



## **FCDO Multi-Hazard Research Network**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Questions are sorted by the following themes:**

- Application process
- Matchmaking event
- MHRN project: scope and design
- FCDO involvement
- Finance and budget

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<b>Application process</b>	
Do we need to know who all our partners are at bid stage?	At Expression of Interest (EOI) stage, we expect you to present your starting set of confirmed or prospective partners. We will review the submissions and if an EOI is strong in other ways but we think it may be strengthened by building out partnerships in specific hazard areas or regions, we will provide this feedback to you. Core partnerships can be further developed at full proposal stage. After the grant is awarded, we expect the network to evolve. As part of this evolution, we would expect you to engage more partners, particularly when expanding into new hazard areas or regions.
Which institutions are eligible to be a lead applicants?	The lead applicant must be UK-based and must <u>not</u> be for-profit. A full list of eligible applicant types is available at the end of this Q&A document.
Which institutions are eligible to be in the network?	This is up to the discretion of the lead applicant. No restrictions apply to partner organisations from the FCDO, although the lead applicant would be expected to carry out due diligence on partners.
Can the lead applicant sub-contract for-profits?	Yes, this is permitted.
Can my organisation be on multiple EOIs or full proposals if we are not the lead applicant?	Yes, this is permitted and will not disadvantage the bid. Lead applicants should submit only one application each. However, lead applicants may also appear as partners on other submissions.
What types of institutions are expected to apply to the EOI?	The EOI call should be answered by organisations interested in leading the network. The network lead can partner with a diverse range of organisations, including for-profits. The network lead should choose these partners based on who they assess would be best placed to deliver the expectations of the MHRN.
Are UK government agencies able to be part of the network (or even lead)?	UK government agencies can apply as a lead applicant and/or can be part of a proposed network.
Will EOIs be shortlisted based on initial assessment/scoring and only selected EOIs invited to submit full proposals, or will it be feedback only at EOI stage?	All applicants will receive feedback. We reserve the right to shortlist applications at EOI stage if there are either too many applications for us to assess at the full proposal stage or if there are applications that are very low-scoring and could not reasonably deliver the expectations of the MHRN. This is to reduce the burden on applicants and assessors.
What are the criteria for assessing the EOIs?	The criteria against which bids will be assessed are detailed in the call document so please refer to these.

How many proposals will be funded?	We are looking to fund <u>one</u> proposal that will deliver all the expectations set out in the call document.
For organisations that are not likely to be the lead applicant, is it advisable to submit an EOI as an individual organisation?	EOIs should only be submitted by organisations interested in leading the network. For organisations or individuals interested in joining a network, the Matchmaking Event on 15 September will be an opportunity to scope potential leads you may want to cooperate with. Please fill out this <a href="#">survey</a> as soon as possible, which will inform the Matchmaking Event and be another way in which hubs and downstream partners can find each other.
What are some key evaluation criteria that will be used to assess partner entities?	The call document sets out both key requirements and also all the details on how EOIs will be scored. Please refer to the call document for this information.
Can low- and middle-income (LMIC) institutions lead regional nodes or specific hazard pillars rather than only subcontract?	The lead applicant that signs the agreement with FCDO must be UK-based. However, this lead applicant can structure the network in such a way as to place partner organisations (including LMIC organisations) in a leading position on specific regions, approaches, or hazards. This is at the discretion of the lead applicant.
<b>Matchmaking Event</b>	
What is the format of the Matchmaking Event and process? Will you be actively matchmaking, i.e. bringing organisations together based on their proposition? Or is this more an open event for partners to meet and create their consortia independently?	The intention behind the Matchmaking Event is for potential leads and potential partner organisations to identify suitable avenues for partnership and cooperation. It is up to the organisations themselves to reach out to one another and establish whether they can work together on delivering this project.
How do individual researchers get involved if we don't know organisations submitting EOIs? Can this be part of matchmaking?	We encourage you to attend the Matchmaking Event and listen to the presentations or potentially offer to deliver one yourself. We will share more details on how you can reach partner organisations in advance of the Matchmaking Event.
How does one register for the Matchmaking Event?	Details will be shared with the MHRN mailing list (sign up <a href="#">here</a> if you haven't already). Please also fill out the <a href="#">survey</a> as soon as possible, which will inform the Matchmaking Event and be another way in which hubs and downstream partners can find one another.
Will the Matchmaking Event be in person, online or hybrid?	It will be a fully online event.
<b>MHRN scope and design</b>	

