

Applicant's Guidelines

Duke of Gloucester Overseas Collaboration Grant

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1 Overview

The British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) was founded in 1947 and is an established international membership organisation and charity committed to the study of soil in its widest aspects. The Society brings together those working within academia, practitioners implementing soil science in industry and all those working with, or with an interest in soils.

As part of our Charitable aims, we provide a number of **grants and awards** each year which promote research and education across all soil science disciplines. As a leading society, the BSSS strongly believes that overcoming the climate and biodiversity crises requires actions which cross country borders in order for real impact to be realised. The society is proud to introduce this *annual Duke of Gloucester Overseas Collaboration Grant* aimed at funding soil-focused research projects and/or knowledge transfer activities in low to middle income countries. Proposals will be assessed based on the expected impact of the project for the host country/ies and not on their scientific novelty. Examples of specific proposals susceptible to be funded are: (I) deployment of new or contrasted analytical methods, (II) proof of concept needed to opt to further funding, (III) data collection surveys, among others.

The activity of the project must target or benefit one country/countries defined as eligible by the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (list of countries available [here](#)), which will act as *host country*. Please, note that applications from countries or entities that have been sanctioned according to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are excluded from this scheme will not be taken into account. The 2024 UK Sanctions Regimes list can be seen on the annexe to this document.

We promote research and education, both academically and in practice, and build collaborative partnerships to help safeguard our soil for the future. This grant provides an ideal opportunity to highlight the importance of nurturing our soils and the collaboration across countries for the benefit of human society.

2 Eligibility of the applicants and mentorship

This grant scheme is intended for researchers, scientists, and professionals with a keen interest in soils, and conducting their main activity in one of the low to middle income countries listed as eligible countries by the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (list available [here](#)), which will act as *host country/ies*. Please, note that applications from countries or entities sanctioned according to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (see annexe) are excluded from this scheme.

The lead applicant must belong to a university, soil science society or soil-focused organisation of the *host country*, which will act as *host institution*. The core scientific/professional activity of the lead applicant must be in the host country. There is no restriction on the profile of the applicants, but applications from Early Career Scientists or Professionals are particularly welcomed (see marking criteria).

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Applicants need to contact a member of the BSSS who will act as Mentor of the project and further ease communication with BSSS. The BSSS Mentor will serve as a long-term project support to facilitate international partnerships but do not need to be actively involved in the project. A list of BSSS members along with their expertise is available on the society website, under the section “Find an Expert”. Please contact us on admin@soils.org.uk should you struggle to find a mentor.

When it comes to the Early Career status, the current grant assumes academic applicants are Early career up until 5 years following the award of their PhD qualification. Early career soil professionals will have up to 5 years of experience in the soil sector.

Eligibility questions can be asked to admin@soils.org.uk.

3 Award conditions and funding

The BSSS is sponsoring a grant of up to £2,000. Nonetheless, the BSSS will match fund up to an additional £1,000 if equivalent funding is provided by the host country – this could be from the host organization, national society of soil science or other organization. This extra funding must be clearly detailed and cannot be an *in-kind* contribution. The grant will be paid to the recipients in UK pounds sterling at the prevailing exchange rate.

For the project to be fundable, the project or transfer knowledge activity needs to be supported by a BSSS member that will act as Mentor/sponsor of the project in front of the BSSS (see section 2 above). The BSSS Mentor does not need to be involved in the project delivery in order for the project to be eligible.

The grant prize must be used to perform research related activities or to transfer knowledge to the host country/ies. It must not be used to pay salaries or institutional overheads. Attendance at conferences and publication costs are eligible if the conference contribution and/or publication is directly derived from the activity of the project.

The application must align with all relevant BSSS policies, which can be found on the BSSS website (<https://soils.org.uk/about-us/governance/policies/>).

Please note that the submitted project must be **stand-alone, independent from the current activity** of the co-applicants.

Obtaining required permits and permissions required to undertake the funded project is the responsibility of the applicants.

The grant prize is given to the applicants and not to their organisations. The project team will have to submit a 1-page report to the satisfaction of the BSSS at the end of the project.

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4 Application

4.1 Application process

The application process comprises 4 steps:

Step 1. The documentation must be submitted online by the applicants to admin@soils.org.uk. Proposals must be submitted during the months of January and February. This documentation includes:

- 1) an application form (see section 4.2)
- 2) a 1-page CV of each co-applicant (see section 4.3)
- 3) a case for support (see section 4.4)
- 4) a diagrammatic work plan (see section 4.5)
- 5) a Justification of Resources (see section 4.6)
- 6) a letter of the host institution supporting the project, and
- 7) a letter of the institution match funding up to £1,000 (see section 4.6).

