



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

Evidence and Policy Directorate (EPG) for the DFID-ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP)

Potential Bidders Conference
2.00-4.30 pm, 16 November 2016
MSE Meeting Rooms, London

Event overview

Purpose:

- to provide information on the requirement: to recommission an **Evidence and Policy Group (EPG)** for the ESRC-DFID Growth Programme (DEGRP): this service has been provided since 2012 by the Overseas Development Institute
- to answer questions from prospective suppliers, and to take on board suggestions and views ahead of issuing an updated specification and opening procurement

Event overview

Format:

- Presentation by John Piper (DFID), Craig Bardsley and Paul Sanderson (ESRC), and Alistair Staunton-Lambert (UKSBS) covering:
 - Background to the requirement: the ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership, its research programmes, and DEGRP
 - Overview of the requirement: The role of the EPG, key deliverables and responsibilities
 - Delivering the requirement: skills and experience needed, challenges
 - Contract details: the EPG's budget, governance and reporting requirements
 - Application and assessment process

Questions of clarification will be taken throughout the presentation

- General Q&A and feedback session
- Next Steps
- Information will be made available online following the event

Requirement Overview

The EPG's overarching objective is to *maximise the impact on policy and practice of research funded through the DFID/ESRC Growth Programme*

In order to deliver this, the EPG will be required to design and deliver a coherent programme of activities aimed at:

- Establishing and/or enhancing a strong international profile for the research generated through the programme
- Building a reputation for the programme as a centre of social science research excellence in international development
- Build upon activities undertaken at individual grant level by maintaining oversight, facilitating, supporting, developing synergies across the programme and developing capacity
- Ensuring findings from the programme's research are effectively cohered, disseminated and utilised by policy makers and users, particularly in developing countries

1. BACKGROUND TO THE REQUIREMENT

About the funders

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

UK's largest organisation for funding independent, high quality research on economic and social issues: supporting more than 4000 researchers and postgraduate students at any one time.

- www.esrc.ac.uk

Department for International Development (DFID)

UK ministerial department that leads the UK government's work to end extreme poverty.