How is the MHRN expected to work with other countries and multilaterals?	Some of the information generated by MHRN will feed into the wider system, but we also expect that the MHRN, through its wide and plugged-in network, will be aware of other work that is taking place and avoid duplication of effort.
How much of the MHRN is intended to be research and how much is expected to be operational/ coordination?	This is a research programme and the majority of the work should be centred on research. However, the MHRN should support the operationalisation of the research outputs to ensure maximum impact.
How should the MHRN decide which hazards to expand into over the term of the grant?	We expect this to be a strategic decision taken between the MHRN and the FCDO during the term of the grant. We would not expect this to be decided at proposal stage.
Will the network be expected to convene open calls and/or targeted consultancies for additional research/capacity training, etc., or will all research need to be specified in the bid? What proportion of the funding should be dedicated to this?	We are asking the lead applicant to design the way they would deliver on the requirements of this project and are not mandating any particular way of delivering the research. However, we would expect that any bid would reflect the need for rapid delivery and coordination, which would likely better suit a collaborative network established over a longer period than a consultancy model where partners are brought in for individual pieces of work.
Your reference to regions is very broad, are there specific countries that you would be looking to engage? How should the MHRN decide what regions to have partners in?	For the emerging infectious diseases hazard area, we expect Africa to be the priority. For the rest of the MHRN, we expect the lead applicant to decide any other focus regions and to give a convincing rationale for this choice. Our recommendation is to partner with regions most at risk of the hazard events covered (especially LMICs where the impacts of hazards are often most severe). We acknowledge that building such a wide range of partnerships in a short time frame is very challenging, so we accept that there would be a narrower regional range for the network to begin with, but we would be interested to understand how you plan to expand this reach as the MHRN evolves.
While this is a multi-disciplinary collaboration, which academic disciplines would you prioritise for this type of work?	We will not prioritise any specific academic discipline but have expectations around the types of technical expertise that should be included in the network. We expect the network to be capable of delivering the specific types of research set out in the call document. It will be for the lead applicant to set out a vision how they will deliver on these requirements with the disciplinary focus represented internally and in their partners.
Can you confirm that armed conflict- and drought-related emergencies are NOT part of the initial scope?	Armed and national conflict as a hazard in itself is not within the scope of this call. However, cascading impacts are part of the call, which would include the impacts from conflicts.  Heatwaves (and drought as an impact) are a key part of the natural hazards priority area included in this call.

