



Open Research Area Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

The Assessment Process

What is the assessment process?

For ORA awards, there will be a two-stage review process. The first stage will obtain written reviews from a minimum of two external expert reviewers nominated by the relevant national agencies. One reviewer at least will be nominated by each agency from which funding is sought (according to the size and the disciplinary breadth of the projects, additional reviews may be commissioned). In the second stage, the projects will be assessed by an international panel. The panel will consist of internationally recognised researchers from various fields of social sciences who have sound knowledge and understanding of national level decision-making systems. The funding recommendations of the joint panel will be subject to approval by the national agencies. Depending on the number and quality of short-listed proposals, the agencies reserve the right to make the final award decision.

Upon receipt, and prior to peer review, the ORA national contact officers will assess all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (e.g. date of submission; number of participating countries; inclusion of all necessary information in English, French or German; appropriate limits on length) and that applicants are eligible to submit proposals according to national rules.

What are the selection criteria?

Please see the ORA Peer Review Assessment Criteria document for details of the criteria upon which peer reviewers and panel assessors will review proposals.

Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply to this scheme?

Since eligibility criteria are subject to national regulation, all applicants are strongly advised to look closely at the details given in the country specific requirements and if unsure to contact the respective national contact officers in their home countries prior to submitting a proposal.

How many Principal and Co-investigators may be included on a proposal?

You should name one Principal Investigator per participating country. However, there is no limit to the number of Co-Investigators that can be involved in the project but all Co-Investigators must make a significant contribution to the conduct of the research. When completing the information on the Project Summary Document please add rows to the document as required.

Can a researcher be involved in more than one project?

Yes, but applicants are expected to ensure that all researchers involved in the project have feasible time commitments to be able to carry out their role within the research. Please contact the relevant national agency if you are uncertain whether your commitment to multiple research projects would be considered feasible.

What type of research can be funded?

Applications can be for basic, strategic and applied research and national agencies are keen to encourage fresh ideas from new as well as established researchers. However, research proposals cannot be accepted for the following: unspecified research work, research already carried out, writing up previous research, stand-alone literature surveys, conference attendance, travel for general study, unsolicited requests to hold conferences, workshops or seminars, preparation of books and publications, or primarily for the preparation and production of materials such as curriculum materials and software development. However, within a research application the inclusion of literature surveys; conferences; seminars; workshops and preparation of books and publications are acceptable as long as the need for any of these is fully justified, and these activities clearly support and/or disseminate the production of new research.

Are investigators from outside of the four countries eligible to be included in the scheme? If so where do I put their information on the proposal document?

Some of the partner agencies allow for other international collaborations to be included within the terms of their normal research grants. These policies will apply to co-investigators outside the four countries if the work of these investigators is most closely aligned with the national research team for which such collaborations are allowed. For example, for the ESRC, the policy on international co-investigators will apply, provided that these investigators work most closely with the UK research team. You will need to check the eligibility rules of the national agency with which researchers outside the four countries are most naturally aligned for confirmation of eligibility.

Can disciplines outside of the social sciences be included in the project proposals?

Yes, they can when they are an integral part of and support the research questions and theme. However, the proposal should be predominantly within the social sciences. If you have any doubt as to whether your proposal is predominantly within social science, please contact the agencies to which your proposal will be submitted for confirmation.

Can a proposal be resubmitted to the ORA scheme if it was previously unsuccessful in an ESRC bilateral call with ANR, DFG or NWO?

The resubmission of previously unsuccessful applications is possible. ESRC has agreed to exceptionally waive the six month rule for resubmission for applications to be submitted to the ORA call for 2010. Apart from this, resubmissions will need to follow relevant national guidelines. For example, applications to the ESRC will need to include a covering letter explaining the substantial revision made to the original application. However, unsuccessful applications to the 2010 ORA competition will still have to wait six months to come through any other ESRC scheme post the ORA decisions in December 2010.

Application Process

Are proposals submitted to each individual agency?

Joint applications involving any two or more of the national partners must be submitted separately to each national agency from whom funding is sought. There will be one single integrated proposal, consisting of a Case for Support and the Project Summary Document, which should be included in each submission, although the language of the case for support may be different (see below). Additional requirements also apply for submission to each individual agency (see specific agency guidance for details of these).

For ESRC applications, do the international partners need to register with Je-S (the Joint Electronic Submission System)?

No the international partners will also be submitting an application to their national agencies and should not be named as Co-Investigators within Je-S, but all investigators will be included on the Project Summary Document.

In what language(s) should the proposals be submitted?

Proposals to the national agencies can be sent in the national language, proposals to DFG or ANR may be (but are not required to be) submitted in German or French, respectively. NWO and ESRC proposals **must** be submitted in English. Therefore, there may be more than one language version per project, but these versions must be close and inter-operable translations of the same document. If English is the dominant language in a specific field the authors may decide to write the proposal in that language only.

Will we receive confirmation that a proposal has been received?

Yes, Principal Investigators from each country will receive a confirmation of receipt shortly after submission.

When can projects start?

The earliest starting date for successful projects is 1st January 2011. All national research teams within a given project will be expected to start their projects at the same time.

What should be included in CVs submitted with proposals?

Each two page CV should give full name, degrees and postgraduate qualifications, academic and professional posts held since graduation, a brief summary of research over the last five years, international activities, other academic activities, a record of research funded by ANR, DFG, ESRC and/or NWO and other bodies, scholarships, grants and prizes. Up to two additional pages are also allowed to list publications most relevant to the proposed research.

The scheme guidance states the Case for Support should include no more than 5,000 words for bilateral proposals and no more than 6,000 words for multilateral proposals. Does this include a literature list (bibliography)?

No. The bibliography should not be included in the word count for the case for support. The bibliography should only include works cited in the case for support.

If there are ethical issues present, is approval required before submitting a proposal?

The requirements and timings for ethical approval vary between agencies. Proposals must adhere to the ethical requirements for each relevant national agency.

I am submitting my application to ESRC where should I include my two page impact plan?

When submitting an application to ESRC through the Je-S system, the two page Impact Plan should be added as an 'other attachment'. The impact plan is a mandatory attachment for the ESRC partner only.

Other questions**How will successful ORA projects be monitored by the funding agencies?**

Each national research team will be expected to report to its national funding agency, in accordance with each agency's regulation. The final project report will be submitted separately to the respective national funding agencies, but reports should refer to the achievements of the entire collaborative project.