

Opportunity for award-holders in the UK Ocean Acidification research programme to seek supplementary support for added-value activities

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper gives information on the opportunity for participants in the UK Ocean Acidification research programme (UKOA) to seek additional financial support to assist added-value activities through three components: Scheme A, international and national travel (primarily for international conference participation and national knowledge exchange activities); Scheme B, international research collaborations, and Scheme C, national research collaborations, synthesis activities and end-user engagement.

1.2 In all cases, the new activities made possible by such additional funding must:

- contribute to the UKOA programme aims and objectives
- maintain the overall balance set out in the programme's Implementation Plan
- be consistent with consortium-specific aims and objectives
- be carried out within existing end-dates of research grant support
- assist the cost-effective delivery of the UKOA programme as a whole.

1.3 A total of around £500k is expected to be made available for UKOA added-value activities over the remaining lifetime of the programme (2011-12 to 2014-15) to cover all three schemes. Whilst the relative support between the schemes will depend on the numbers and quality of support requests, around £50-100k is expected to be available for Scheme A, through a rolling assessment process for awards up to £2k. For Schemes B and C (for awards up to £40k), there will be two funding rounds, in November 2011 and, provisionally in November 2012, with at least £150k available for the second round.

1.4 UKOA participants for the purpose of this opportunity are considered to be PIs and Co-Is of research grants, other UKOA-supported members of their research groups, and UKOA-supported research students. Proposals must however be submitted by research grant holders (PIs/Co-Is), except for Scheme A (as detailed below). Capital costs are not allowed.

2. Scheme A: Support to assist international and national travel

2.1 Support for international travel was excluded from UKOA research grant awards made in 2010, since full funding for the programme as a whole was then unconfirmed. Furthermore, details of many potentially-relevant international meetings were not known when UKOA proposals were prepared and submitted in the previous year. It is now considered fairer for PIs and Co-Is to re-define their funding requests for international travel, with funding decisions to be made on a programmatic basis, rather than to proceed on the basis of original submissions.

2.2 National conference attendance is expected to be covered from existing awards and other sources. However, UKOA consortia who do not have dedicated funding for knowledge exchange (KE) activities are encouraged to develop relationships with national end-users¹ (non-academic stakeholders, benefitting from research-related knowledge and skills) by obtaining additional national travel and subsistence for that purpose.

2.3 The maximum funding for either international or national T&S support is £2,000 per bid, and value for money will be carefully scrutinised. Thus for international travel, most awards are likely to be below £2,000, with a guidance value of £1,000 or less for a European meeting and £1,500 for elsewhere in the world, to fully or partly cover travel, accommodation, food and registration fee (if applicable). Only one individual per research group (= PIs, Co-Is and researchers at the same institution, supported by the same UKOA award) would be expected to seek

¹ End-users may be members of national and devolved government departments and agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

support for a specific meeting, and bids need to be endorsed by the lead PI of the relevant consortium.

2.4 Bids for additional T&S support for UKOA research students should include endorsement from their lead supervisor, explaining why costs cannot be covered by the Research Training Support Grant (RSTG) component of their award.

2.5 For national, KE-related travel, a single award is expected to cover several meetings with end-users, that may be limited to a single organisation or stakeholder group, or may cover a wider range of public and private sector research-users. Proposed activities should complement existing programmatic KE work, building on the wider linkages provided by the international Ocean Acidification Reference User Group². To avoid duplication of effort, early discussion with the UKOA KE Coordinator, Dr Carol Turley (ct@pml.ac.uk) is strongly advised.

2.6 A modest claim for consumables/recurrent may be included as ‘other reasonable necessary expenses’ within the KE-related £2k support. However, if these are the main costs incurred, or the total cost of the planned activities is greater than £2k, support should be sought under Scheme C. Only one individual per research group (= PIs, Co-Is and researchers at the same institution, supported by the same UKOA award) would be expected to seek national T&S support to develop end-user engagement.