Does FCDO expect a significant amount of publication of results/research in academic journals as part of this network? Or more the operational sharing of data for decision making? Or both equally?	The key priority is that the research informs the preparedness and response activity of the FCDO and its partners. Academic journal articles may be part of the dissemination work alongside other means of information sharing, but the FCDO has no set expectations on the number of academic publications. The FCDO requires that FCDO-funded research must align with an Open Science approach, including making data and methods open-source and ensuring that all publications are available open access, in line with <a href="#">Research Open and Enhanced Access Policy</a> . For further guidance, view FCDO accountable grant template attached in call documentation.
It seems that the main deliverable is stated as a 'research platform'. Is this essentially a repository of different tools and products (e.g., predictive model of response behaviours to hurricanes, comms guide for evacuation behaviour)? Following the grant period, will the FCDO continue the hosting of this presumably online platform? Should we consider this in budget proposals?	We would expect the lead applicant to present a vision for this platform, with the FCDO being an end user of the product rather than the designer. Effective options that can be integrated with <a href="#">Global Research and Technology Development</a> (a new gateway to FCDO funded research) should be considered. A detailed proposal will be appraised through a separate <a href="#">assurance process</a> at a later date.
What role do you see the network playing in early warnings compared to a more responsive post-event mode?	An early warning system is not in the scope of this project. We are interested in understanding how to better predict hazards and will share outputs with partners. This prediction may inform early warning initiatives but we do not expect in-country early warning systems to be established as part of the MHRN.
Please can you give a bit more steer about local versus global approaches? Are you expecting tools that are globally applicable (or at least across most LMICs) or more regionally-specific tools?	Ideally, the outputs would be tailored to the culture and location that is being supported. We consider this to be part of the people-centred approach that is a requirement for this project. However, we understand that this level of localisation may only be possible in a small range of contexts in the early stages of the grant. We would be keen to understand how you might build this capability in more contexts through the life of the grant.
Is there an option to have in the platform both public facing and FCDO only access area given role in providing advice to FCDO staff and decision makers	This should be possible and could be arranged between the lead applicant and the FCDO as the platform is designed by the MHRN. A detailed proposal will be appraised through a separate <a href="#">assurance process</a> at a later date.
Is it expected that the network will have a physical presence in every location where emergencies happen?	It would not be expected that you have someone physically present in every location. We expect involvement of organisations outside the UK, but do not expect this to cover every location where emergencies occur. We also do not mandate any forms deployment as part of this grant.
Are emergencies/hazards that affect the UK a particular priority, or is this taking a global perspective?	If a hazard overseas has impact on the UK, we would connect with the relevant departments and functions in UK government. Hazards that affect the UK are <u>not</u> prioritised. The focus of this project

	is international with priority given to hazards that cause suffering and loss of life overseas, particularly in LMICs.
How much of the work will be centred on specific disasters/emergencies (as opposed to, e.g., ongoing research on prevention/mitigation in a given context)? For example, might ongoing workstreams be cancelled or de-prioritised if FCDO demand work to shift to immediate disaster response?	Unless it were a very significant global event, we would not expect all ongoing research within MHRN to be deprioritised during an emergency. The design for how the network would handle emergencies while not disrupting ongoing core research should be considered by the lead applicant.
Are you expecting the proposal to detail specific research projects or will the 'hub' be expected to put out calls for proposals to fund research under specific themes?	The lead applicant will be expected to explain how the programme will be structured and how it will deliver against the expectations set out in the call document. We are not expecting detail on exact research projects or research questions at the EOI stage. We would expect that the research conducted by the network would likely be decided in collaboration with the FCDO, who can help the MHRN prioritise and consider user needs. The design of how the MHRN will decide who leads on research and how budgets are allocated will be down to the lead applicant. However, we would expect that any application would reflect the need for rapid delivery and coordination, which would likely better suit a collaborative network established over a longer period than a consultancy model where partners are brought in for individual pieces of work.
How many emergencies will the MHRN be expected to respond to?	The MHRN would certainly not be expected to respond to every emergency that occurs annually, given there are roughly 400 events a year that the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines as an emergency. Instead, the MHRN will be expected to offer best endeavours at responding to emergencies within the priority areas outlined in the call document. Additionally, the FCDO will need to draw on expertise in the network for potentially significant or overlooked emergencies. It is not possible to say how often this would occur, but frequency would not be daily or weekly, for example. The FCDO recognises that requesting frequent rapid responses during emergencies could disrupt the overall research programme and would, therefore, work with the lead applicant on setting expectations in the early stages of the network.
<b>FCDO involvement</b>	
Can we embed staff into the FCDO as part of the MRHN?	Yes, this is possible. We would like to hear your rationale for this and an explanation of the type of staff you would want to embed and what their role would be.