- www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development

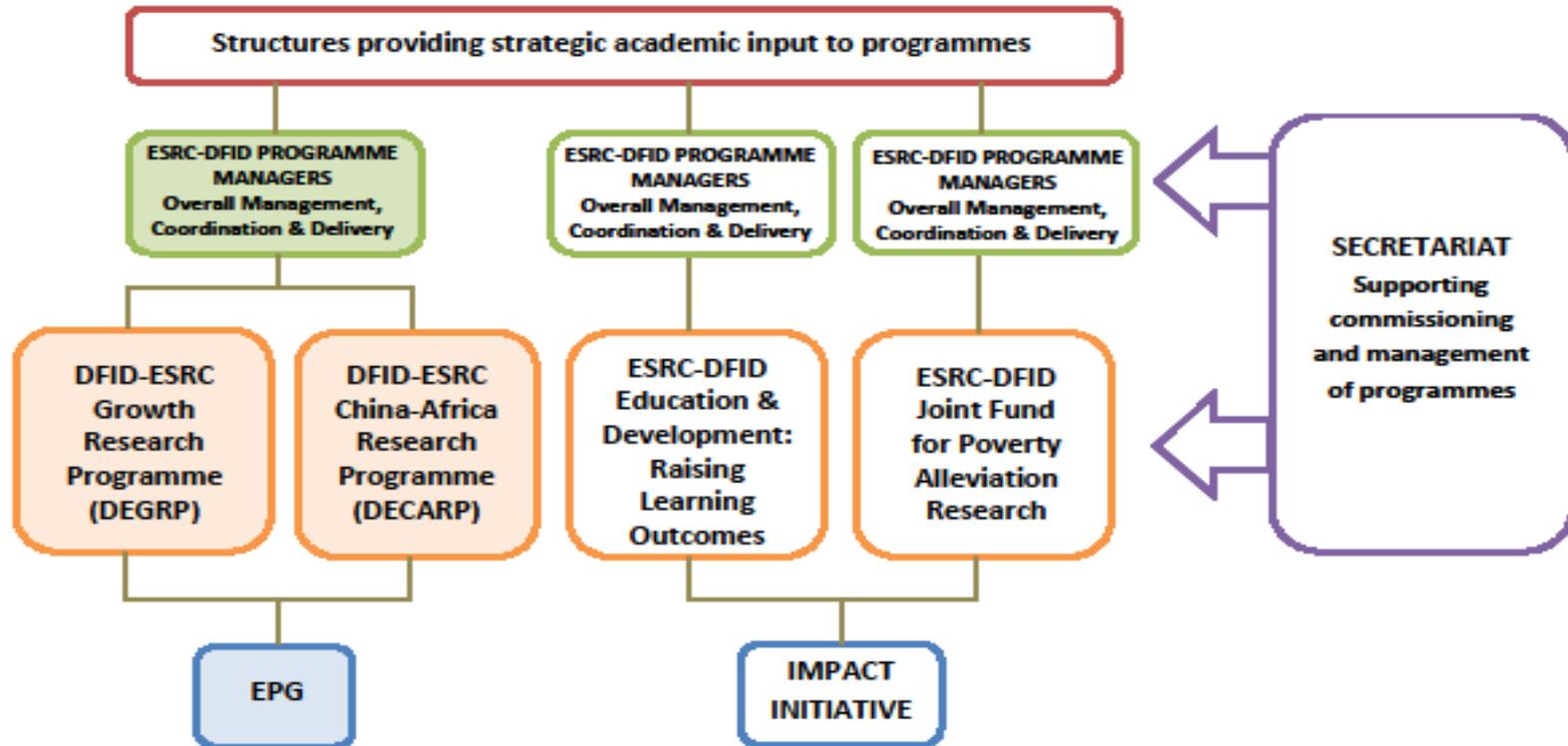
DFID growth research

- Step change in DFID funding for research in 2010 with formation of Research and Evidence Division.
- Aim to fund high quality research which looks to maximise policy impact
- Growth research portfolio partnering with key institutions across a range of issues related to growth
 - Building on existing relations with World Bank (Ag, Trade, PSD, Finance, Education, Transport), UNU-WIDER (cross cutting), ESRC (Ag, innovation and Finance)
 - Developing new relationships with the IMF (Macro), IGC (Firms, Natural resources, labour), CEPR (Firms), IZA (Labour), AERC and PEP (capacity building)
 - Developing new stand alone programmes on infrastructure, energy and institutions
- The evidence and policy group will need to be cognisant of the wider DFID growth research programme utilising linkages where appropriate

The ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership

- Formed in August 2005
- Four jointly-funded research programmes to date:
 - ESRC/DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research
 - DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP)
 - DFID/ESRC China and Africa Research Programme (DECARP)
 - ESRC/DFID Education and Development: Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Research Programme
- Also work together within multi-lateral programmes with other RCs and funders beyond the Partnership

Governance of the Strategic Partnership



Key shared programme characteristics

- Research must:
 - be directly relevant to LICs and any additional priority countries identified
 - be relevant to and meet demand from decision-makers and practitioners
 - be at least 50% social science but encourage multi/inter disciplinary
 - identify and include opportunities for capacity building
 - plan for impact and pathways to achieving this
- No geographic restrictions to who can apply: Southern-led applications and partnerships are strongly encouraged
- Programme and partnership commitment to the delivery of impact with relevance to development

DFID/ESRC Growth Research Programme (DEGRP)

- Launched 2011, total budget £25m, funding 43 research grants (including China-Africa):
- Initially three thematic areas:
 - Agriculture and growth;
 - Financial sector development and growth;
 - Innovation and productivity.
- A fourth theme, lessons for African LICs from China's experience was subsequently added (*originally separate programme, soft merged with DEGRP in 2014*)
- Commissioned through a series of calls:
 - DEGRP Call 1 (2011) -18 grants, £6.9m (all completed)
 - DEGRP Call 2 (2013) - 19 grants £8.5m (9 now completed)
 - China-Africa call (2013) - 5 grants £3.7m
 - DEGRP Call 3 (2015; focussed on financial sector development) - one large grant, £1.8m

2. OVERVIEW OF THE REQUIREMENT

Key elements of requirement

- Overarching objective: ***maximise the impact on policy and practice of research funded through the DFID/ESRC Growth Programme***
 - **Academic impact:** demonstrable contribution of research in shifting understanding and advancing scientific, method, theory and application across and within disciplines
 - **Economic and societal impact:** demonstrable contribution research makes to society and the economy, and its benefits to individuals, organisations and/or nations
- ‘Impact’ can include:
 - **Instrumental:** e.g. influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour
 - **Conceptual:** e.g. contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates
 - **Capacity building:** through technical and personal skill development.

