



Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA)

**Announcement of Opportunity
Deadline 3rd March 2010**



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Announcement of Opportunities

The Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) programme is a partnership that brings together the Department for International Development (DFID), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to deliver a planned 7 year interdisciplinary research programme, with a total budget of £40.5 million.

ESPA is launched under the umbrella of the Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) partnership (www.lwec.org.uk).

ESPA seeks to generate the evidence on ecosystem services, their full value and links to sustainable poverty reduction so as to equip end users and decision makers with the knowledge on how to manage ecosystems better.

It is anticipated that ESPA will be delivered through three funding rounds: in addition to this announcement of opportunity, calls are planned for mid 2011 and late 2013. A series of activities run by the ESPA Directorate will also contribute to ESPA's delivery.

This announcement of opportunity invites proposals for the first substantive ESPA call. This first call is split into two funding streams with three submission opportunities.

Funding Stream 1 is a one-off opportunity for shorter-term, innovative, conceptual development type projects submitted as a Programme Framework grant.

Funding Stream 2 has two submission opportunities, one to win catalyst funding through a Partnership and Project Development grant (2a) in preparation for the second submission opportunity for a larger Research Consortium grant (2b). Note that it is not a requirement for submissions to the research consortia scheme (2b) to have applied for, or been successfully funded through a Partnership and Project Development grant (2a).

Funding Stream 1

1. Programme Framework Grants

The purpose of the **Programme Framework** awards is to “kick start” the development of the new and innovative concepts, methodologies and / or models needed to ensure the successful delivery of ESPA's objectives.

Closing date for ‘Notification of intent to submit’ documents is 29th January 2010 (see Section 5.5)

Closing date for applications - 3rd March 2010, 16:00 UK local time

Awards of up to 2 years duration, up to the value of £250,000 GBP (FEC¹)

Funding Stream 2

2a. Partnership and Project Development Grants

These awards will provide catalyst funding to support south-south² and north-south consortia formation and proposal writing, in order to develop a proposal to be submitted to the Research Consortium call (2b) or to future ESPA funding rounds.

Closing date for applications - 3rd March 2010, 16:00 UK local time

Awards of up to 6 months duration, up to the value of £50,000 GBP (FEC)

¹ FEC – full Economic Cost, is the full cost required to carry out the research including any overheads and academic time. Further information on this is given in section 6.3

² For countries referred to as ‘south’ in this document refer to those listed in Annex 3

2b. Research Consortium Grants

These are larger scale research activities that will deliver the key research for ESPA to deliver on its objectives.

Note: This call will not open until September 2010 (exact date tbc)
Anticipated closing date December 2010 (exact date tbc)
Awards of 3-5 years duration, of a value between £0.5-5M GBP (FEC)

Please note:

Section 1-3 in the following documentation relates to all the funding schemes described (Programme Framework awards, Partnership and Project Development awards and Research Consortium awards)

Sections 4-7 relate specifically to the Partnership and Project Development and Programme Framework schemes, which are currently open for applications with a closing date of 3rd March 2010.

The call for Research Consortium awards will be re-issued in September 2010, with updated application process guidance, relevant to this particular scheme.

Applicants' attention is called to sections 5.3 and 5.4, which explains the Je-S registration process that is required to submit an application. This process can take several weeks. Therefore applicants who are considering submitting a proposal are strongly advised to initiate this process by contacting Je-S as soon as possible.

Important note: Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance in the NERC Grants Handbook³ or Je-S Help text, **the information in this document supercedes that provided in the NERC Handbooks and Je-S and should be followed as stated.**

Contents

<i>Summary</i>	7
1.0 Background	7
2.0 ESPA Scope	8
2.1 Overall aims and objectives	8
2.2 Geographic scope	9
2.3 Research themes	10
2.4 Capacity Building in ESPA	14
2.5 Uptake and Impact	15
2.6 ESPA Research Approach	16
3.0 Available funding schemes	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Programme Framework Grants	19
3.2.a Partnership and Project Development Grants	20
3.2.b Research consortium grants	21
4.0 Assessment Criteria	22
4.1 Programme Framework grants assessment criteria	22
4.2 Partnership and Project Development grants	23
5.0 Application process	25
5.1 Introduction	25
5.2 Eligibility Criteria	27
5.3 Registering an organisation on Je-S	28
5.4 Registering as an Individual on Je-S	29
5.5 Notification of Intention to submit a Programme Framework grant	31
5.6 Joint Proposals	31
6.0 Application components	33
6.1 Je-S Proforma	34
6.2 Case for Support	34
6.3 Finances	35
6.4 Impact plans	37
6.5 Letters of Support from Project Partners	38
7.0 Submitting your proposal	38
8.0 Assessment Process	39
8.1 Scheme eligibility	39

³ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/researchgrants/>

8.2	Peer Review	39
9.0	Reporting.....	39
10.0	Data Policy	39
11.0	Checklist and key information	41
11.1	Summary of Requirements for Applications.....	41
11.2	Key dates	42
11.3	Key points to remember	42
11.4	Further Guidance	42
11.5	Contacts	43
12.0	Glossary	43

Box and Figure contents

Box 1	ESPA Objectives.....	8
Box 2	ESPA Research Themes	8
Box 3	ESPA Guiding Principles.....	18
Box 4	Researcher roles.....	26
Fig 1	Process for Je-S registration.....	30

Annexes – separate documents on the website

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao4.asp>

Annex 1	Step-By-Step Guide to creating a Je-S account
Annex 2	Step – by step guide to completing the Je-S application
Annex 3	DAC list of developing countries (from www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist)
Annex 4	Finance template spreadsheet
Annex 5	Financial conditions and funding categories
Annex 6	FAQ's

Summary

The Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) research programme aims to deliver high quality, cutting-edge research that will improve our understanding of the way ecosystems function, the services they provide and the relationship with the political economy and sustainable growth⁴. The research will provide the evidence and tools to enable decision makers and end users to manage ecosystems sustainably and in a way that contributes to poverty reduction.

1.0 Background

Ecosystems provide a range of services that are important to us all, but our intrinsic dependency on ecosystem services has been largely misunderstood, undervalued and ignored by decision-makers. This has resulted in practices that have led to consistent declines in ecosystem services delivery: 60% of the world's ecosystem services are being degraded or used unsustainably⁵. This deterioration is affecting growth and development progress, and will continue to do so into the future. Despite this, we struggle to know how to deal with it.

Some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups, especially those living in rural areas, are most directly dependent on ecosystem services and therefore most vulnerable to sudden changes in ecosystem service provision and to poor ecosystems management, particularly changes that leave them exposed to natural and human disasters such as drought, famine and floods. Poor people are also less able to access substitutes to services provided by ecosystems.

Whilst there is some growing momentum around 'sustainable', 'green' and 'inclusive' growth, decision makers have continued to promote policies and processes that have brought about massive ecosystem changes and often with little benefit for the poor. This is frequently because, unlike other economic goods, ecosystem services are considered 'free' and costs and benefits associated with their exploitation are therefore not fully valued or captured by market mechanisms. When treated as common property, with poorly defined property rights, they are also subject to unsustainable exploitation.

Impacts arising from exogenous change, such as climate change and economic volatility, are accelerating ecosystem deterioration and presenting much more acute policy and management challenges. We urgently need better understanding of how ecosystems function and provide critical services, and how these services relate to and interact with the political economy in order to develop policies and mechanisms with sufficient capability to deal with large scale change, increasing uncertainty and new forms of risk, especially as it affects the poor.

ESPA seeks to do this through addressing the following key knowledge gaps:

- the drivers of ecosystem degradation: internal and external; physical, political and socio-economic;
- ecosystem functions and dynamics, particularly in relation to critical thresholds and irreversible change;
- the full value (from a multi-stakeholder perspective) of ecosystem services; and
- drivers of sustainability, identifying positive incentives for sustainable management of ecosystems services for poverty reduction.

For further information about the ESPA programme, see the ESPA Programme Memorandum at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

⁴ In this call, sustainable growth should be seen to encompass all related concepts including inclusive growth, low carbon growth, carbon resilient growth, green growth and environmentally sustainable growth.

⁵ As identified by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which is a state of the art scientific appraisal, carried out between 2001 – 2005 focused on the linkages between ecosystems and human well-being, and, in particular on ecosystem services. It involved 1360 experts worldwide. See www.millenniumassessment.org/.