Step 2. Applications will be assessed at the next meeting of the Grants & Awards committee of the BSSS (usually scheduled in the month of March), which will contact the applicants informing them about their decision. The award may be subject to conditions applied by the reviewing panel.

Step 3. The granted team will have **24 months to undertake the funded project**.

Step 4. At the end of the grant, a brief **1-page report must be submitted**. As required by BSSS, grant recipients agree to:

- Present at a future BSSS meeting (presenting remotely will be considered)
- Write an article to appear in a BSSS journal (European Journal of Soil Science and Soil Use and Management) and/or websites
- Provide copyright-free images of the project or taken whilst completing the project which could appear in BSSS journals and/or websites
- Acknowledge the BSSS funding in all presentations, press releases, and activities relating to the grant output
- Provide an interview with, or complete a case study form, which will be used to promote the outcome of the grant award to BSSS members and the wider public via BSSS journals and/or websites.

BSSS may ask grant recipients to undertake additional activities to promote the outcome of the grant.

4.2 The application form

Applicants will be required to complete the application form which will include the:

- title of the project/activity
- amount of funding requested
- names and roles of the applicants in the group

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- project summary.

The summary is intended as an overview of the project suggested by the applicants targeting and should be aimed at both specialised and non-specialised public.

4.3 CV of the applicants

All co-applicants must provide a short CV (1 side of A4). The CV must state the ongoing research or related professional work with soil being undertaken by the co-applicant, including, if needed, the title and a brief description of the research/work activity in question. When relevant, the CV must provide enough details to demonstrate the condition of Early Career of the applicant(s).

A full list of publications is not required. A selection of the publications most relevant for the case for support (see section 4.4) can be added to the CV.

4.4 Case for support

Applicants must describe their plans for the grant in a case for support document (project) to be annexed to the application form. While writing the case for support, applicants should note the available assessment criteria (section 5).

In addition to the title of the project, it is suggested that the case for support includes:

- **Applicants.** Description of the applicants' profiles, their adequacy for the project, and their condition as Early Career, if relevant.
- **Background.** Briefly describe the relevant background and rationale to frame the project.
- **Aim of the project.** Describe the aim(s) of the suggested project including, when relevant, specific objectives.
- **Workplan.** This section should describe how the activity will be organised, describing relevant tasks, deliverables, and milestones. A diagrammatic work plan must be submitted in a separate document.
- **Impact of the project.** Describe briefly how (and how much) the project will contribute to support the host country/ies.
- **Key references.** Include references cited at the end of the case for support. There is no specific style, but the reference must include sufficient information for reviewers to easily locate the sources listed.

The case for support document must be written in 11-point Arial font A4 size, with all page margins set to 2 cm. The page limit for the Case for Support is 2 sides of A4, including figures and references.

4.5 Diagrammatic workplan

A diagrammatic work plan illustrating the workplan described in the Case for Support is mandatory. This cannot be used to extend the case for support. Project-specific timelines, milestones and deliverables should be clearly and accurately shown.

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Deliverables are distinct outputs of the action, meaningful to attain the action’s overall objectives (e.g., reports, technical diagrams, ...). Milestones are checkpoints in the action allowing to chart progress (e.g., completion of a key deliverable, critical decision point in the adoption of different technologies or strategies in the light of the action’s development).

The workplan should not exceed 1 side of A4.

4.6 Justification of resources

The JoR is a free text document providing a justification of the funding amount requested on the application form.

We recommend matching the costs to the headings shown in Table 1. Subheading can be used to better explain the resources requested.

Table 1. Justification of Resources heading and brief description.

JoR heading	Description
Travel and subsistence	Resources required for travelling purposes (e.g., meetings).
Other directly incurred costs	Costs directly derived from the realisation of the project. For example, consumables or advertising costs should go in this heading.
Impact	Resources aimed at boosting the impact of the action among the general public .

In addition to the JoR, if the applicants wish to request the up to £1,000 extra funding offered by BSSS, a commitment letter of the institution match funding this BSSS extra funding must be added to the application.

5 Assessment criteria

The activity proposed will be assessed according to:

- (i) Quality of the proposed activity (40%)
- (ii) Impact potential for the host country/ies (30%)
- (iii) Feasibility (20%)
- (iv) Scientific/professional stage of the application team (10%).

For further details, see marking guide document.

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Annexe: UK Sanctions Regimes 2024

This is a condensed list created on 31 May 2024, and all information was gathered from [The UK Sanctions List - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

UK sanctions regimes currently in force as at 31 May 2024 are:

- Afghanistan
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Central African Republic
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Guinea
- Haiti
- Iran
- Libya
- Mali
- Myanmar
- Nicaragua
- Republic of Belarus
- Republic of Guinea-Bissau
- Russia
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Syria
- Venezuela
- Yemen
- Zimbabwe