FCDO Research Commissioning Centre: A research programme on evidence use in policymaking

Links to call documents and additional resources

Call for expressions of interest: Studies of evidence use in practice (Strand 2) **[closed]**	https://www.grtd.fcdo.gov.uk/call-for-expressions-of-interest-a-research-programme-on-evidence-use-in-policymaking-studies-of-evidence-use-in-practice/
Call for expressions of interest: Interventions to influence the use of evidence (Strand 3) **[closed]**	https://www.grtd.fcdo.gov.uk/call-for-expressions-of-interest-a-research-programme-on-evidence-use-in-policymaking-interventions-to-influence-the-use-of-evidence/
Grant management system for submitting expressions of interest (both strands). Please see the accompanying user guide on the call pages.	https://rcc.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp
Programme resources (conceptual framework, measures inventory, pathfinding paper)	https://www.grtd.fcdo.gov.uk/research/understanding-evidence-use-in-policymaking-in-sub-saharan-africa-and-south-asia/

Frequently Asked Questions

This document collates FAQs from three rounds of submitted questions. Please find the newest questions grouped at the top of the sheet.

Previous questions are sorted by the following themes:

- Application process
- Number of awards
- Applicant eligibility
- Countries of focus
- Sectors of focus
- Strand 3: Interventions of interest
- Research design and scope

18 August 2025

- Budget and value for money

Question	Answer
Additional questions and answers (added 18th August)	
What are the latest start and end dates for projects?	The maximum project length for Strand 2 is 12 months from the date of agreement signing and the funds will need to be fully disbursed by the end of February 2027. We can therefore accommodate a small amount of flexibility on the start and end dates within these parameters, but our preference would be that projects complete by December 2026.
There does not appear to be a dedicated section to provide an overview of the study, motivation, research question, and objectives etc. Is this information taken from the first application, or should it be included under the “Overarching approach” question in the Technical Approach section or somewhere else?	Please include the study overview, motivation and research questions in the “Overarching approach” section of the proposal form. As your proposal will be reviewed as a standalone submission, you are welcome to use content from your expression of interest.
Should we include scholarly citations in our proposal? If so, is there a preference for whether these are uploaded as a separate appendix or included in the text immediately following the section where they are referenced?	Please do include citations where appropriate in your proposal. You can include the full reference at the end of the section where they are cited.
I did not see a reference to a word or page limit. Could you confirm if there is general guidance on this?	The form for research proposals does not include word or page limits. We encourage applicants to communicate their proposal clearly and concisely in whatever space is appropriate.
Could you share information on the number of proposals retained for this phase? From earlier communication, my understanding was that the final selection would include around 5–10 projects, depending on budget.	We received 145 expressions of interest for Strand 2, of which 36 were invited to submit a full proposal. Subject to budget requirements, we currently expect to fund 5-10 projects in this strand, but are exploring options to secure additional funding.

If we are planning a dissemination/knowledge sharing event to gather stakeholders and share findings from the research with them, where do I add costs for venue/meals/travel for that event? In this case, travel cost will include travel + accommodation cost of participants such as government officials. Is this to be added in the Office Expense and Travel tabs separately?	Please include all travel-associated costs (flights/internal transfers, meals, accommodation) in the Travel tab and other direct costs (such as venue hire) in Office Expenses, with a brief explanation of what they cover.
In the earlier Q&A from May, it was noted that a cap of **15%** can be applied for indirect costs (for those organizations that do not use NPAC or TRAC). However, in the Excel budget file for the proposal, the link to the 3ie Indirect cost policy on the "Budget Guidelines" tab indicates an indirect cost cap of **10%** for universities and other research institutions. Can you please clarify which guidance should be followed?	As per the published FAQs, the indirect cost cap for organisations that do not use NPAC or TRAC is **15%**. The thresholds listed in the 3ie cost evaluation guidance do not apply to RCC commissions. We apologise for the inconsistency between the template and our previous guidance – we are currently updating this.
On the budget templates, we are continuously finding that the "Financial Summary" and "3ie Category Summary" tabs are not resulting in the same budget totals. Is this intentional? Is there a category that 3ie omits when calculating its summary?	The 3ie Category Summary page pulls through budget totals by activity category, so please ensure you use the dropdown menus available to link costs to designated project phases. Due to a change in the template, this page does not include indirect costs, so should match the "Sub Total Direct Cost" line on the Financial Summary page. If you are experiencing any other issues with the template, please write to us at rcc@3ieimpact.org.
Additional questions and answers (added 18th June)	
Is it required to have a formal agreement/MOU in place between partners submitting a joint expression of interest in response to this opportunity?	The RCC does not require that applicants have any signed arrangement with partners listed in their application at Expression of Interest stage. They can progress to signing MOUs and other contracts once awarded.
Can a National Government Agency, a Multilateral Development Bank or Fund or the UN in partnership with a research entity apply for this call?	There is no restriction as to type of organisation that is eligible, so if your organisation is able to adhere to the accountable grant agreement (please review the call page) then you can apply. If you have questions about the AGA please email rcc@3ieimpact.org and we will try to clarify.
Are there any restrictions on who the lead organisation can partner with to deliver this project?	There are no restrictions regarding who lead applicants can partner with.