2.0 *ESPA Scope*

2.1 Overall aims and objectives

The purpose of ESPA is “to positively influence end users and decision makers through the generation of cutting edge evidence on ecosystem services, their full value, and links to sustainable poverty reduction”⁶.

In doing so, ESPA will contribute to the overall ESPA goal of “sustainably managed ecosystems contributing to poverty reduction and inclusive growth in developing countries”⁷.

ESPA will fulfil its purpose through funding a portfolio of research projects and activities that should be designed to address the following four objectives:

Box 1: ESPA Objectives

- The creation of a strong research and evidence base on the interface between ecosystem services, their dynamics and management, human use and pathways to sustainable poverty reduction.
- Development of innovative, interdisciplinary research and methodologies, delivering tools and approaches that enable the simulation and prediction of socio-ecological responses to multiple drivers.
- High uptake of research outputs and synthesis by early and on-going engagement and communication with policy makers, practitioners and decision makers.
- Enhanced capacity of southern researchers to conduct, lead and use/communicate high quality ESPA-type interdisciplinary research, including through effective north-south and south-south research partnerships.

Research consortia in particular will be expected to address all four objectives in their design and implementation, to enable the overall ESPA programme to achieve its goal and purpose. The balance of focus and effort between these objectives should be appropriate to the aim of the research and the purpose of the grant scheme.

To guide researchers on the scope of research, six themes have been identified. These themes have arisen out of a two year scoping phase for ESPA and represent some common findings from across the situational analyses⁸ as well as the intersection of research priorities across DFID, NERC and ESRC. They are not an exclusive list and should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. The themes are described further in Section 2.3, but a summary is shown in Box 2.

Box 2: ESPA Research Themes

- Impact of climate variability and change on the water cycle, ecosystem services and water security.
- Ecosystem services, disease ecology and human well-being.
- Forests, land use change and ecosystem services.
- Biodiversity and ecosystem services—ensuring a sustainable flow of goods and services to enhance human well-being.
- Strengthening the management of coastal ecosystems to support sustained ecosystem service delivery for reduced poverty and vulnerability in coastal zones.
- The political economy of sustainable ecosystem services for poverty reduction and sustainable growth.

⁶ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/analyses.asp>

Research projects will also be expected to deliver on the capacity building and research uptake objectives listed above; further details on these requirements are given in section 2.5.

To deliver high quality and cutting-edge research with real impact, ESPA research will need to improve our understanding of how to link ecosystem services more effectively into poverty reduction and sustainable and growth. Therefore, ESPA research projects should make substantial contributions towards building the evidence base and tools that will help decision makers find ways of addressing the following overarching questions:

- What is the role of ecosystem services in providing safety nets and diversifying livelihood options for the poor and vulnerable? How can these ecosystem services be managed to increase the resilience of these groups, bring about new or alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities, and reduce their exposure to stresses and shocks?
- What is the contribution of sustainably managed ecosystem services to national and regional wealth (and related poverty reduction benefits) and key economic sectors? Can we better manage ecosystems to deliver sustainable growth⁹, capturing the full range of ecosystem services values?
- Which ecosystems and ecosystem services are at greatest risk of reaching their environmental limits and tipping points, including those that might trip into irreversible change and cause large scale livelihood and development losses?
- What opportunities might ecosystem services provide for pathways out of poverty, including from emerging large-scale sustainable growth opportunities, e.g. markets for carbon sequestration?
- How do impacts arising from exogenous change affect the provision of ecosystem services for poverty reduction? How do declines in ecosystem services increase vulnerability and reduce resilience to exogenous changes?
- How does the political economy and governance context drive decision making about the use and management of ecosystem services at different levels? How can we institutionalise and incentivise better decision-making on ecosystem services for poverty reduction, while building responsive policies and programmes to meet the 'voice and accountability' demands of the poor?

2.2 Geographic scope

The programme will work mainly in four regions of the world that experience significant challenges in managing their ecosystem services in the context of poverty reduction and sustainable growth. The regions identified are:

- South Asia;
- China;
- Sub-Saharan Africa; and,
- Amazonia.

Projects will be expected to work mainly in these regions but, with appropriate justification, other regions will also be considered. Cross-regional / country-country research, engagements and partnerships are strongly encouraged. A cross-country project might, for example, deal with common ecosystems spanning several countries within one region.

ESPA research will be expected to use place-based case studies within these regions to integrate across spatial and time scales, as appropriate. This is because ESPA recognises that interactions

⁹ In this call, sustainable growth should be seen to encompass all related concepts including inclusive growth, low carbon growth, carbon resilient growth, green growth and environmentally sustainable growth.

between nature and people and the resulting feedbacks are dynamic, location and time specific, occur at different scales and respond to a multitude of different drivers.

2.3 Research themes

The research themes presented below represent some common findings from across the situational analyses¹⁰ as well as the intersection of research priorities across DFID, NERC and ESRC. They were subjected to scrutiny and revision by focus groups consisting of academics and other experts who were charged with articulating the overarching challenge for each theme, along with the expected outcome and some examples of realistic outputs.

The themes, expected outcomes and example outputs are set out below. These expected outcomes and outputs are not an exclusive list and researchers can identify new and relevant research issues within these themes as relevant to the overall ESPA purpose and objectives.

Individual themes should not be viewed as separate, independent or stand-alone, but rather as a description of components of the ESPA research landscape to guide applicants during this first call. There are many overlaps between and across the themes, and some themes (particularly political economy) cut across all other themes. Equally there are many issues that will impact more than one of the ESPA regions identified (as well as other regions). Researchers should feel free to develop proposals that cut across and combine elements of some or all of the themes (and other issues, if appropriate) and regions, in order to deliver the objectives and hypotheses proposed.

2.3.1 Water theme: Impacts of climate variability and change on the water cycle, ecosystem services and water security

Major risks and uncertainties surround the extent to which climate variability, climate change and other changes could modify the water cycle in regions relevant to ESPA. For example, changing patterns of rainfall, snow and ice melt, could affect transfers of water through soils and ecosystems and hence river flows and groundwater recharge. Such changes present potential risks and benefits to society. ESPA research will aim to look at ways and means of understanding these processes, risks and benefits better, and integrating that understanding more effectively into poverty reduction and sustainable growth¹¹.

Expected outcome:

Increased water security for developing countries in the context of environmental and climate change. This means ensuring sufficient quality and quantity of water¹² for health, productive uses and ecosystems, minimising water-related risks to people, environments and economies.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Methods and tools for handling tradeoffs thereby enabling effective management of multifunctional landscapes (i.e. that deliver on the widest range of ecosystem services) with a focus on water security (availability and quality) and sustainable access.
- b) Evidence base on the vulnerability of surface and groundwater systems to multiple drivers of change, such as climate, land-cover, socio-economic and technological pressures. Priorities include understanding how the retreat of glaciers or changes in monsoonal variability might affect downstream water flows and dependent livelihoods. Likewise, how changes in the availability of groundwater affect people and ecosystems.
- c) Strengthened capacity in risk assessment of key drivers and diagnostics to improve regional probabilistic forecasting of water cycle elements, including extreme events (i.e. droughts and floods) and their links to human health.

¹⁰ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/analyses.asp>

¹¹ In this call, sustainable growth should be seen to encompass all related concepts including inclusive growth, low carbon growth, carbon resilient growth, green growth and environmentally sustainable growth.

¹² Including optimising use, managing discharge and other aspects

- d) Evidence of the vulnerability and resilience of ecosystem services to hydrological variability and change as well as opportunities for adaptation to maintain or enhance human well being.

2.3.2. Health theme: Ecosystem services, disease ecology and human well-being

Disease disproportionately affects the poor; and, in a vicious circle, tends to keep poor people in poverty. Other groups around the world (e.g. Gates Foundation, others) have explored various ways of reducing the burden of specific infectious diseases. ESPA research will focus on how ecosystem dynamics and services, and their environmental and socio-economic drivers (e.g. climate change, land use, production and settlement patterns) regulate the emergence, spread, transmission dynamics and vulnerability to clusters of infectious and non-communicable¹³ diseases in specific settings, and how these interactions may be managed to reduce the burden that they impose upon the poor.