Key elements of requirement

- Strategy Development
- Knowledge Exchange
- Communications
- Connectivity
- Grant holder support

Strategy Development

- Map research base and existing and potential research users
- Identify potential synergies across the programme
- Develop opportunities and pathways for research use
- Develop and oversee a programme of work to maximise potential for research uptake and impact and evidence this

Knowledge Exchange

- Ensure policy and practice perspectives are integrated into the research process
- Identify opportunities to forge connections between research(ers) and decision makers
- Identify and communicate with grant-holders about opportunities to present and debate research findings
- Facilitate connections between researchers and users (e.g. through grant-holder workshops, thematic/regional conferences, stakeholder engagement events etc.)

Communication

This will involve:

- identifying, developing, producing or commissioning and distributing a wide range of knowledge products (e.g. policy briefs, abstracts, etc.)
- Synthesising and disseminating programme research findings for non-academic stakeholders
- Developing appropriate products and using cost effective channels to reach relevant stakeholders (including website)

Connectivity

- Identify and facilitate engagement between grantholders
- Identify common themes and synergies
- Facilitate and encourage (interdisciplinary) co-operation between grantholders
- Help synthesise and focus results on policy and practice

Evidencing impact

- Help grant holders identify examples of outcome and impact of the research
- Share examples within and beyond the programme in suitable formats (e.g. impact case studies database and beyond)
- Input into programme monitoring and evaluation activity (e.g. impact evaluation, annual reports, logframe indicator progress)

Capacity building

- Provide ongoing advice, support and assistance to grant-holders to:
 - Understand grant-holder and decision-maker concerns and priorities
 - Identify appropriate communication methods
- Design and ensure delivery of an ongoing support programme that:
 - Meets grant-holders needs
 - Includes development opportunities for grant-holders across programmes
 - Shares learning and best practice

3. DELIVERING THE REQUIREMENT

General expectations

- Engagement with the grant-holders
- Engagement with the funders
- Proactive, creative and flexible approach
- Effective and efficient delivery
- Value for money

Core expertise required

- Understanding international development context and stakeholders
- Research uptake/impact strategy development and delivery
- Research uptake/impact processes in international development
- Management and partnership working

EPG Composition

- Diverse expertise will be required
- Welcome bids from:
 - Consortium / Partnerships / other collaborations etc.
 - Single organisation
- Lead organisation will need capacity to host and co-ordinate EPG
- Responsible for delivering or commissioning activities to support delivery of work programme

Challenges

- Navigating and reconciling differing objectives and incentives of academics and practitioners
- Multiple potential stakeholders
- Fragmented, diverse nature of research programme
 - Subject matter
 - Maturity of projects
 - Approach and methodology
 - Motivation and characteristics of grantholders
- Impact takes time

4. CONTRACT DETAILS

Contract and Budget

- 3 years with option for 1 year extension
- Subject to **annual reporting processes** and quarterly performance review
- In the range of £200k-£350k per annum
- Budget includes salary costs, admin/support costs, all overheads and operational costs, must be justified
- Budget also includes all activities within the EPG's programme of work and any additional external expertise the EPG may choose to commission
- EPG able to submit proposals against any additional funds that become available as appropriate but this is for supplementary activity only

Workplan and milestones

- Within 3 months of contract start EPG will develop and agree a detailed workplan, including specific milestones and deliverables
- Workplan to be revised and agreed at least annually within the review process
- Key performance indicators to be developed and agreed, as a basis for reporting and assessment

Communication and governance

- Meet with funders quarterly to summarise activities, progress and issues arising
- Annual report to funders demonstrating activity to date against milestones and deliverables, plus detailed plan/ budget/ timetable for next 12 months, with associated review meeting

5. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Application Process

- The Contract Notice will be released on Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) and also on Contracts Finder. You can view this at <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>
- Bidders need to place their bid online using the e-sourcing tool 'Emptoris': access to the log in page is at <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp>
- You will need to 'Register for CCS eSourcing' if you are not currently set up as a supplier
- Details of how to place a bid on Emptoris are provided in the tool itself and will also be attached to the Contracts Finder notice along with CCS contact details.