Can the terms of the grant agreement around GDPR and the Data Protection Act be adjusted or waived?	No. Adherence to GDPR and DPA is a requirement of FCDO funding and will be a component of due diligence for successful awards. If applicants do not have the relevant data protection measures in place at award stage, they will be required to undersign FCDO Research Commissioning Centre GDPR policies while they develop these. For more information about GDPR and its core principles, see: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/
In our country we are not able to transfer funds abroad so international partnerships are difficult. In case of a successful application, would it be possible for you to send the allocation directly to our international partners?	Our preference is to engage in a single grant agreement with the lead applicant, who is then responsible for onward agreements and payments to additional partners. However, we understand that this may not be feasible in certain contexts so we are open to discussing alternative arrangements on a case-by-case basis.
What is the maximum number of partners that can be listed in the Expressions of Interest? The template allows space for 3 including the proposing institution - is this the maximum and can others be added later?	There is no maximum number of organisations that can be included as partners, provided they all play a substantive role on the project. Annex A of the Expression of Interest template provides space for 3 partner institutions, additional to the lead institution. Where more than 3 external partners are proposed, please mention them in the main text of the application and these can be added at a later stage.
In case that a listed institution is working in partnership with others (either as a pre-existing FCDO-funded research consortium, or other partnership arrangement), how should this be represented in the list of partners and/or in the EoI?	All institutions that will receive research funding through the grant should be listed as partners.
Should the proposal primarily focus on methods, concepts, or approaches to evidence-driven impact? Alternatively, is it acceptable for the proposal to build on contemporary conceptual ideas to address a practical problem, issue, or area of focus?	We are interested in advancing understanding of how to improve policymakers' use of research evidence by evaluating interventions that aim to influence evidence use – including by overcoming an identified barrier. The call for expressions of interest provides some illustrative examples, but we are open to any intervention underpinned by a strong theory of change and high potential for impact.
Section 3 of the application refers to "Counterfactual impact evaluations, including experimental or quasi-experimental identification designs." How essential is it to include this specific methodological approach in our proposal? Are alternative approaches also acceptable, or is there a preference for counterfactual methods?	The Expression of Interest form asks for demonstration of appropriate methodological expertise, which could include counterfactual impact evaluations or small-n evaluations. We are open to any evaluation design that addresses the research questions and meets the aims of the call.

How rigid is the funding call for Strand 3 regarding evaluating policymaking or evaluating the impact of interventions? Can it focus primarily on delivery?	The priority for Strand 3 is understanding the impact of interventions to influence evidence use in policymaking, so intervention delivery without an evaluation, or where the primary focus is not on evidence use in policymaking, would not be considered. We welcome applications that additionally examine the downstream socio-economic impact of evidence-informed policymaking.
The stated word limits are described as approximate (e.g., 300 words). How much flexibility is there with these limits? For instance, would a response of around 325 words be acceptable?	Yes. Please use the approximations as an indicator for the level of detail and amount of information to provide. Our application system allows for flexibility around this figure.
The call for EoIs mentions that: 'Studies should be conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. They can adopt a single country focus or a comparative approach across multiple contexts.' This would suggest that covering both regions would be encouraged / required?	There is no requirement to cover both Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia or include multiple countries. Where multi-country studies are proposed, these can be within or across regions.
The requirement of at least 5 publications per team member is forcing non-academic but otherwise resourceful persons who have contributed to many useful publications without being acknowledged in print to pause. Can such team members indicate their contribution in such publications?	There is no requirement to have published academic publications. For those who have, we ask applicants to select (up to) the five most relevant examples to include in their CV. Applicants are welcome to emphasise any aspects of their experience that meet the aims of the call.

FAQs published 8 May 2025

Application process	
Is the "RCC Application Template" the same as what we'll need to complete in the Grant Management System?	Yes, the template provided is downloaded from the grant management system for applicants' information. Please note that applicants will need to register for the grant management system the first time they use it, which involves some additional information about their organisation. Some tables that operate as pop-up fields in the grant management system (e.g., team composition) are not shown in the PDF template so we recommend that applicants consult the online system.