Expected outcome:

In the context of environmental change, poor people and their livelihoods are less affected by the burdens of disease, whether these are human, animal or plant diseases.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Systems understanding of how ecosystem service dynamics over multiple spatial and temporal scales, including shocks and stresses related to climate change, affect the emergence, re-emergence and spread of existing human, animal and plant infectious diseases, including zoonoses.
- b) Systems understanding of how changes in ecosystem services and their interaction with other key factors (urbanisation, economic and environmental changes) can impact on non-communicable disease.
- c) Multi-level understanding of the vulnerabilities to particular clusters of infectious diseases, and the additional burdens of non-communicable diseases generated by social, economic and cultural inequalities under pressure of environmental change/shocks/stresses.
- d) Novel, multi-level, ecosystem-based biological, social, economic and cultural interventions for disease surveillance, regulation and control, and, identified means through which these can work for the poor. (For example, integrated vector management; land use modifications; biodiversity-oriented strategies).
- e) Policy approaches that respond effectively to the cross sectoral, dynamic and uncertain character of social-ecological-disease interactions.

2.3.3 Forests theme: Forests, Land Use Change and Ecosystem Services

In addition to direct provisioning services, such as timber and fuel, forests provide a host of regulating, supporting and cultural services which tend to be poorly understood and under valued. ESPA research will aim to look at ways and means of understanding these forest ecosystem services better and integrating this more effectively into poverty reduction and sustainable growth¹⁴.

Expected outcome:

¹³ Loss of ecosystems services can also affect non-communicable diseases such as cardio-vascular disease, obesity, asthma and mental health through degraded soil, air and water quality

¹⁴ In this call, sustainable growth should be seen to encompass all related concepts including inclusive growth, low carbon growth, carbon resilient growth, green growth and environmentally sustainable growth.

Enhanced contribution of forest ecosystem services to poor peoples' livelihoods and sustainable growth processes in the context of environmental and climate change.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Better understanding of how the poor can derive enhanced livelihoods from the range of biomass and forest ecosystem services (such as food, energy and building materials) in the context of sustainable growth; in particular, researching those regulating and supporting services that are not well documented at present, e.g. carbon cycles and sequestration, but which play a critical role in supporting development at various scales.
- b) Effective and viable (including innovative) mechanisms that can capture benefits from forest ecosystem services including for the poor, as well as how to institute more effective governance mechanisms.
- c) Better understanding of the values of ecosystem services derived from forests, potential trade-offs between different ecosystem services and relevant stakeholder groups, now and in the future, and how to bring this understanding into the wider political economy.
- d) Identification and evaluation of the opportunities that forest ecosystem services could provide governments for alternative development scenarios, including from mitigation and adaptation, which would also benefit the poor.
- e) Evaluation of the risks and consequences for the poor of land-use change, climate change and other environmental change in forests and the identification of strategies for active management of forests and forest landscapes to improve the well-being of the poor.

2.3.4 Biodiversity theme: Biodiversity and ecosystem services - ensuring a sustainable flow of goods and services to enhance human well-being

Biodiversity underpins the delivery of many ecosystem services and informed ecosystem management will provide both improved livelihoods and new development opportunities. Yet our understanding of the links between biodiversity and ecosystems services, poverty reduction and growth processes remain weak. ESPA will aim to narrow this gap in understanding.

Expected outcome:

Good biodiversity and ecosystem management supports the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services, enhancing poor peoples' livelihoods and increasing their resilience to climate and environmental change and natural disasters.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Practical knowledge on key ecosystem services for poverty reduction and sustainable growth and how biodiversity supports them, including locally relevant information on the social, economic and ecological processes that lead to changes in biodiversity and how this in turn impacts on the delivery of ecosystem services.
- b) Better management of biodiversity and ecosystems that supports delivery of sustainable outcomes in productive sectors, for instance, in agriculture, forestry or fisheries, ensuring ecosystem services in their entirety are taken into account (i.e. including especially regulating and supporting services).
- c) More effectively managed trade offs between more and less biodiverse systems across landscapes.
- d) New information on the effects of alternative land-use on biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services, such as soil formation, pollutant breakdown, water regulation, nutrient cycling and natural hazard mitigation, particularly in the context of environmental and climate change,

including improved understanding of relevant tipping points, thresholds, irreversibilities and cross-scale effects.

- e) A better understanding of how to manage biodiversity and ecosystem structure and processes to enhance the capacity of the poor for adaptation and resilience to climate change and other social, economic and environmental changes.
- f) Identification of larger scale biodiversity and ecosystem management approaches that can mitigate the impacts of global change on loss of ecosystem services: e.g. through enhancing carbon sequestration, improving water management, and reducing incidence of natural hazards and shocks.

2.3.5 Coasts theme: Strengthening the management of coastal ecosystems to support sustained ecosystem service delivery for reduced poverty and vulnerability in coastal zones.

Humans tend to be highly concentrated along coastal margins, many of whom are driven from other places by poverty and/or population growth, resulting in undue pressure on many coastal ecosystems. People on the coast tend to value provisioning services above other ecosystem services; consequent exploitation and short-term management often degrades other ecosystem services with high societal costs, e.g. flooding, reduced water quality, soil erosion, loss of future economic opportunities. In addition, coastal zones are frequently vulnerable to the impacts of environmental and climate change which increase the vulnerability of poor people disproportionately. ESPA research will increase our understanding of managing coastal ecosystem services to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience.

Expected outcome:

The sustainable management of coastal ecosystem services to reduce poverty and vulnerability in coastal areas.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Systems-based knowledge of coastal zone socio-ecological systems (including the inter-linkages with terrestrial & marine ecosystems) to understand better the ecosystem services that they provide, their dynamics, resilience and tipping points, as linked to poverty and vulnerability in coastal communities.
- b) New knowledge generated on the sensitivity of coastal ecosystem services to human induced, environmental and climate change and the implications for the poor, and how to manage coastal ecosystem services better for reduced poverty and vulnerability.
- c) Techniques, including system modelling, monetary and non-monetary valuation and scenario planning, to understand and deliver evidence on the social, environmental and economic consequences of crossing thresholds in coastal ecosystems.
- d) Application of systems knowledge for evidence-based policy and decision making in coastal areas, including the development of practical tools for application in environmental management and planning to support poverty reduction and reduced vulnerability.
- e) Strengthened institutional capacity to design, conduct and use research on sustainable ecosystem services in support of poverty alleviation in coastal communities.

2.3.6 Political Economy theme: The political economy of sustainable ecosystem services for poverty reduction and sustainable growth

Vital ecosystem services, particularly supporting and regulating, are taken for granted and degraded because they are not seen to hold economic value and are not therefore factored into policy and decision making. Costs and benefits of the use and management of ecosystem services are often not

equitably distributed. ESPA research will identify how to ensure that ecosystem values, and mechanisms that support the sustainable use of ecosystem services, are taken into account fully in decision making.

Expected outcome:

Poor people benefit equitably from sustainable ecosystem services management.

Examples of potential outputs:

- a) Develop theories and methods necessary to upgrade the quality of policy, institutional structures and management on the political economy of ecosystem services (scaling, distributive, etc. values, trade-offs people are making) at the resource specific level (understanding existing costs and/or a policy level (communicating to the appropriate audiences), now and into the future.
- b) Conceptual framework and contextual evidence on how the range of risks, uncertainties, and resilience, influence ecosystem service values and their sustainability.
- c) Embed better scientific understanding of all ecosystem processes and functions in appropriate monetary and non-monetary valuation methods, including accommodating both poor people's underlying values and other stakeholders' interests
- d) Better understanding of the drivers and incentives that will help ensure ecosystem services are factored into governance, policy and decision making at different levels.
- e) Improved understanding and measurement of the subjective welfare of poor people and communities in terms of their interrelationships with ecosystem services, wellbeing and livelihood provision and integration with poverty monitoring frameworks and indicators.

2.4 Capacity Building in ESPA

ESPA is seeking to enhance the capacity of southern researchers to conduct, lead and use/communicate high quality ESPA-type interdisciplinary research, as described in Section 2.1. By supporting capacity building, ESPA aims to increase the ability, mass and networks of researchers in the developing country regions working on ecosystem services and poverty alleviation.

The funders of ESPA recognise that there are different types and levels of capacity, not all of which can be addressed through this programme. ESPA will therefore primarily focus on delivering *technical capacity building*, and to a limited extent *organisational capacity building*.

Technical Capacity Building in ESPA will support building the technical capacity of individuals and teams to enable them to fulfil the project's objectives effectively and efficiently. This can include:

- technical skill development: proposal writing, methodological training, inter-disciplinary research approaches
- supporting development of new researchers, i.e. early career or researchers moving to a new field of study or discipline
- supporting co-authorship, particularly of peer reviewed publications
- enabling new researchers and other stakeholders to meaningfully participate in research discourse, networks
- developing interdisciplinary team working

Organisational Capacity Building in ESPA will support limited organisational capacity building, where directly relevant and proportional to the achievement of project objectives. The proposed activities must fall within eligible costs (Section 6.3.1).