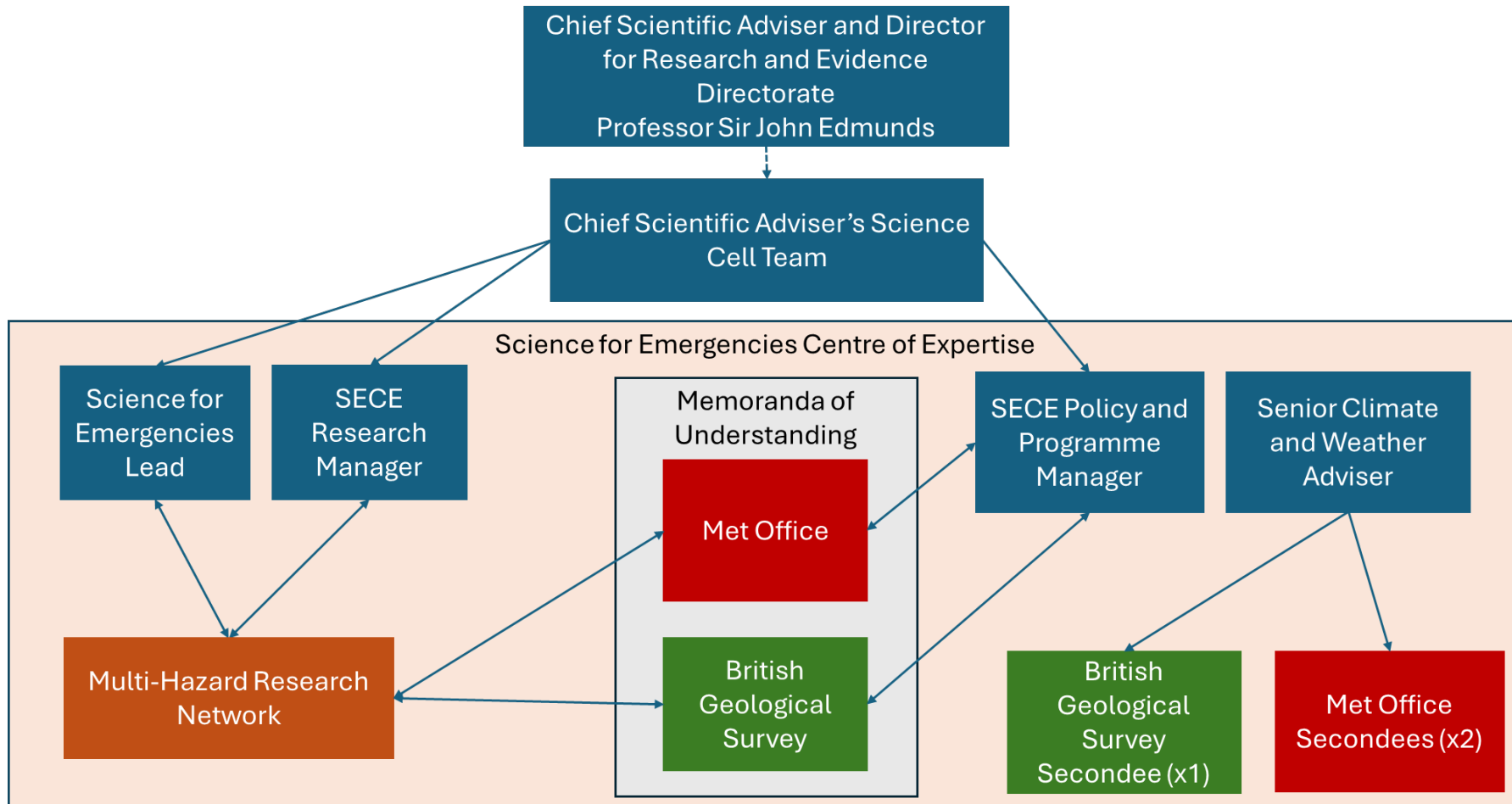
How will the launch of this MHRN network affect how the new HEROS 2.0 project is designed and implemented?	The MHRN is a separate programme, and it is not influencing the design or implementation of HEROS. Once both are set up, there may be scope to coordinate, particularly to ensure there is no duplication. However, this is not something we would expect to see articulated at the proposal stage.
How much FCDO staff time will be dedicated to working on this programme?	Within the Research and Evidence Directorate in the FCDO there are 4 FTE staff working on delivering the overarching programme through which the MHRN will be funded, including ensuring that the programme's outputs have greatest impact within the FCDO. It is expected that the lead applicant will work closely with these staff. Please see the diagram at the end of this document for details on these staff and the overarching programme.
How integrated will the MHRN be with FCDO? Will there be dedicated FCDO staff to work as part of the MHRN, or will this primarily work through the FCDO secretariat commissioning research?	The integration between the MHRN and the team within FCDO is up to the lead applicant. The current staff within the FCDO are focussed on delivering the overarching programme through which the MHRN will be funded, including ensuring that the programme's outputs have greatest impact within the FCDO. It may be that the lead applicant will want to embed staff in that team. We do not mandate any particular structure for the MHRN, but you will have clear points of contact within FCDO.
Will you provide more info on the "In house capabilities and research programmes" and "Cross Government Capabilities" to help understand how MHRN would complement and work with them?	Please see a diagram of the components of the overarching programme at the end of this document. Research programmes funded by the FCDO are viewable on <a href="#">DevTracker</a> . Cross-government capabilities include those delivered by other departments during emergencies that fall within their <a href="#">remit</a> and the cross-cutting <a href="#">Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies</a> .
How does this expert network feed into existing networks that the government/Cabinet Office already has compiled, e.g. SAGE, for different emergencies?	We are keen for the MHRN not to duplicate any work currently undertaken by other networks for emergencies. The core differences between the MHRN and other available mechanisms for understanding emergencies in UK government are that the MHRN will have an international focus (particularly in LMICs) and that there is a research programme that underpins the expertise offered.
Will the network have access to lessons identified from previous FCDO responses?	FCDO may be able to share lessons learned from previous responses with the lead applicant once they are appointed.
Will the FCDO be working with the equivalent in other governments in relation to this work as they could also benefit from this research?	The FCDO works closely with other governments through its international posts (the UK's embassies and consulates overseas) and, therefore, they may be end users of some of this research.
<b>Finance and budget</b>	