2.7 There is no closing date for requests for international and national T&S support, that should be made to the UKOA Science Coordinator, Dr Phil Williamson (p.williamson@uea.ac.uk). The following information should be included, noting that much of the information is the same for both international and national, KE-related support, but that there are also important differences:

<i>International T&S</i>	<i>National T&S (KE related)</i>
Name of individual proposing to travel	
Name and venue of meeting, conference or workshop	Name(s) of end-user organisation(s) and main contact(s)
Specific travel dates	Start and end dates of engagement activity
Title and authorship of proposed contribution (eg accepted, submitted or planned oral or poster presentation) or other participatory role	Summary of planned activities
Breakdown of main estimated costs, based on economy/low-cost fares and other reasonable necessary expenses	
Expected contribution towards costs from named other sources	
Additional project and programmatic benefits that may be obtained, e.g. liaison with specific research groups, involvement in subsequent publication; planning or implementing collaborative work	Additional project and programmatic benefits that may be obtained, e.g. better links and understanding between programme and specific user needs; involvement in briefing paper; planning or implementing collaborative work
Supporting statement from the lead PI of the relevant consortium <i>For research students:</i> Supporting statement from lead supervisor	
Any additional relevant background, e.g. whether bid included in original proposal.	Short supporting statement(s) from relevant end-user(s),

2.8 The decision on whether or not support will be awarded will normally be made within 4-6 weeks following receipt of application, based on the advice of the Chair of the UKOA Programme Advisory Group and at least one other member of the UKOA Programme Executive Board.

2.9 Reimbursement of approved costs will be made to individual researchers by the finance office of Plymouth Marine Laboratory after the international or national travel has been made. This will require completion and submission of a PML-UKOA T&S claim form (to be provided when T&S support bids are approved), enclosing original receipts and tickets as evidence of actual costs. If institutional invoices, rather than personal claims, are involved, the need for such arrangements should be identified at the time the original request is made.

² www.epoca-project.eu/index.php/what-do-we-do/outreach/rug.html

3. Scheme B: Support to assist international research collaborations

3.1 Supplementary support for existing UKOA research grant awards is available during the lifetime of the programme for added-value activities involving international partners with full economic cost of up to £50k, i.e. actual support to the university or other research organisation of £40k (based on NERC support of 80% of FEC).

3.2 There is flexibility in what activities may be covered within the generic requirements identified above (1.2). Nevertheless, cost-effectiveness and a well-balanced portfolio are important considerations, favouring funding requests for less than the maximum amount. Thus supplementation is not intended to support substantive new projects, for which other funding mechanisms are more appropriate; e.g. NERC's standard grant schemes, KE project awards, and International Opportunities Fund³.

3.3 Three specific opportunities for international research collaborations (via fieldwork or other involvement) are identified as potentially timely for the UKOA programme:

- i) Joint studies with the German BIOACID programme (www.bioacid.de), including working exchanges by researchers and research students. Planning for Phase 2 of BIOACID (2012-2015) is currently underway; details are expected to be available in September/October 2011. If the UKOA-supported work is directly dependent on a BIOACID 2 project proposal, the UKOA award may need to have 'approval in principle' status until the funding outcome of the BIOACID 2 proposal is known, in May-June 2012.
- ii) Joint work with US research groups; for example, building on links developed by UKOA researchers through the 2011 US-UK Collaboration Development Award scheme⁴, and collaborations with existing and proposed US ocean acidification projects supported by NSF and/or NOAA⁵.
- iii) Joint work with the MedSeA programme (Mediterranean Sea Acidification in a changing climate, 2011-2014; <http://medsea-project.eu>), an EU-funded initiative that includes experiments using pelagic mesocosms⁶ in 2012 and 2013, a land-based mesocosm study (CRETACOSMOS) and socio-economic components.

Collaborations with other non-UK research groups are also in scope, e.g. building on partnerships developed through the EU-funded European Ocean Acidification programme (EPOCA; www.epoca-project.eu), particularly if high added value can be demonstrated.