Delivering Capacity Building through ESPA research

ESPA-funded research will be expected to build capacity *through* the research process. In particular, ESPA-funded research must involve the meaningful participation of researchers and stakeholders

from countries targeted in the research. This can be done through north-south and south-south partnerships, and should include researchers/stakeholders from target research countries. Capacity building elements of the research should reinforce the main intellectual focus of the research project and the impact/uptake of the project.

The specific capacity building requirements of the Programme Framework Grants and Partnership and Project Development Grants are set out below:

Capacity Building in Programme Framework Grants

An elaborate capacity building component is not required for these grants, given their short duration. However, it is expected that north-south and south-south partnerships will be an important component of these projects if they are to deliver the new and innovative concepts, methodologies and/or models that are credible and relevant to the developing country context. The projects will include capacity building, where needed, to support these partnerships and the participation of developing country researchers, e.g. supporting co-authorship of the outputs.

A description of the partnerships involved, how they will work and be supported and how they contribute to delivering the aims of the research will form part of the assessment criteria.

Capacity Building in Partnership and Project Development Grants

These grants have been established to enable consortia to build the capacity needed for developing the full research consortium project proposal. Proposals for this submission opportunity should address the following:

- the capacity building that will be required to develop a full research consortium grant proposal and will be conducted as part of the catalyst project; and
- the process for developing a full capacity building strategy, as part of the full research consortium grant proposal or other proposal.

Capacity building will form part of the assessment criteria.

Please note that because the duration of these grants is less than 3 years, use of these grants to fund doctoral students cannot be included on either of the Partnership and Project Development or Programme Framework Grants.

Capacity Building in Research Consortia Grants

Full guidance on capacity building in the research consortia grants will be provided when the call is re-issued in September 2010.

The research consortia grants will be expected to have a detailed capacity building strategy and the capacity building content of the proposal will form part of the assessment criteria.

2.5 Uptake and Impact

ESPA aims to maximise uptake of its research outputs by early and on-going engagement and communication with policy makers, practitioners and decision makers. The ESPA programme, including ESPA-funded research projects, will seek to identify and take opportunities to increase impact and uptake as they arise during or after the life course of the research.

Delivering Impact and Uptake through the research projects:

In order to maximise likelihood of uptake, the funders of ESPA expect researchers to identify the potential impacts of their research on policy, practice and stakeholders and actively plan how these can be maximised and developed. Uptake and impact is usually best achieved when research questions are directed to a clear target audience and informed through stakeholder engagement.

All ESPA research must be able to demonstrate strongly its developmental impact. As set out in the ESPA Programme Memorandum¹⁵, this may be through generating knowledge that directly benefits ESPA's primary beneficiaries (poor and socially excluded people dependent upon ecosystems

¹⁵ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

services living in developing countries). However, ESPA is more likely to generate findings that will contribute to sustainable growth at a wider scale. Delivery will be achieved through engaging and influencing intermediaries such as governments, regional organisations, NGO's, international policy makers and the private sector.

Researchers will be required to include an impact plan as part of their research proposal. ESPA researchers will also be expected to contribute to the wider ESPA programme knowledge sharing, uptake and communication activities in collaboration with the ESPA Directorate.

The specific impact and uptake requirements of the Programme Framework Grants and the Partnership and Project Development Catalyst Grants are set out below. These will form part of the assessment criteria.

Delivering Impact and Uptake through Programme Framework Grants:

All applicants are required to include an **Impact Plan** that addresses the following three questions:

- Who will benefit from this research?
- How will they benefit from this research?
- What will be done to ensure that they have the opportunity to benefit from this research?

Delivering Impact and Uptake through Partnership and Project Development Catalyst Grants

Applicants for the Partnership and Project Development Catalyst Grants will not be expected to have a fully developed impact plan in their proposal. They will, however, be expected to provide an outline impact plan that provides a preliminary analysis of the potential impacts of their proposed research, and statements on how they will go about identifying and engaging with the potential beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Applicants should also outline how they will develop the impact plan when preparing an application for a full Research Consortium award.

Delivering Impact and Uptake through Research Consortium Grants:

Full guidance on capacity building in the research consortia grants will be provided when the call is re-issued in September 2010. All applicants to the full Research Consortium Grant scheme will be required to include an **Impact Plan and it is recommended that a minimum of 10% of the overall budget should be dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the plan.** The Impact Plan should address the following three questions:

- Who will benefit from this research?
- How will they benefit from this research?
- What will be done to ensure that they have the opportunity to benefit from this research?

The impact plan should also detail research uptake activities, including knowledge sharing and dissemination, for example:

- linkages created with related initiatives across sectors and disciplines
- partnership and collaboration with non-academic partners

Further information on impact plans is given in section 6.4

2.6 ESPA Research Approach

ESPA's funders have agreed that a number of key characteristics should typify all ESPA proposals, and these include:

- inter- and multidisciplinary research¹⁶,
- system-based research approaches,
- poverty focus,
- linking research to policy,
- supportive of learning and flexibility, and
- strengthening capacity in southern institutions.

¹⁶ Research that encompasses the different disciplines of natural, social and economic sciences

These characteristics are described in more detail in the Programme Memorandum¹⁷.

In addition, the funders have developed some guiding principles for ESPA proposals. Researchers are expected to take these principles into account when preparing their research proposals and, if successful, when implementing them. However, they are intended to guide ESPA research rather than restrict it. Therefore, researchers should consider these principles and apply them accordingly in the context of their specific thematic and regional research.

¹⁷ <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

Box 3: ESPA Guiding Principles

- i. The research should demonstrate potential for scientific or methodological breakthrough; for instance, by encompassing research that is 'ahead of the curve' and that holds opportunity for real integration across the different scientific disciplines, and by promoting new ways of inter-disciplinary cooperation and systems based approaches.
- ii. Ecosystem services should be viewed in their entirety, albeit acknowledging that regulating, supporting and cultural aspects of ecosystem services are under-researched. ESPA will therefore encompass research across the range of supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services and will attempt to look at the tradeoffs between them and implications for poverty reduction.
- iii. All research should ensure that it is developed with a clearly articulated link to poverty reduction and/or inclusive growth with a full understanding of the political economy and social context.
- iv. ESPA projects will support the co-production of knowledge through the sustained and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders throughout the research process, beginning at the proposal development stage.
- v. Projects should support researchers from different disciplines, and from different regions of the world, to come together and work in equitable partnerships in an interdisciplinary manner encouraging the development of replicable interdisciplinary research methodologies.
- vi. Potential links with work going on elsewhere should be recognised, particularly where the UK has a stake (e.g. EU, IGBP, IHDP, World Bank, GEF, UNDP, UN CBD, IPBES, MA follow up) and other relevant research programmes and investments funded by the ESPA partners, e.g. the DFID Climate and Development Centre, the Renewable Natural Resources and Growth programme, the NERC Changing Water Cycle and Valuation programmes, the ESRC STEPS centre, and the ESRC Centre for Climate Change for Economics and Policy (CCCEP), as well as the wider Living With Environmental Change partnership.
- vii. Projects should build on the outputs of other relevant research. ESPA will develop its programme with a clear understanding of existing and on-going research activities and ensure that it builds upon and strengthens these where relevant as well as driving new and innovative research into ecosystem services.
- viii. Lessons learned from other relevant activities should be built on in order to make a new and innovative contribution to the systems science of sustainable development.
- ix. Attention should be paid to environmental, social and economic processes and dynamics and how they interact and impact on ecosystem services.
- x. The research should particularly target under-researched issues and areas.
- xi. Project design should take into account the multiple spatial and temporal scales across which ecosystems and the services that they provide operate and are impacted.
- xii. Attention should be given to the development of research methodologies which are replicable in developing country context to promote scale-up of ESPA approaches.
- xiii. Projects should attempt to maximise impact by ensuring relevance to policy and decision making and other end-users, through research into use and communications approaches.
- xiv. Methodologies should be incorporated that disaggregate data by sex and other socio-economic variables such as income, age, ethnicity, race, disability. and also by geo-spatial criteria. It will be incumbent upon researchers to demonstrate clearly where and why any of these are deemed to be inappropriate in the research proposal.
- xv. Where relevant, links should be built between formal and indigenous science.