What balance of the budget would be expected to go towards staffing fixed posts for the entirety of the three years, versus holding back funds to commission new research/ers?	Applicants will propose a detailed budget split, ensuring it aligns with the overarching proposal and delivery strategy. The approach should remain flexible to accommodate evolving plans and shifting priorities. Resource allocation will be guided by a balanced consideration of delivering high-quality research, value for money and sustaining operational efficiency. Please note that budgets are not required at EOI stage; they will be assessed as part of full proposals.
How will the funding for LMIC partners be managed?	It will be for the lead applicant to decide how they structure their network, including how they allocate funding with partners and how they manage these downstream functions.
Will there be an expectation for set day rates among the consortium/partners?	Full proposals will be assessed for value for money using the '4Es' framework—Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Equity—and must provide a detailed, transparent budget breakdown, including supply chain costs, risks, and any cost-sharing or savings initiatives.
Will the award be managed as one award or multiple awards?	<u>One</u> award will be granted and managed by the lead applicant. The maximum overall award is £15m total, with per annum spending at no more £5m. Payments will be made quarterly in arrears once agreed financial reporting documentation has been approved by FCDO team.



**Table: Eligible lead applicant types**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>UK academic institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Universities</li> <li>○ Research institutes</li> <li>○ Higher education colleges</li> </ul>
<b>UK-based not-for-profit organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UK registered charities</li> <li>○ Civil society organisations</li> <li>○ Foundations and trusts</li> </ul>
<b>UK-based multilateral organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ United Nations agencies in the UK</li> <li>○ Other intergovernmental organisations in the UK</li> </ul>
<b>UK public sector bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Government departments (UK and overseas)</li> <li>○ Local authorities</li> <li>○ Public health bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-existing UK-based partnerships and consortia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Formal consortia led by an eligible institution (e.g. academic-NGO partnerships)</li> </ul>

**Diagram: Overarching Science for Emergencies Centre of Expertise**

*In this diagram, navy boxes indicate FCDO's in-house staff. Memoranda of understanding (MoUs) have been established between the FCDO and both Met Office and British Geological Survey. The priority hazards to be covered in the Multi-Hazard Research Network complement rather than duplicate the research work in the MoUs. The two MoUs also include seconded experts, as shown in the diagram.*