Can you please provide more information on what information/ documents should be submitted at the EOI stage? Is there a template to be followed or a page limit?	Please review the template application form on the call page.
Can you please share the link to the application template?	Please see links to the respective call pages and the RCC grant management system above.
Do you apply to the different strands separately, or does applying to Strand 3 also include an application to Strand 2?	These are separate funding calls, so separate applications are needed for each strand.
How can I check my topic was not done already or taken by others?	This is an open call for expressions of interest so applications will be assessed based on the strength of what they propose. Applications should provide a rationale for the contribution their study intends to make, including by demonstrating knowledge of previous literature.
Number of awards	
About how many applications do you expect to move from EOI to the full application?	The number of EOIs selected for full proposals depends on the number and quality of applications we receive and the overall funding envelope. However, we will follow the recommendation of the Independent Review of Research Bureaucracy (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-research-bureaucracy) to ensure that the number is proportionate to the chance of success.
What is the total available funding for this call? Do you have a sense of about how many awards will be awarded, either in total or for each of the two categories?	The total number of projects awarded is contingent on the overall budget envelope, which is subject to FCDO review, as well as the individual project budgets requested. We currently expect to fund 5-10 projects in Strand 2 and 5-10 projects in Strand 3.
We feel that this is a timely call and will probably attract large number of applicants. Do you anticipate offering multiple awards?	As above, we are looking to fund multiple projects with individual budgets up to the specified budget for each strand.
Given funding uncertainties at FCDO, can you confirm that you expect the call and funding to be able to proceed?	Although the FCDO has announced forthcoming cuts to official development assistance, funding has been committed to this research programme and we are confident it will go ahead. The final budget envelope is subject to FCDO review.
Applicant eligibility	

Can an organisation or consortium apply to both Strand 2 and Strand 3?	Yes, an organisation can apply for both Strand 2 and Strand 3.
Are there any limitations on the number of proposals an organisation can lead or be named on across the research programme?	No. There are no limits to number of proposals from an organisation as long as there is relevant capacity and expertise.
Can applicants choose to study processes they themselves are implementing/involved in, or should the grantee organisation be independent of the process? Can an implementing organisation partner with a local university to study their own interventions?	For Strand 3, interventions should be evaluated by organisations independent of those involved in implementing the intervention to minimise potential bias and maximise transparency. Implementing organisations are welcome to partner with external evaluators to conduct an independent evaluation.
Who should be the PI: colleagues from HIC or LMIC?	There are no restrictions on where the PI should be based. We welcome PIs from LMICs, particularly from the countries in which the research is based.
Could you please provide some clarity on whether the funding opportunities are open to non-UK institutions that are not members of the “RCC consortium”? Can institutions submit applications without RCC members being part of the application?	Yes, these funding opportunities are open to non-UK institutions and organisations outside the RCC consortium. We strongly encourage research leadership in the countries where research takes place. The funding call is open to institutions within and outside the RCC consortium.
Do applicants need to have partners or collaborators in the UK as Lead applicants?	No, this is not a requirement. We would encourage leads from outside the UK.
Even if there is no requirement, is there a preference for including a UK or local organisation?	We strongly encourage applications from organisations based in the countries of focus for the research, and equity and partnerships will be a key consideration for decision-making at both the EOI stage and for full proposals.
In the call, the RCC states, 'The RCC strongly encourages the leadership of in-country research organisations where primary research is undertaken'. Does this mean that you'd prefer, e.g., an LMIC organisation to be the lead even when working in cooperation with a UK based organisation?	As the call documents state, we strongly encourage applications from organisations based in the countries of focus for the research, and equity and partnerships will be a key consideration for decision-making at both the EOI stage and for full proposals.
The call encourages the leadership of in-country research organizations where primary research is undertaken. Could you elaborate on how this preference influences the evaluation of proposals? Will you prioritise projects led from LMICs?	Demonstration of context-specific research expertise, as well as equity and partnerships, will be a key consideration for decision-making at both the EOI stage and for full proposals.
Should the applicant organisation be registered in an eligible country or elsewhere?	The applicant organisation does not need to be registered in the country being studied. However evidence of specialist and in-country knowledge/expertise will be highly valued.