3.0 Available funding schemes

3.1 Introduction

This announcement of opportunity invites proposals for the first substantive ESPA call. This first call is split into two funding streams with three submission opportunities.

Funding Stream 1 is a one-off opportunity for shorter-term, innovative, conceptual development type projects submitted as a Programme Framework grant

Funding Stream 2 has two submission opportunities, one to win catalyst funding through a Partnership and Project Development grant (Section 3.2) in preparation for the second submission opportunity for a larger Research Consortium grant (Section 3.3b). Note that it is not a requirement for submissions to the Research Consortia scheme to have applied for, or been successfully funded through a Partnership and Project Development grant.

Funding Stream 1

3.2 Programme Framework Grants

ESPA's research agenda extends beyond traditional academic disciplines and cannot be addressed through uncoordinated studies of individual system components by isolated traditional disciplines. Process-level understanding and integrated models of the complex biophysical and social systems and feedbacks will be needed if the dynamic relationship between humans and ecosystems are to be sufficiently understood so that they can be predicted and managed^{18,19}. Although this new, interdisciplinary approach must build on existing disciplinary strengths, it will require development of new perspectives, integration of disciplines not accustomed to working together and generation of whole new areas of research endeavour.

Therefore, the purpose of the **Programme Framework** awards is to “kick start” the development of the new and innovative concepts, methodologies and / or models needed to ensure the successful delivery of ESPA's objectives. The funders particularly encourage applications to this scheme that bring new perspectives and novel approaches to cross-cutting topics, such as the challenge of equitable management of ecosystems that benefit poor people; quantification of tradeoffs among ecosystem services and their interactions with human well being; consideration of nonlinear and abrupt changes / tipping points in both social and biophysical systems; systems-based approaches to the feedbacks between and within complex social, economic and biophysical systems; fully integrated approaches to political economy and governance that embed consideration of ecosystem health and management as well as poverty reduction and sustainable growth²⁰. The funders encourage work that challenges conventional thinking and existing paradigms where appropriate.

Award holders would be expected to contribute to the development of the Programme through the early engagement and collaboration with the ESPA Directorate (once established) and other researchers.

Award holders will be expected to participate in an ESPA Forum, when established, to be managed by the ESPA Directorate, which will aim to develop an ESPA community and encourage collaborative working, and the development of an integrated programme.

Applicants may **only** be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **one** Programme Framework grant.

¹⁸ Carpenter et al. (2009) Science for managing ecosystem services: Beyond the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. PNAS v 106, no 5, 1305-1312.

¹⁹ Nicholson et al. (2009) Priority research areas for ecosystem services in a changing world. J Applied Ecology. Doi 10.1111/j.1365-2664.2009.01716.x

²⁰ In this call, sustainable growth should be seen to encompass all related concepts including inclusive growth, low carbon growth, carbon resilient growth, green growth and environmentally sustainable growth.

Applicants are referred to the assessment criteria for Programme Framework Grants (see Section 4.1).

Applicants can request up to £250,000 GBP (100% FEC), for a maximum period of 2 years.

It is anticipated that up to 16 Programme Framework grants will be awarded in this call.

Applicants are requested to submit a 'notification of intent to submit' by 29th January 2010 (see section 5.5)

Deadline for the receipt of completed applications is 16:00 UK local time on 3rd March 2010. Awards are expected to be issued in June 2010.

Funding stream 2

3.2.a Partnership and Project Development Grants

Partnership and Project Development Grants are aimed at providing the necessary funding to enable researchers to develop substantial, realistic and relevant research partnerships and research strategies in order to develop a proposal for submission to the much larger ESPA Research Consortium call, due to be issued in September 2010 (with a closing date in December 2010) or to subsequent ESPA funding rounds.

Partnership and Project Development Grants are not intended to support research projects, per se, but may support some preliminary research activity where it is necessary for developing the detailed research questions for the larger Research Consortium project proposal.

At the Partnership and Project Development Grant application stage, good interdisciplinary research ideas within the ESPA research agenda are more important than having whole interdisciplinary groups fully identified at the outset. Therefore, applicants may submit proposals that do not have all interdisciplinary collaborations in place upon submission, provided that they demonstrate how they will address this in preparation for the Research Consortium grant submission in December 2010.

Partnership and Project Development Grants may support the following kinds of activity and the resources needed to undertake them:

- evidence gathering, strategic reviews and research needs/impacts assessments;
- planning and hosting research meetings in order to build collaborations and develop research questions and hypotheses;
- building appropriate research strategies, methodologies plans and proposals;
- bringing together new working partnerships (south-south and north-south), collaborations and management mechanisms;
- identifying and engaging with the appropriate decision makers and beneficiaries;
- developing leadership teams and project management procedures;
- developing communication strategies and impact plans.

In the final project report, on completion of the grant, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how they have developed their research strategy and collaborations (including those with policy makers and other stakeholders, as well as local community groups as appropriate) to enable them to prepare a Research Consortium Grant proposal.

It is expected that Partnership and Project Development Grant holders will go on to apply for ESPA Research Consortia Grant funding (section 3.2b), or submit applications to other later ESPA calls²¹. However, it should be noted that those in receipt of previous ESPA awards, including the Partnership and Project Development grants, will **not be guaranteed** further funding from the Programme.

Applicants intending to apply for a Partnership and Project Development Grant are advised to prepare their application with the ESPA objectives and scope in mind as articulated in Section 1-3 of this call.

The key output of the Partnership and Project Development Grant should be a fully developed research proposal to be submitted to one of the ESPA Research Consortia funding rounds for a large scale programme of work (£0.5-£5M).

Whilst the objective of Partnership and Project Development Grants is to principally provide support for the building of southern-led partnerships, support of northern-led partnerships that include southern partners is not excluded, where the need for new partnership development is required and can be demonstrated.

A list of funded Partnership and Project Development Grants will be published. Communication between the funded research groups (aided by the ESPA Directorate once established) is encouraged, so that teams can explore opportunities for collaboration.

Applicants who were recipients of an ESPA Capacity Building Grant will not be eligible for a Partnership and Project Development Grant, unless they were not the lead Principal Investigator (PI) and the new proposal is to build a new research team and strategy. In this case, applicants would need to explain their role in the previous capacity building grant and why they are developing a new team and research agenda.

Applicants may be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **two** Partnership and Project Development grants, but can only be named as lead PI on **one** of these.

Applicants can request up to £50,000 (100% FEC) for a maximum grant duration of 6 months.

Deadline for receipt of completed applications into the JeS system is 3rd March 2010. Awards are expected to be issued in June 2010.

Because the purpose of these awards is to build teams to develop proposals to submit to the consortium awards call (anticipated closing date in December 2010), it is a condition of funding that applicants must be able to commence activities within one month of an award offer being made.

It is anticipated that around 30 Partnership and Project Development Grants will be awarded in this call.

3.2.b Research consortium grants

These are the larger scale activities which will deliver the key research for ESPA to deliver on its objectives. The Partnership and Programme Development Grants will provide the resources to support the development of substantive proposals for the Research Consortium Grant submission opportunity.

The Research Consortium Grants will address the objectives and scope of ESPA as listed in sections 1-2. Applicants should read these sections carefully.

In order to deliver research to be funded by ESPA, strong multi-disciplinary teams will be required, formed of north-south or south-south partnerships. Inter-disciplinary ways of working and skills should be central to the project approach.

²¹ Note that there are 3 planned consortium funding rounds – Dec 2009; July 2011 and Oct 2013 (estimate). The latter 2 calls will be aimed at filling gaps in the Programme and for emerging issues.

Projects may focus on a particular theme and/or region, if appropriate. Projects that cut across and combine elements of some or all of the themes and regions are also encouraged, if relevant to the objectives and hypotheses proposed.

ESPA also encourages a systems-based approach where research is undertaken on the complex inter-linkages between the biophysical and human components of ecosystems and their services, to fully inform policy makers and other stakeholders.

Further details on ESPA rationale and scope are given in the Programme Memorandum²².

Applicants can request funds between £0.5M and £5M GBP (100% FEC) for a grant duration of between 3 years and 5 years maximum.

Full guidance on Research Consortium grants will be provided with the call is reissued in September 2010.

4.0 Assessment Criteria

The assessment panel will consider whether applications are of world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically-sound) and if they demonstrate strong development relevance. The assessment panel will be looking for research that has the potential to generate cutting-edge evidence on ecosystem services, their full value, and links to sustainable poverty reduction.

