

**Institute for Global Sustainable Development, University of Warwick**  
**Submission to Climate Change, Development and COP26**  
**10.05.2021**

**Introduction**

The Institute for Global Sustainable Development is a research institute at the University of Warwick. It works in partnership with researchers, practitioners and community members in low- and middle-income countries to deliver impactful research that directly supports adaptation and resilience to the effects of climate change. We have a particular expertise in research that supports resilience to extreme weather events that have had increasing frequency due to climate change, such as flooding and landslides.

We welcome the International Development Committee's focus on climate change, development and COP26 and the opportunity to provide information to support the enquiry.

**Any gaps that remain between what the Government has done and what it committed to do**

- The drastic reduction in funding for climate-development research as a consequence of reduction in Government spend on International Development presents a gap between government policy and implementation.
- The introduction of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) as a dedicated stream of funding to support research in partnership with and for the benefit of ODA recipient countries was significant in increasing the contribution and impact of research that responded to specific climate related challenges in LMICs.
- GCRF was launched in 2016 and had a budgeted investment of £1.5 billion between 2016 and 2021 on collaborative research and innovation through UK universities and research organisations, delivered by the Research Councils, the UK Academies, funding bodies and UK Space Agency<sup>1</sup>.
- A recent UKCDR report<sup>2</sup> suggests that £564.2m was invested between 2015-20 on ODA-funded, climate-development research. This includes a number of projects at the Institute for Global Sustainable Development and the wider institution.
- The reduction of the 2021-22 ODA funded research budget by £120m has for us equated to a £199,000 reduction in budget for one live research project that is directly supporting extremely poor and vulnerable communities in Brazil and Colombia to become more

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-challenges-research-fund/global-challenges-research-fund-gcrf-how-the-fund-works>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/uk-funded-research-on-climate-change-international-development-2015-2020/>

resilient to the impact of climate change<sup>3</sup>. The lack of certainty around funding for the following year 21/22 adds to this challenge.

- We very much welcome the commitment to addressing the impact of climate change with LMICs and, by extension, we fully support the commitment to engaging in equitable partnerships. In our experience, collaborations based on the principles of equitable partnerships are much more successful in terms of immediate benefits to LMICs and sustainability in the longer term. We are certain that the provision of GCRF funding to date, which has facilitated equitable partnerships through policy and funding, has played an important role in enabling us to foster meaningful partnerships with LMICs. Therefore, the lack of clarity around future funding of climate-development research has created a gap that will impact our ability to continue and build upon these partnerships and the benefits that they generate.
- The sudden and unexpected reduction in funding for projects and the impact on the trust they have in the UK as a partner for this kind of research might impact our ability to work together to address climate change in future. Our recommendation would be to make a firm commitment to continuing this specific strand of research funding in order to avoid any further losses to momentum and trust in this key area.

**The extent to which the Government’s work to date on climate change and development has taken the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the needs of low-and-middle income countries and vulnerable groups into account**

- We celebrate the emphasis that the GCRF research funding programme places on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and LMICs. GCRF has been one of the largest funding schemes worldwide to be explicitly oriented towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Climate change has always been a well-represented theme in GCRF and so we believe that this programme makes a positive contribution to the government’s work in these areas.
- We recognise the risk of SDG alignment becoming a ‘tick-box’ exercise, and in this regard we believe the integration of SDGs in to the accountability structure of the GCRF programme has been beneficial. Certainly, at our own institution, the incorporation of the SDGs in to funding mechanisms has played an important part in enabling us to encourage a deeper engagement with the goals and their associated targets and indicators. We believe there is scope for greater emphasis on the SDGs, increased focus on the SDG targets, and the connection to climate change in any future programmes.
- Consensus is building around the idea that the localisation of the SDGs, combining the high level targets with local contexts in order to make the aspirations of the SDGs real for communities, is essential.

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<sup>3</sup> We would be happy to supply specific information about the benefits of this research to date.

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- We believe that research done in partnership with LMICs is more responsive to and considerate of the specific contexts of people and places. In that sense, the Government's commitment to the GCRF research programme is an excellent example of those needs being taken in to account.
  - We are concerned about the grave consequences of the ODA research cuts for partners in LMICs, early-career researchers and the UK's future capability to lead global partnerships to address climate change challenges and contribute to the SDGs. There is a need to build upon the significant achievements of UK's ODA research funding of the past few years to strengthen further the role of the UK research community as a leader in global partnerships to tackle the pressing challenges of climate change and the SDGs.