Are research granting institutions eligible to apply?	There is no restriction as to type of organisation that is eligible, so if your organisation is able to adhere to the accountable grant agreement (please review the call page) then you can apply. If you have questions about the AGA please email rcc@3ieimpact.org and we will try to clarify.
Are for-profit organisations able to apply (as a lead or a subcontractor) for this bid?	Yes, for-profit organisations are eligible to apply for the bids. All lead and sub-contractors/downstream partners would be required to submit budgets with direct and indirect costs separated out with a preference for using NPAC to quantify indirect costs.
Would like to clarify if a registered consultancy agency can apply?	Yes.
Can public sector organisations and ministries (such as a National Statistical Office) apply?	Yes.
If the registered individual consultant with registration certificates, business license, TIN certificate, and tax clearance. Will I not be eligible still?	We are only able to contract directly with organisations and not individuals. Our due diligence process makes it mandatory to have particular organisational policies in place.
How about partnership between two institutions, i.e., a university and a government institution. Is such partnership eligible?	Yes. One organisation should be the lead applicant organisation, and you can then submit the application in partnership with another organisation or multiple organisations.
What is the definition of legal organization for the purposes of this Expression of Interest? Would a US-registered LLC qualify?	Legally registered organisations include not-for-profit organisations, public limited companies, limited companies, limited liability partnerships, other partnerships, sole traders, or another legally recognised status. A US-registered LLC would be eligible to apply.
Where can I find the list of legally registered organizations and/or their consortia?	There is no pre-specified list of legally registered organisations and/or their consortia. Any legally registered organisation is eligible to apply, independently or in partnership with other organisations.
Can public sector employees receive any financial benefit?	For projects that are progressed to the second stage of the commissioning process, a budget template will be provided which will require salaried staff costs to be outlined and a percentage of these salaried costs to be specified as direct project costs. These should cover the cost of salary remuneration and benefits including superannuation (pension) and taxes.

Can an organisation where the study will be conducted collaborate with 3ie?	Prospective applicants are welcome to contact 3ie about their partnership needs, but due to 3ie's role in managing this commission, conflicts of interest would need to be carefully addressed.
Countries of focus	
Does the FCDO RCC have priority countries for understanding evidence use in policymaking?	The call is open to all low- and lower-middle income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, based on World Bank classifications (see: https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/the-world-by-income-and-region.html). Although South Africa is classed as an upper middle-income country, is it included in the call. Outside of that, there are no specific priority countries.
We wanted to know which country classification are you considering for South Asia?	As per World Bank classifications, South Asia includes: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives.
Does this call for proposals extend to Southeast Asia, specifically the Philippines?	No, the call is restricted to South Asia.
We have noted that organisations or consortia from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are eligible to apply. However, we could not find a specific list of eligible countries and were wondering if NGOs based in India are eligible to apply under this call.	Yes, India is a focus country and any legally registered organisation can apply.
Please confirm that all countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa qualify for this call for EoI	The call is open to all low- and lower-middle income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, based on World Bank classifications. Upper middle-income countries - with the exception of South Africa - are not included.
Can we put up a proposal only for South Asia?	Yes. Area-specific or country-specific proposals are welcome.
Can you please also clarify if we can include countries additional to the Asia and Sub Saharan Africa in the proposal (e.g. South Africa + a country in Latin America)?	The calls are focused on Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, so countries outside these regions are not eligible.
Regarding the geographic focus, is there any preference for a single-country study versus a comparative approach across two countries within Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia?	We are open to within-country studies or cross-country comparative studies. Applications should be guided by clear research questions that demonstrate the learning to be generated from the chosen design. At proposal stage, budgets should be commensurate with the complexity and scope of the study proposed.

Is there a preference for multi-country studies?	We are open to within-country studies or cross-country comparative studies. Applications should be guided by clear research questions that demonstrate the learning to be generated from the chosen design. At proposal stage, budgets should be commensurate with the complexity and scope of the study proposed.
Sectors of focus	
Are there priority areas or sectors of emphasis in the calls? E.g., education, health, WASH, economic development	Strand 2 (studies of evidence use in practice) is focused on policy areas related to national economic growth, including, but not limited to, energy, high-volume transport, industrial policy, trade, labour markets, etc. Strand 3 (interventions to influence evidence use) is open to any policy area with limited EIPM evidence. Beyond this, there are no specific priorities for the calls.
Can you share examples of "economic growth" policies?	As above, economic growth policy can include energy, high-volume transport, industrial policy, trade, labour markets, etc. We conceive of "policy" in a broad sense, so interventions could aim to increase evidence use in government strategy, national planning, public sector investment decisions, programme implementation, legislation, reform, regulation, or similar.
Would projects related to migrant labour policies – such as those helping workers access higher-paid jobs abroad, or boosting remittances to Global South countries – be considered a relevant policy sector?	Yes, we would welcome projects related to migrant labour policies for Strand 2 or 3.
Does the policy sector need to align with UK Govt priorities? For instance, would a topic like migrant labour be seen as 'not well aligned' with UK Govt priorities?	No consideration to UK Government priorities needs to be given, other than the steers expressed in the call documents.
Would financial inclusion or livelihood-based migration be relevant policy areas?	Yes. Financial inclusion would be a welcome topic for Strand 2 especially. If livelihood-based migration can be linked to economic development policy, then it would be welcome too.

