please click [here](#).

Before making an application under the terms of this MoU, applicants should contact the relevant STFC Programme Manager **BEFORE** submitting an application in order to discuss the strategic fit of the proposal with STFC's science strategy.

For general enquiries concerning the STFC implementation of this Agreement please contact Terry Mawby: [terry.mawby@stfc.ac.uk](mailto:terry.mawby@stfc.ac.uk).

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Please note that this Operational Guidance note will be updated periodically as required. Please check that you have consulted the most recent version before submitting an application.

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