As well as the ESPA Guiding Principles detailed in Box 3, the assessment panel will be asked to comment on the following criteria in assessing proposals. Applicants are therefore advised to consider all these criteria in preparing their applications. Note these are not in any priority order.

4.1 Programme Framework grants assessment criteria

i) Research agenda

- Is the question the research is designed to answer significant with regard to addressing ESPA's aims and purpose?
- Does the project have the potential to "kick-start" the development of new and innovative concepts, methodologies and / or models with the potential for scientific or methodological breakthrough?
- Does the application demonstrate world class research design that shows specificity, clarity and coherence between research questions, research methods and anticipated intellectual outcomes?
- Is the research design feasible?
- Are the methods and data analysis regime clear, including an appropriate method for data disaggregation across a range of variables?
- Does the research proposed have clearly articulated relevance to development?
- Does the research proposed demonstrate how it will contribute to the evidence base and tools that will help decision makers link ecosystem services more effectively to poverty reduction and sustainable growth?

ii) Fit to the Call Priorities

- Does the proposal fit the scope of ESPA as outlined in the call?
- Will the proposed research project contribute to the delivery of ESPA's objectives?

²² <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/documents/espa-programme-plan.pdf>

iii) Approach to Interdisciplinarity and Quality of Integration

- Does the project bring together the appropriate mix of researchers, e.g. environmental scientists, social scientists and economists?
- Is there evidence of new and effective interdisciplinary collaborative working between the disciplines within the proposed partnership?

v) Impact Plan, Stakeholder Engagement, and Outputs

- Does the project have real potential for impact on poverty reduction through development of new concepts, methodologies and / or models?
- Does the application identify appropriate target audiences (stakeholders, end users and other researchers)?
- Are there clear plans to make findings available to target audiences and to maximise research uptake?

vii) Research Partnerships

- Are the proposed partnerships/collaborations appropriate to the research question? Will they clearly enable the delivery of outcomes that are credible and relevant to the developing country context?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of partners and collaborators proportionate and balanced?
- Where appropriate, will non-academic stakeholders be actively involved in the co-production of knowledge?

v. Capacity Building

- Where appropriate, does the proposal include training and development opportunities to support the delivery of roles and responsibilities?

iv) Project Management

- Are the project management plans and configuration of roles and responsibilities reasonable, achievable, appropriate and credible for the given project?
- Are the resources requested reasonable to deliver the project?
- Is the management plan appropriate for the project – are planning, coordination, risks, reporting and synthesis dealt with adequately?
- Does the project-managing organisation provide evidence of managerial and fiduciary competence?

vi) Value for money

- Are the finances sought justifiable and reasonable for the specified outputs?
- Are the time commitments of all research participants appropriate?

viii) Quality of team

- Do the credentials of the investigators and host institutions appear appropriate to deliver the project?
- Is there evidence of previous experience with NERC, ESRC and/or DFID, or other substantial internationally funded research programmes?

4.2 Partnership and Project Development grants

i) Research agenda

- Does the research proposed have the potential to be world-class, intellectually innovative, and methodologically sound?
- Does the research proposed have clearly articulated relevance to development?
- Does the research proposed demonstrate how it will contribute to the evidence base and tools that will help decision makers link ecosystem services more effectively to poverty reduction and sustainable growth?

ii) Fit to the Call Priorities

- Does the proposal fit the scope of ESPA as outlined in the call?
- Will the proposed research project contribute to the delivery of ESPA's objectives?

iii) Approach to Interdisciplinarity and Quality of Integration

- Does the project have a feasible plan to bring together the appropriate mix of researchers e.g. environmental scientists, social scientists and economists?
- Is there evidence of plans to enable new and effective interdisciplinary collaborative working between the disciplines within the proposed partnership?

iv) Impact Plan, Stakeholder Engagement, and Uptake

- Does the outlined project have real potential for impact on poverty reduction?
- Has the applicant outlined how they will develop an impact plan that will be credible, feasible and appropriate?
- Does the applicant have appropriate plans for identifying who the stakeholders/potential end users of the research outputs are and the processes and means for engaging with them during the development of their final research proposal?

v) Research Partnerships

- Does the applicant have an effective plan to develop partnerships or collaborations appropriate to the proposed research project? Are the benefits of the partnership elaborated and justified?
- Is there a plan for non-academic stakeholders to be actively involved in the co-production of knowledge?
- Is there a plan for developing equitable partnership and engagement (south-south and north-south)?

vi) Capacity Building

- Has the project identified appropriate capacity building activities for southern researchers to enable development of the full research proposal and set out a feasible plan for implementing them? (Capacity building for developed country partners will only be considered when it is required for needs that are unique to ESPA)
- Has the applicant outlined how they will develop capacity building components for the full Research Consortium proposal?

vii) Project Management

- Are the resources requested reasonable to deliver the project?
- Does the proposal have appropriate plans to develop project management procedures, if necessary, in preparation for developing a research consortium proposal?
- Does the project-managing organisation provide evidence of managerial and fiduciary competence?

viii) Value for money

- Are the finances sought justifiable and reasonable?
- Are the time commitments of all research participants appropriate?

ix) Quality of team

- Do the credentials of the named investigators and host institutions appear appropriate to further develop and deliver the final Research Consortium project proposal?
- Is there evidence of previous experience with NERC, ESRC and/or DFID, or other substantial internationally or regionally funded research programmes?

5.0 Application process

5.1 Introduction

ESPA will fund **both** UK and non-UK researchers based in recognised higher education institutions, research organisations or organisations with a credible and demonstrable research capacity. The criteria for recognition as an eligible research organisation are set out in section 5.2.

All applications must be submitted through the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S).

Unless you are sure that your organisation is already registered on the Je-S, ALL APPLICANTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION ARE ADVISED TO CONTACT THE [JE-S HELPDESK](#)²³ IMMEDIATELY to ascertain the Je-S status of their organisation and themselves as an individual. The Je-S Helpdesk can also advise on the process required to be able to submit an application. The process required is also summarised graphically in Fig 1

Applications can include a number of research roles, and these are described in Box 4 as they relate to Je-S submission.

²³ JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk

Box 4: Research Roles:

Principal Investigators (PI) and co-Principal Investigators (co-PI)¹

Each project will have only one lead Principal Investigator (PI). The lead PI will head the research and the management of the project; for example, the PI is responsible for overall project reporting requirements. For joint proposals (see Section 5.6 for a description of joint proposals) a “non-lead” or **co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) must be named on each component application of the joint proposal**. Co-PI’s work with the PI to deliver the research, management and leadership of the project and are responsible for the input of their part of the project. Only the PI and co-PI’s organisations will receive direct funding from ESPA. Both the lead PI and co-PIs will be responsible for ensuring that the terms and conditions for the grant are met. Where projects have UK researchers, at least one of the UK partners must be a PI or co-PI on a joint proposal.

Co-Investigator (Co-I)

A Co-Investigator assists the Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator in the research, management and/or leadership of the project. They may be expected to take over the leadership of the project, if the PI or co-PI is unable to continue in their role. Co-I’s will not receive direct funding from ESPA, but will receive any funding, relevant to their work on the project, from the PI or co-PI organisation.

Researcher Co-I

A Researcher Co-I is a post doctoral research assistant (PDRA), or other suitably experienced staff member, who has a number of years previous experience as a PDRA (or appropriate equivalent), but who is not eligible to be a PI, co-PI or Co-I. However, they will have made substantial contribution to the formulation and development of the project and will be closely involved in the project (if funded). Researcher Co-Is do not receive direct funding from ESPA, but rather from the PI or co-PI organisation.

Project partners

Project Partners may be public, private or NGO sector experts who could provide invaluable stakeholder inputs and advice to the project. Project Partners will not receive funding directly from the award, but will have an integral role in the proposed research. An organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing specific contributions, either direct or indirect, to the project (e.g. time, equipment, etc). Minor costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration, but these should be substantially less than the contribution of the Project Partner organisation to the project. There is no limit to the number of Project Partners you can have on the application, but Project Partners must be from separate Research Organisations to those submitting the proposal. Project partners do not receive direct funding from ESPA, but rather from the PI or co-PI organisation.

Sub-contractors

Sub-contractors will contribute a specific service to the project, but will not usually be involved in the development of the project. They are not named specifically on the project pro-forma, but should be identified in the case for support, along with a description of their input to the project. Sub-contractors do not receive direct funding from ESPA, but rather from the PI or co-PI organisation.