Can agriculture and food systems be a policy focus?	Agricultural sector research related to economic growth - in topics related to, e.g., increasing productivity, mechanisation, and commercialisation are welcome. However, topics related to subsistence farming, or nutrition or food systems more broadly, are not a priority for Strand 2.
Would a focus on nutrition policy be considered a good fit within the scope of your call? While not listed explicitly in the call, nutrition is a critical factor in economic productivity and human capital, often lacks strong EIPM evidence, and is most important for a nation health and economic growth.	As above, but nutrition policy is not a priority for Strand 2, could be included in Strand 3.
Can nutrition be considered relevant for Strand 3?	Yes, Strand 3 is open to any policy area with limited EIPM evidence.
Would fertilizer subsidy policy qualify for strand 2?	Yes, studies of evidence use in decision making around removing distortions in fertiliser subsidy policy would be of interest for Strand 2.
Would a focus on agricultural inputs policy, which affects many smallholders' ability to produce marketable surpluses, be of interest?	If the policy is about increasing agricultural productivity in a way that contributes to economic growth, this would be in scope for Strand 2.
How does research evidence on the effect of discontinued trade programs like AGOA for countries like Ethiopia qualify for this call?	While trade policy is welcome an area of focus related to economic growth, this seems to suggest studying the effects in a LIC of a policy decision taken elsewhere (in this case, the US removing AGOA eligibility from Ethiopia). This would not be in scope, unless it is studying how Ethiopian policymakers used evidence in their responses to the US AGOA decision.
Would a perspective on the role of international organisations in energy system planning be in scope for Strand 2?	Provided the study examines the role of evidence by actors in energy system planning, it is relevant for strand 2.
Is evidence in the context of humanitarian/human rights response one of the priorities?	Humanitarian/human rights responses are not a priority policy area for Strand 2, which is focused on national economic growth and development, but can be explored in Strand 3.
What about climate change related policies?	Inclusion of climate change policies in Strand 2 depends how these are conceived. We would consider projects aiming to study evidence use in, e.g., decision-making around scaling up renewable energy investment, policies to increase climate resilience of infrastructure, flood defences to protect economic activity in urban areas, etc. Policies whose sole intent is mitigation would not be included.

For studies of evidence use in practice - would tax policies and social welfare policies be considered as policy sectors of focus?	As a contributing factor to economic growth, tax policy is welcome as an area focus. We would particularly encourage submissions on tax policy where the intent of the policy reform is to increase economic growth (e.g., to raise revenue in a less economically distorting manner). Social welfare policy is not included in Strand 2.
Is inclusion of disabled people in the workforce/economic activity relevant for Strand 2?	Yes, issues around inclusion of disabled people in the labour force would be relevant for Strand 2. Applications would be more likely to succeed if there is a clear link to economic growth – e.g., inclusion in the formal labour force – and less likely if they are focused on subsistence/informal work.
Would the development of an "approach to development policymaking" (connecting economic theory and empirical evidence/RCTs) be of interest? If yes, which strand would this belong in?	Yes, this could be of interest. Which strand it falls into would depend on whether it retrospectively examines an example of this approach in practice (Strand 2) or whether it represents a new approach to test (Strand 3).
Would education policy-focused be eligible?	Aspects of education and human capital development that support economic growth in the short term – for example, skills training, skills certification and labour market matching – would be within the scope of Strand 2. Aspects that contribute to economic growth over longer time horizons – for example, primary education – are not the focus of Strand 2, but could be explored in Strand 3.
Would entrepreneurship education be in scope?	Yes, given the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth, this would be in scope.
Is research focused on the health sector eligible under this call?	Health policy is not included in the areas of focus for Strand 2 but can be explored in Strand 3.
Just to be clear, since health seems already well studied to some extent, are there particular areas you might recommend for those still interested in studying health related policies?	Strand 2 is focused on economic development, so would not include health policy. Strand 3 is open to any policy area lacking strong EIPM evidence. We are open to applications from the health sector that address an important evidence gap.
Would you be open to an evaluation of evidence-based policy-making on HIV-programming and resource allocation over the last 20 years in one specific country, but which would have relevance to many other countries?	Health policy is not included in the areas of focus for Strand 2 but can be included in Strand 3, which is open to any policy area with limited EIPM evidence. This specific topic would be relevant to Strand 3 if it includes an intervention to influence evidence use.

