

WUN Research Development Fund 2020

Introduction

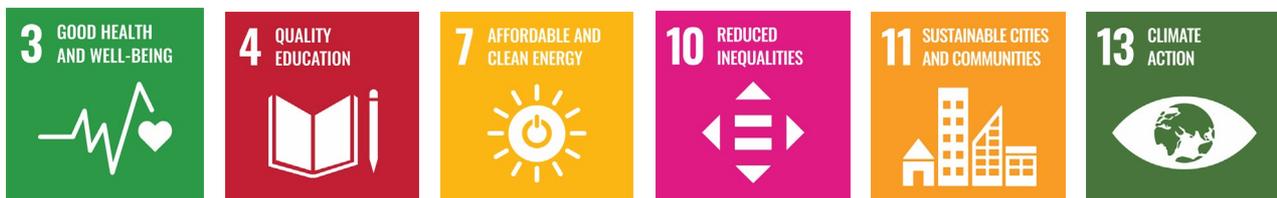
The WUN Research Development Fund (RDF) provides grants of up to £10,000¹, for one year to foster research collaborations among academic staff (faculty) at WUN member universities. Grants from the RDF are intended to help stimulate larger collaborative projects that will strengthen WUN and make the collaborating partners competitive for major awards.

The RDF supports research projects that the partnership can pursue with distinct advantage. In line with the WUN Strategic Plan 2020-2023, those will generally fall under the network's principal research theme of *sustainable development*.

WUN RDF 2020: Sustainable Recovery

As the world approaches investment in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing attention is being paid to doing this in ways that will be sustainable, which is aligned with WUN's strategic goals. This presents the network with a unique opportunity to initiate projects that anticipate the major investments that will be made over the coming years, and enlarge the impact and global recognition of WUN.

With the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as our points of reference, and following discussion within and among the Global Challenge Steering Groups, we encourage proposals that address sustainable recovery in one or more the following areas:



For information on what each goal encompasses (detailed by the targets that accompany them), click the corresponding icon above.

Previous applications to the special WUN COVID-19 call held in May 2020 are also eligible for submission at the discretion of your university (subject to the maximum of two proposals that may be submitted by each member). Contact your local WUN Coordinator for more details.

What are the attributes of a strong project?

1. Projects should be academically rigorous, and address problems of consequence within the domain of *sustainable development*.
2. Projects should establish or strengthen collaborative linkages among member universities, and should engage at least three member universities across at least two countries. The collaboration may include non-WUN universities and external partners but must have an active core of WUN member universities. Where projects engage members from more than one WUN region², this will be seen as an advantage. Projects that include newer members of WUN as collaborative partners are especially encouraged.
3. Projects should help enlarge the impact and global recognition of WUN. Projects that have the following attributes are especially encouraged:
 - They address problems that are aligned with major international funding initiatives from national governments and/or international agencies and foundations.
 - Their outcomes are likely to attract broad public interest.

¹ Currency converter (set on 15 July 2020): GBP£1 = AUD1.80; BRL6.76; CAD1.71; CHF1.18; CNY8.80; EUR1.10; GHS7.24; HKD9.76; MXN28.15; NOK11.75; NZD1.92; TWD37.14; USD1.26; ZAR20.95

² WUN regions are defined as North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

4. Projects should be aimed at problems that the partnership can pursue with distinct advantage. WUN is likely to have special advantage when the research problem:
 - Requires distinctive constellations of talent that are best assembled (or can only be assembled) by drawing on multiple partners.
 - Presents opportunities for comparative analysis, stemming from member universities' locations in different geographical and cultural contexts.
 - Requires access to unique environments/resources possessed by one or more partners.
5. Project plans should demonstrate the responsible use of resources, including a sensitivity towards the environmental impact of their implementation.

In the past, awards made from the RDF required matching support from the applicants' home universities. Recognising the financial stress that several of our members are currently experiencing, matching cash contributions (nor the letters of support that would have accompanied them) are **not** required in the 2020 round.

How are applications assessed?