3.4 Bids for such support should be made to the UKOA Programme Administrator, Jessica Batchelor (jetc@nerc.ac.uk) based on a Case for Support of no more than 2 pages together with a summary of requested finances based on standard NERC headings (Annex 1). Supporting statements should be included from i) the lead PI of the relevant UKOA consortium; and ii) partner research groups/organisations. However, there is no need for information on Previous Track Record nor CVs of PIs and researchers (on the basis that these will have already been provided with original UKOA proposals).

3.5 The first UKOA funding round for supplementation to support international research collaborations has a closing date of **14 November 2011**, with funding decisions expected in January 2012. The second funding round is expected to have a closing date in mid-November 2012. For

³ Information on NERC International Opportunities Fund at www.nerc.ac.uk/research/international/iof/events/ao2.asp

⁴ Details at www.oceanacidification.org.uk/latest_news.aspx (04 April 2011 entry), as supported by the FCO-BIS Science & Innovation Network

⁵ For projects involving collaboration with US researchers, contact with the NSF OA Coordinator (Dave Garrison dgarriso@nsf.gov) and/or the NOAA OA coordinator (Libby Jewett, libby.jewett@noaa.gov) is strongly encouraged. Also see OCB information at <http://whoi.edu/page.do?pid=49579>.

⁶ For mesocosm work in 2012, the EU-funded MESOAQUA project (<http://mesoaqua.eu>) may provide an alternative source of support. Application deadline: 30 September 2011.

time-limited opportunities at relatively low cost (e.g. cruise participation) arising before or between those closing dates, a request for earlier consideration can be made.

3.6 Bids for such support will be assessed by the UKOA Programme Advisory Group with advice from independent experts as required. If successful, supplementation will be made to existing awards to cover the additional costs. The UKOA Data Policy will apply to data arising from the additional support, and relevant outputs and outcomes are expected to be reported through the annual ROD/OPM exercise.

4. Scheme C: Support to assist national research collaborations, synthesis activities, and research-user engagement

4.1 Around half of the total available for UKOA added-value activities is expected to be made available to enhance UKOA national linkages, programme integration and synthesis, ‘pathways to impact’, and knowledge exchange activities not covered by existing awards, contracts and programmatic arrangements. The relative support between Schemes B and C will however depend on the numbers and quality of the bids received at each funding round.

4.2 As described in paragraph 3.1 above for Scheme B, individual awards will be up to £40k (£50k FEC) as supplementation to existing research grants. Cost effectiveness and a well-balanced portfolio are important considerations, favouring funding requests for less than the maximum amount. The proposal should clearly identify the additional project and programmatic benefits that are expected to be obtained.

4.3 Application procedures are the same as for Scheme B (paragraphs 3.4 - 3.6; Annex 1) with the same first-round closing date, **14 November 2011**. A greater focus on programme synthesis is expected for the second funding round, provisionally mid-November 2012, for activities that could continue until 2014-15.

4.4 As noted under 2.4 above, proposals to develop end-user engagement may be limited to a single organisation or stakeholder group, or may cover a wider range of public and private sector research-users. Proposed activities should complement the linkages provided by the international Ocean Acidification Reference User Group. To avoid duplication of existing effort, early discussion with the UKOA KE Coordinator, Dr Carol Turley (ct@pml.ac.uk) is strongly advised. Letters of support from end-users and other partners should be included, identifying their interests and confirming co-support (if applicable).

Annex 1

For UKOA added-value activity bids under Schemes B and C, the Case for Support should clearly identify the existing award to be supplemented (quoting NERC reference number). A summary of requested resources should also be provided, based on the following format and submitted with the approval of the PI’s host institution. Additional information on breakdown of any staff costs should be available if required.

Summary fund heading	Fund heading	FEC	NERC contribution	% NERC contribution
Directly incurred	Staff			80
	Travel & subsistence			80
	Other costs			80
	Sub-total			
Directly allocated	Investigators			80
	Estates costs			80
	Other directly allocated			80
	Sub-total			
Indirect costs	Indirect costs			80
Exceptions	Staff			100
	Other costs			100
	Sub total			
Total				