Can the evaluation be related to sectors that are indirectly related to economic growth? (i.e. major health or education investments)	As above, these sectors can be considered for Strand 3 but not for Strand 2.
Would a research focus on social policy and poverty reduction be considered?	Social policy is not a focus area for Strand 2 but could be for Strand 3.
Would you consider policy areas for human capital formation, youth employability and households livelihoods, such as social protection including social transfers?	Aspects of human capital formation that support economic growth in the short term - for example, skills training, skills certification and labour market matching - would be within scope for Strand 2. Similarly, youth employment - with a link to economic growth - could also be an area of focus. Social protection policy and household livelihoods are not included as priority areas for Strand 2 but could be explored in Strand 3.
More specifically on social protection interventions, would those focused on strengthening women's economic empowerment be in scope?	If the application can draw a link from women's economic empowerment to national economic growth and the role of evidence in policy processes then it could be relevant for Strand 2. Strand 3 is open to any policy area with limited EIPM evidence.
In the countries we are interested (Ethiopia and Kenya), agriculture and social protection policies play important roles given the large share of the agrifood sector and pervasive poverty and food insecurity challenges. But in your example of sectoral policies, we are not seeing any mention of agriculture or social protection or food policies. We are wondering if there is interest in these policies and issues.	Agricultural sector research related to economic growth - in topics related to, e.g., increasing productivity, mechanisation, and commercialisation are welcome. However, topics related to subsistence farming, or nutrition or food systems more broadly, are not a priority for Strand 2. Similarly, social protection or food policies are not a priority for Strand 2, but could be included in Strand 3.
Does social support include evidence use in country-specific social support systems?	Country-specific social support systems are not a priority for Strand 2, but could be included in Strand 3.
Is Payment for Ecosystem Services considered as a policy sector of focus for Strand 2?	Payment for ecosystem services, such as payments to farmers for not deforesting their land, would not be considered under Strand 2, unless the policy intent is clearly focused on increasing economic growth rather than environmental protection.
Strand 3: Interventions of interest	
Does the FCDO RCC have priority evidence interventions where they are looking to understand the impact of evidence generation and use?	The call is open to any evidence-use intervention underpinned by a strong theory of change and high potential for impact. Please see the published pathfinding paper for more information and potential examples.

Is there a preference for policy evidence generated through FCDO-supported projects and interventions?	While these are welcome, there is no preference for FCDO-supported interventions. The call is open to any project/intervention that meets the stated aims.
Must the project involve evaluation of existing intervention project? What if there are no intervention project within the country meets the call	Strand 2 focuses on evidence use in practice, and so is less focused on interventions in cases where there aren't existing examples. In some cases, we may be open to funding implementation of new interventions where none are being actively implemented, provided they demonstrate a credible route to impact, fill an important evidence gap, and accompany a feasible implementation plan.
Strand 3 seems to suggest policy influencing interventions are the priority; can you please let me know the role or involvement of UN agencies in forging of robust partnerships in this regard?	The interventions we are interested in evaluating should be intended to support evidence use in national government policymaking. The interventions can be implemented by organisations outside government, including UN agencies, provided national policy outcomes are the primary objective.
What is Strand 3 for? Does it mean to evaluate the existing practice of evidence of use in policy using experimental design or something else?	Strand 3 focuses on evaluating interventions that are designed to influence the use of evidence in national policymaking. Interventions could focus on strategies to leverage existing evidence for policy, or on generating new evidence that meets policymakers' needs. Evaluations should be designed using appropriate methods, including RCTs or quasi-experiments, or "small n" mixed method evaluations
Does the intervention have to be created as part of this study or, for example, can it be focused on a pre-existing policy unit that was called-upon for evidence?	We welcome applications that evaluate ongoing interventions, such as a pre-existing policy unit called upon for evidence.
Research design and scope	
Could you please clarify the difference between the aims of the two calls? I notice some overlap, as an intervention designed to influence evidence use (Strand 3) could also serve as a subject of study on how evidence is used in practice (Strand 2).	Strand 2 (studies of evidence use in practice) is focused on understanding the role of evidence in policy processes, not in the context of an explicit intervention. Strand 3 (interventions to influence evidence use) focuses on evaluating the impact of interventions designed to increase the use of evidence in policymaking.