Applications are reviewed and ranked by a committee made up of at least six members of the WUN Academic Advisory Group, including its Chair, the Chairs of the Global Challenge Steering Groups and the WUN Executive Director.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Objectives**– the project falls within the scope of the RDF 2020 Focus Area, is of high academic quality, and addresses a new research problem or takes an existing WUN research program in a *significantly* new direction.
- **Teamwork** – the program involves a team of researchers drawn from a range of relevant regions and disciplines.
- **WUN Advantage**—the set of individuals involved, and/or the environment and resources available to them, confers a distinctive advantage in tackling the research problem.
- **Breadth of Impact** – the outcome of the project is likely to be of significant public interest.
- **Sustainability**– the research problem chosen lies within the scope of funding initiatives from national or international agencies, and project completion is likely to make the applicants competitive for such funds.

What can RDF funds be used for?

Eligible expenditures are detailed in the *Permitted Uses of WUN Funds* annex.

How do I apply?

The RDF is open to academic staff (faculty members) at WUN member universities. Applications must first be approved for submission through an internal review at the principal investigator's university and submitted to WUN with the sign-off of the local WUN Coordinator. Each member university may submit up to two applications on which its academic staff (faculty) are principal investigators. There is no limit on the number of applications on which an individual can be a co-investigator.

Applications, submitted online through the WUN online application portal, are due by **Friday, 23 October 2020 at 17.00 GMT**. Internal deadlines at many member universities will be earlier. **Web access to the online application will open on 30 July 2020**.

Prospective applicants considering a submission should contact their Coordinator well before the application deadline. The Coordinator will be able to provide advice about eligibility, preparing the application, internal deadlines, and the university's internal review. Contact information for your local Coordinator can be found at the bottom of this document.

Applications must be accompanied by:

- Program budget outlining key areas of expenditure (a common template will be provided).
- CV of the principal investigator (1 page maximum) with URL links to partner investigators.

Applications that are incomplete or received after the closing date will not be considered.

The outcome of the review will be announced on **11 December 2020**. For successful applicants, award funds in GBP will be deposited in February 2021 via bank transfer to the principal investigator's nominated university account after receipt of an invoice from the awardee's university, and the establishment of the project page on the WUN website.

What are my financial, reporting and acknowledgement obligations?

Awarded funds should be expended within 12 months. Funds unspent at the conclusion of the 12-month award period may be recalled by WUN.

Principal investigators are required to

- Establish, with the help of your local WUN Coordinator, a simple project page on the WUN website.
- At 12 months, produce a short video (approximately five minutes in length) that can be shared publicly and details the project and activities/outcomes to date.
- Acknowledge support from WUN on any publications and presentations that result from the RDF-funded project.
- Submit a brief report after the initial year of the project and annually for the life of the project³.

Annex: Permitted Uses of RDF Funds

Please note that, should you identify categories of expenditure that would benefit the success of your project and are not listed here, the WUN Secretariat would be happy to respond to your queries.

- A maximum of one in-person event that requires air travel (for example planning workshops, international project team meetings or conferences). Costs associated with virtual meetings are not subject to this restriction.
- Exploratory research initiatives
- Formation of collaborative networks
- Engagement of students through remote guest lectures and master classes
- Access to necessary software
- External project website production and development
- Data collection
- Development and implementation of survey instruments
- Access to online databases
- Access to general samples from panel survey companies
- Contribution to open access fees of up to £1500
- Primary data collection costs
- Activities related to other data collection (Costs of /acquiring/copying policy documents and literature where these are not available via institutional libraries/databases)
- Transcription costs
- Consumable equipment costs for the sole use of the project such as primers, probes, reagents, pipettes etc.
- Prototype production
- Development, production and dissemination reports
- Up to £500 to support the cost of a short project video at the end of the year

What expenditures are not funded by the RDF?

The RDF does not support management fees, salaries or salary supplementation, equipment depreciation, scholarships, course fees and bench fees. Where funds are to be used for air travel, only economy class fares are permissible. In the interest of the environment, while also recognising the value of face-to-face interaction, RDF funds may support no more than one in-person event that requires air travel (for example an international project team meeting or conference). When planning your project, we recommend that you consider potential travel restrictions due to the pandemic that could remain into 2021. WUN encourages the use of deploying virtual alternatives to assemble the project team whenever possible.

³ Annual reporting, mandated by the WUN Partnership Board (member university Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Rectors), is essential to tracking outcomes and the return on investment for WUN. WUN will send a reminder to the online survey annually via your local Coordinator. Investigators who fail to submit satisfactory reports will be ineligible for future WUN funding.