Studentships and visiting researchers

Because Partnership and Project Development grants and Programme Framework grants are under three years, support for doctoral students cannot be requested. Visiting Researchers may be funded to visit the investigator’s institution for up to 12months, in order to give full time advice and assistance on the research. Visiting Researchers must be named on the application and a coherent rationale for their role and contribution to the project included.

The organisations of all lead PI’s, and co-PI’s must be **listed and registered on the Je-S system by 8th February 2010** (see section 5.3 for guidance on this process).

Co-I organisations are only required to be **listed by 8th February**.

All PI, co-PI, Co-I and Researcher Co-Is involved in the proposal must also create an individual-registered Je-S account **before the proposal is submitted (see Section 5.4)**.

If the proposal is successful and offered ESPA funding, the **PI organisation, and any co-PI organisations** (if submitting as part of a joint proposal, see section 5.6), will need to complete the full eligibility Je-S **recognition process before any funding is committed**, if not already a Je-S eligible organisation.

Project partners or sub-contractors do not have to be registered on the Je-S system or undergo the full eligibility recognition process.

The steps that need to be completed to become 'listed', 'registered' and 'fully recognised' are set out in more detail in section 5.2 below.

5.2 Eligibility Criteria

5.2.1 Organisations

Most UK higher education institutions and some other independent UK research organisations are already '**recognised**' by the UK Research Councils and are eligible to apply for, and hold, Research Council grants. Details on which UK organisations are currently eligible for Research Council funding can be found on <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/eligibility.htm>.

Non-UK organisations (and other UK organisations not currently eligible²⁴ to receive Research Council funding) may be eligible to directly receive ESPA funding (as lead or co-PI) if they can satisfy **all** of the following conditions:

(1) The organisation must be a legal entity.

2) The organisation must be able to demonstrate an independent in-house capability to undertake and lead research and training in the field or discipline in which it wishes to be funded. This would normally involve employment of at least three permanent or long term staff, each of whom have 4-6 years postdoctoral research experience (or equivalent) and recognised research publications at national and at international level; they must also be capable of leading innovative research projects, directing other post-doctoral researchers, and providing necessary supervision at this level. Equivalent experience may take a number of forms, such as long term professional experience in the relevant field of work.

3) The organisation must meet the accountability and audit requirements of the ESPA funders.

This requires your organisation to provide, on request, full documentation to give assurance of the:

- institutional governance and accountability structures;
- audit and accountability procedures;
- sources of core funding and other funding.

Organisations that do not meet these requirements may not directly receive funds from ESPA (i.e. as lead/co-PI), but may be named as a Co-I, Project Partner or sub-contractor (and receive funds through the lead organisation).

Full eligibility checks will only be undertaken on organisations recommended to receive funding.

5.2.2 Individual Researchers

Researchers that will act as PIs, co-PIs, Co-Is or Researcher Co-Is must be based at UK or non-UK organisations with a demonstrable and credible research capacity (see section 5.2.1).

UK Researchers: standard NERC eligibility criteria apply to all UK PI's, co-PIs and Co-I's – see NERC Grants Handbook <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/researchgrants/>

²⁴ Research Organisations currently ineligible to receive funding from the UK Research Councils (RC) may be eligible under this call for proposals. Note that funding for these organisations will come from DFID, and not the Research Councils. These organisations will not be eligible for any other RC funding, unless specifically stated by an individual Council.

Non-UK Researchers: Non-UK PI's, co-PI's and Co-I's should meet the following criteria.

- have at least three years of relevant post-doctoral or appropriate equivalent research experience *[NB: Equivalent experience may take a number of forms, such as long term professional experience in a relevant field of work. Any case for equivalent experience must be fully explained and justified in the track record section part of the application].*

and at the time of application:

- be employed by the Research Organisation submitting the proposal, or if not employed (i) have an existing formal arrangement with the organisation that enables him or her to carry out research there and receive all necessary management and infrastructure support from the organisation or (ii) be scheduled to move to the submitting organisation before the proposed start date of the grant in such a way that would ensure that the criterion stated above is met by the time the grant starts
- have an assurance from the submitting organisation that, if the proposal is successful, the contract of employment, or formal commitment, to provide support if not employed, will extend at least three months beyond the end date of the grant. Confirmation of this assurance from organisations should accompany any grant application.

Researcher Co-I's can only be included on the project if they:

- are specifically named on the project, and
- will be employed for the duration of the award by the same Research Organisation as either the PI or one of the co-PIs or Co-Is (they do not have to be employed at the time of application).

Researcher Co-Is may not take over from the Principal Investigator, should the PI leave the project.

Applicants may **only** be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **one** Programme Framework grant.

Applicants may be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **two** Partnership and Project Development grants, but can only be named as lead PI on **one** of these

5.3 Registering an organisation on Je-S

Many UK organisations and some non-UK organisations will already be fully registered on Je-S and able to submit applications. See Fig 1 for further explanation of the process involved.

If you are in any doubt as to your individual status or that of your organisation on Je-S, please contact the Je-S Helpdesk (JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk). Je-S will then email out forms which request the required organisational information, to allow them to help you complete the necessary procedures.

Three procedures must be completed for organisations to become Je-S 'registered':

Procedure 1 for 'Listing'

The organisation name and address are listed on Je-S by the Je-S team on request by the organisation concerned. This information is then shown and selectable from drop-down lists on the Je-S system. In order to get your organisation listed on the system, all you need to do is contact the Je-S Helpdesk²⁵ and provide them with the name and address of your organisation and/or department.

All researchers who will be named on the application pro-forma (PI, co-PI, Co-I, Researcher Co-I) will need to **ensure their organisation is listed on Je-S by 8th February**

For the benefit of non-UK applicants to the ESPA call, the Je-S registration process has been broken down into two procedures. Of these two, only Procedure 2 below has to be completed before the application is submitted.

²⁵ JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk

Procedure 2 for Submitter Registration

In addition to being 'listed' on the Je-S system, all organisations wishing to submit a proposal must complete the 'Submitter Registration' process to set up a 'submitter' account. The organisations submitting must delegate an individual within the organisation, who has the delegated authority to be designated as the 'submitter' for applications made through Je-S, this should not be the researcher. In addition, a senior member of the organisation (e.g. Vice Chancellor, Finance Director, Head of Department) must sign and accept the Je-S Terms and Conditions.

Forms must be returned to the Je-S Helpdesk (via email) no later than 8th February 2010

The 'submitter' will be responsible for completing the final stage of submission for the application. Therefore, PI's and co-PIs must ensure that the 'submitter' is fully aware of the deadline for proposals and their role in the process.

This is the minimum level required for all organisations (of PI's and co-PI's) submitting an application.

Procedure 3 for Eligibility Recognition

This is the final level of registration on Je-S. In this step, the organisation must provide assurances to NERC on their governance and financial structures, etc, verifying that the organisation is eligible to receive ESPA funding via the UK Research Councils. Further information on this is given on Section 5.2.1. To minimise the administrative burden to non-UK applicants, **for this ESPA call, the 'eligibility recognition' step of the registration process will only be undertaken for new organisations if their application has been approved for funding.**

5.4 Registering as an Individual on Je-S

All Principal Investigators (PI's), co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) Co-Investigators and Researcher Co-I's must also create an individual Je-S account in order to be added to any application.

To do this, go to <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk> and select 'Create Account' and follow the process described.