What counts as evidence? Is it focused on the use of evaluations as evidence or is it broader and could it include data and evidence use more broadly? Does it mean research findings about whether certain policies work or not in a given context or evidence about the use of evidence in a specific context/country?	The objective of these calls is to generate evidence about the use of evidence in policymaking. We welcome applications that additionally consider the downstream socio-economic impact of evidence-informed policymaking. We distinguish evidence from other types of information in that evidence (i) substantiates or disproves a specific proposition and (ii) is appropriate in terms of quantity and quality for addressing the question or need at hand. To reflect FCDO and RCC's role in commissioning research, this call is primarily focused on the use of evidence generated from research, by which we mean a systematic investigative process employed to increase or revise current knowledge. This could range from conceptual and theoretical research to policy evaluations and systematic reviews.
How relevant is it for proposals for Strand 2 and 3 to be based on findings from Strand 1? For example, to what extent is the conceptual framework a binding guide to research design and conceptualisation? Will you look also at applications that may draw on the framework but also draw on approaches less reflected in it and even challenging parts of it?	Strand 1 resources are intended to guide applications by providing a high-level conceptual framing and an inventory of measures that could be used in evaluations. . We would be keen for the conceptual framework to be used in the research design and conceptualisation but this is not a binding guide and we are open to it being challenged so we can reflect on its suitability and use the work commissioned to inform changes as the work evolves.
How should examples of evidence use be identified? Should these come from literature, reports?	In Strand 2, studies can have two entry points: starting with a body of evidence and understanding its role in policy processes, or starting with a policy development and understanding the role of evidence in the process. Applications should identify examples to be explored, with reference to their relevance and the actionable learning to be generated from them. Applications should demonstrate knowledge of relevant literature and policy documents, but can also draw on other means to source evidence use examples e.g., consultation with policymakers and practitioners.
Do we include evidence use by government ministries and parliament?	The primary emphasis is on policymaking by national governments, including elected officials, senior civil service staff and those working for them in key ministries and supporting agencies – so evidence use by government ministries and parliament would certainly be of interest.
For Strand 2, would a study focussed on multiple countries be perceived as more impactful than a single country case study?	In Strand 2, we are open to within-country studies or cross-country comparative studies. Applications should be guided by clear research questions that demonstrate the learning to be generated from the chosen design.
For Strand 3 are you expecting more than one country to collaborate? Is a single-country study eligible?	Yes, single-country studies are welcome.

Can the proposal be of country specific study?	Yes, country-specific research is welcome.
What about involving the regional economic blocs in lieu of a one country approach?	Please do so if this makes sense for your project and you can do this within the required timeframes and within budget.
On Strand 3, do we need to identify specific policies to influence since we are working with consortia where policy advocacy will be conducted as part of the intervention?	Applicants should clearly define what policy impact looks like in the context of their intervention. This may include reference to specific policies.
Could you clarify whether the focus should be on evaluating past work in the policy space, or if the expectation is to implement new research related to economic analysis and policymaking? For example, Strand 2, does the policy already need to be developed that has been informed by evidence?	We expect studies in Strand 2 to have retrospective designs that leverage existing bodies of evidence or policy processes. This is to ensure that the learning to be gained from a policy example is fully formed within the available one-year timeframe. However, we recognise that policy processes in the sphere of economic development are rarely single, discrete events, rather often comprising multiple phases of reform or a series of decisions that get made over time. Studies that examine distinct periods or clear decision points within a wider reform process, including an ongoing one, could therefore be considered if underpinned by a compelling rationale. Evaluations of interventions in Strand 3 are likely to be prospective, examining the impact of a given intervention on policy processes.
Will you consider studies that seek to draw out learning/evidence from recently completed interventions?	Preference is for prospective evaluations of existing or new interventions, but where a strong case is made for a retrospective evaluation, including the learning that can be gained from the approach proposed, it can be considered.
Assuming that you have a strong consortium with sufficient capacity and consisting of e.g. research/think tanks, evidence intermediaries, policy institutes, can you propose a project that integrates strand 2 and 3? A research-to-action type of project integrating a study an some interventions. What are the implications on the budget as this may mean a higher budget overlapping both strands.	Although research consortia are welcome to apply to both strands, we are not in a position to accept proposals that cut across Strands 2 and 3. This is because the review and selection processes are separate for each strand and are bound by the respective maximum budget caps.
Would process evaluation of an intervention be in Strand 2 or 3?	Evaluations of interventions in Strand 3 would be expected to include a process evaluation.