Assessment Process

- All bids will be evaluated through the eSourcing tool by the designated evaluation panel
- Evaluation is based on a Selection and Award basis. You need to pass the 'Selection' stage in order to pass into the 'Award' stage. This selection stage will contain Pass/Fail questions.
- The evaluation criteria is split into two main weighted sections – Price and Quality - each of which contain specific questions
- Bidders must provide a response to each question which is then scored from 0-100 by the panel
- It is the intention to then hold an interview or face to face clarification stage with bidders prior to award.
- Full guidance surrounding the application and assessment stage will be provided in the tender documentation and notices.

Preliminary Timetable

Activity	Date
Anticipated Tender Launch Date	Monday 19 th December
Anticipated Deadline for Bids to be submitted	Friday 3 rd February
Anticipated Award date	February 28 th
Contract issued	March 13 th 2017 for commencement in April

6. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Are there any future anticipated calls in this programme?

A. We can't say at this point.

Q. Are you envisaging external evaluations of the EPG or the programme?

A. This would be conducted under a separate process and budget. Bidders would not need to budget for this in their proposals.

Q. It has been emphasised that you want to see a programme for connecting individual grants across the programme; would the EPG also be required to connect the programme research with relevant research conducted outside the programme? A. Yes, the role is to identify potential impact from individual grants and to develop this both in the context of the wider programme and research conducted outside the programme: e.g. identifying where programme research challenges or supports the cumulative body of evidence on particular policy issues.

Q. Is the EPG expected to demonstrate or also to measure impact?

A. Although not a requirement, an innovative approach towards measuring impact achieved would be welcome. As a minimum the EPG should be identifying lessons learned (e.g. why were certain actions effective or ineffective?) and promulgating best practice across the programme so as to improve the impact of the programme as a whole.

Q. What is the focus of capacity building work under DEGRP and the role of the EPG within that?

A. We are looking for the EPG to enhance the relevant skills of individual grantholders in achieving impact as well as connectivity across grantholders so as to enhance the potential for impact of the programme as a whole.

Q. Is the scope of the EPG to involve all grant holders or could there be a particular focus?

A. The allocation of resource in this respect would be up to the EPG and would obviously depend on the circumstances and impact potential of individual grant holders and of course the stage of development of individual research projects. Some are now completed, but that is a good time to promote use of research evidence. Bidders should note that Call 1 grant holder contracts do not oblige the grant holders to engage with the EPG (unlike call 2 and call 3 grant holders), because the EPG started after call 1 grants had begun, so this will require the EPG to engage and influence call 1 grant holders, where relevant.

Q. How does the the work of the EPG relate to strategic academic input to the programmes? (refer to the diagram 'Governance of the Strategic Partnership' in the associated presentation)

A. This is separate to the activities of the EPG but the EPG is expected to engage with external academic input in supporting the programme (as is the case with the incumbent supplier). We are not expecting to change this structure. The EPG's focus is on policy impact, not academic impact, but to be effective the EPG needs to be aware of the latter.

Q. Is the EPG expected to develop the capacity and impact of individual grants or focus on the wider programme

A. There are a number of different ways to approach the problem but ultimately we are concerned with the impact of the programme as a whole and maximising the value of the funders' investment in it. A clear strategy for doing this is a key requirement of the EPG.

Q. Are there restrictions on websites? For example can the EPG have its own website?

A. ESRC and DFID will obtain advice from their respective policy teams on this matter and will include guidance in the final Terms of Reference in the tender document.

Q. How would the key performance indicators mentioned in the presentation be used in management of the EGP?

A. They would be part of the log frame by which the performance of the programme as a whole is assessed.