Could you tell us about your preferred methodologies for Strands 2 and 3?	Research design and methods should be guided by the research questions and study objectives. The call documents provide examples of possible study designs, but they are not exhaustive and we are not prescriptive about the methods to be used.
Under which strand would a discrete choice experiment fall?	Discrete choice experiments examining, for example, the relative importance of different factors related to evidence in policymaking could fall under Strand 2 if not attached to a live evidence-use intervention.
Can you confirm that the cost question in strand 3 is still included in the research or if it has been rephrased in any way?	Indicative research questions are provided in the published call documents. Applicants are welcome to draw on these or propose related questions that fit the scope of the call.
We work directly with national research commissioning agency, with ministry policymakers, with the national research agenda, and have been looking at the process of coordinating / harmonising research and conveying this to a range of stakeholder audiences. There is not much evidence to call on. This is a process / dialogue / qualitative shift. Would that meet your requirements?	If your model of collaboration can be considered an intervention with the objective of increasing evidence use in policy processes (i.e., one that could be evaluated and replicated or scaled), it could be considered for Strand 3, otherwise it could provide an example of evidence use in practice for Strand 2. In terms of policy outcomes, our conceptual framework includes outcomes in four domains - conceptual, attitudinal/behavioural, procedural, and content - so we would be interested in any of these aspects of evidence-informed policymaking.
Is this primary research or secondary as well?	We anticipate primarily primary research, but in Strand 2, secondary analysis of existing data, e.g., to explore relationships between underlying factors and policy outcomes, would be welcome.
Can proposals focus on a single country to conduct comparative analyses of interventions introduced by its sub-national governments?	Comparative studies can take place within a single country. Our focus is on national policymaking for economic growth, so sub-national governments can be included where there are implications for national policy.
Will you consider study designs that are not experimental or quasi-experimental i.e. where no comparator?	Yes, where an evaluation does not lend itself to a counterfactual design we are open to alternative evaluation approaches appropriate to the research questions and intervention being evaluated.
Will you consider studies of programmes of work that involved a range of mechanisms intended to enhance evidence to policy processes?	Interventions should be underpinned by a theory of change detailing the pathway(s) through which they would be expected to influence policy processes. They can leverage a single mechanism or combine several.

What sort of outputs or outcome are you looking for in this call?	Please see the call documents for details of indicative outputs. These include an inception report, quarterly process reports, a final research report and other outputs/ dissemination approaches, including journal articles, as appropriate to facilitate evidence uptake.
What are the typical sources that you would expect for the evidence synthesis?	We do not anticipate conducting evidence synthesis (in the sense of a systematic review or similar) as part of these calls. More broadly, knowledge of relevant academic and grey literature and policy documents should be demonstrated as appropriate.
Budget and value for money	
Please clarify if the award amount is being divided amongst all awardees. E.g., For strand 3, is the budget up to 400k for each evaluation, or is it the overall budget for all (5-10)?	Individual projects carry a budget maximum of £200k in Strand 2 and £400k in Strand 3. Multiple projects will be awarded each with a grant up to the maximum ceiling in the respective strand. Please note that Value for Money will be a key consideration in decision-making so these should be considered as upper limits, with budgets commensurate with the complexity and scope of the research.
Is there a cap on % indirect costs? Or recommended % indirect costs?	For indirect costs, organisations should follow FCDO's guidance on applying NPAC (Non-Attributable Project Costs). UK based higher education institutions should follow the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology. There is no explicit cap on the % of indirect costs when utilising the NPAC or TRAC (in the case of UK higher education institutions) methodologies for calculating indirect costs. However, if NPAC or TRAC cannot be used by an organisation to quantify indirect costs, then a cap of 15% is applied to indirects.
I noticed in the guidance that there is a 10% limit of the total budget for indirect costs for for-profit organisations. Can profit be considered as part of the indirect costs for a grant for this call for proposals?	There is no explicit cap on the % of indirect costs when utilising the NPAC or TRAC (in the case of UK higher education institutions) methodologies for calculating indirect costs. However all indirects are required to represent value for money and there is guidance given for proposals that reach the second stage on eligible NPAC costs. However, if NPAC or TRAC cannot be used by an organisation to quantify indirect costs, then a cap of 15% is applied to indirects.

Is the budget for each project in Strand 2 £200,000?	There is a maximum value of £200,000 for Strand 2 proposals but Value for Money considerations will be applied in decision-making depending on the scope of the research so this should be considered as a ceiling.
For Strand 3, are you also open to funding intervention cost, or is it restricted to the evaluation cost?	Where a study involves evaluating an active evidence-use intervention, we would expect to cover only the research costs associated with evaluating the intervention. We are open to making funding available (within the £400k budget ceiling) to support the delivery costs of a new intervention that demonstrates a credible route to impact, fills an important evidence gap, and accompanies a feasible implementation plan.