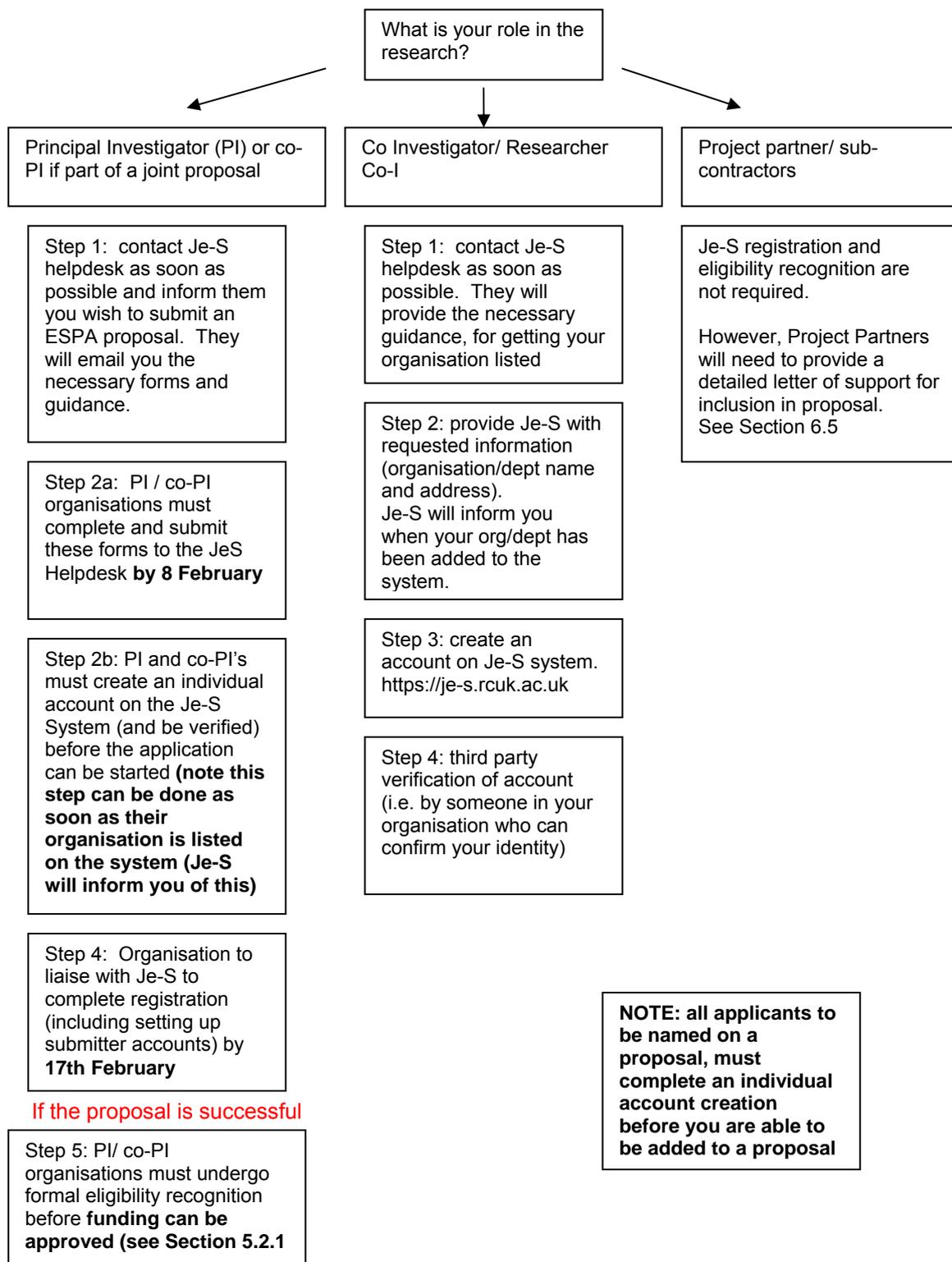
PI's should ensure that all researchers to be included on the application as co-PI, Co-I or Researcher Co-I have registered themselves on Je-S.

Individual PI, co-PI and Co-I registration cannot be completed until their host organisation is listed and their identity verified by a third party in their organisation.

An organisation's administrator is able to prepare the online documents on behalf of the principal investigator if necessary, if they have previously created an 'Administration' account for themselves (note this account type does not need third party verification).

Fig 1: Process for Je-S registration

Are you and your organisation registered on the Je-S system and able to submit proposals?
 If no, or you are not sure, please follow the procedure below.



5.5 Notification of Intention to submit a Programme Framework grant

Applicants to the Programme Framework grants are requested to submit a brief statement notifying the ESPA Secretariat of their intention to submit a proposal no later than **29th January 2010**. This should be a maximum of 1 side of A4 in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point, with margins of at least 2cm. It should include:

- the names of the Principal Investigator, co-Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators and Project Partners, and their organisation;
- a brief description of the project (~500 words); and
- three recommendations for international experts able to review the application as part of an assessment panel.

The purpose of the **Notification of Intention to Submit** is to assist the ESPA Secretariat in gauging the level of demand for the scheme as well as to help the ESPA partners start the process of identifying a pool of high quality international reviewers and panel members in advance of receipt of full proposals. This will significantly improve the quality of the proposal assessment process and help to ensure its timely completion.

Notification of Intention to Submit documents will not be assessed for Science Excellence, and applicants will not be provided with feedback on their content. Applicants will not be penalized in any way for subsequent alterations to their proposed plan of work or changes to the composition of their consortium. Applicants will also not be penalised for not submitting their Notification of Intention. Submission is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged.

Notification of intention to submit should be **emailed to espa@nerc.ac.uk by 29th January 2010**. **This process does not require the use of Je-S, so Je-S listing, registration and recognition are not required in advance.**

5.6 Joint Proposals

Joint proposals enable different Research Organisations (RO) working on the same project to receive ESPA funding separately and directly from NERC²⁶. This can apply either where the collaboration involves:

- multiple UK organisations,
- multiple non-UK organisations, or
- UK and non-UK research organisations working together in a consortium.

Joint proposals help avoid undue costs that might be caused by multiple currency exchanges or other transfer delays that might occur between institutions.

Therefore, to ensure UK funds are not subject to unnecessary currency exchange, any researcher based at a UK organisation must be named on an application with a UK-based PI/co-PI to ensure payments remain in pounds sterling. Non-UK researchers may be named on applications led by either UK or non-UK PI's/co-PI's.

How to submit a Joint Proposal:

A joint proposal involves submitting several Je-S applications for the same project – one application form for each PIs or co-PIs that is involved in the proposal. Each separate application must be linked to all other applications that collectively comprise the complete joint proposal and, crucially, must be linked to the lead organisation making the application through the Je-S application system.

All Research Organisations applying through a joint proposal will be asked by the Je-S system to indicate whether the project is part of a joint proposal, and to confirm whether their component application is the lead or non-lead. The lead PI in the lead organisation will be given a common

²⁶ Please note only research organisations acting as PIs or Co-PIs can receive funding directly. Co-investigators are funded via the PI's or CO-PIs.

identifying code for the project. Non-lead Research Organisations will have to specify this common identifying code when submitting their part of the joint proposal on the Je-S. This common identifying code then links all the different/component joint applications comprising the whole project.

The lead PI must start the application process first in order for the common identifying code to be created. Co-PI's will not be able to start entering information until they have entered this code.

It should be noted that the lead PI is able to create documents on behalf of the co-PI's and then transfer ownership to the co-PI prior to submission. For projects that involve both UK and non-UK researchers, applicants may consider designating the UK researcher as the lead PI or co-PI, and have them create much of the documentation, as they are likely to be more familiar with the Je-S process.

The minimum sum that can be awarded to an individual Research Organisation is £10,000 (100% FEC). Funds will be issued directly to the Research Organisation of the lead PI and funds will also be issued directly to the organisation of any co-PIs .

All Research Organisations receiving funds directly from this call will be:

- accountable for all funds received,
- responsible for the proper disbursement of funds to any partner organisations or individuals named on their application (e.g. Co-I's, project partners, subcontractors) and
- subject to the terms and conditions for ESPA awards.

For each project there will be one overall lead Principal Investigator and lead Research Organisation with responsibility for the management of the project, including all reporting requirements. The Research Organisations of co-Principal Investigators will also have responsibility for the input of all other individuals/organisations named on their application, i.e. any Co-Investigators and other project partners.

The end date of any grant made to the **lead** Research Organisation must not be earlier than the end date of a grant made to any of the joint/non-lead Research Organisations in the project.

Limitations to Joint proposals for the Programme Framework Grants.

- Joint project proposals may be submitted with a maximum of **four** component Je-S applications, including the lead application, i.e. one lead PI and three co-PIs.
- To avoid unnecessary currency exchange, any researcher based at a UK organisation must be named on an application with a UK-based PI or co-PI.
- Any researcher (i.e. lead PI, co-PI, Col, Researcher Col) can only be named on one Programme Framework proposal.

Limitations to Joint proposals submitted to the Partnership and Project Development Grant scheme

- Joint project proposals may be submitted with a maximum of **two** component Je-S applications, including the lead application, i.e. one lead PI and one co-PI.
- To avoid unnecessary currency exchange, any researcher based at a UK organisation must be named on an application with a UK-based PI or co-PI.
- Applications involving only UK institutions will not be accepted to this scheme.
- Any researcher (i.e. lead PI, co-PI, Col, Researcher Col) can only be named on two proposals, and only one as the lead PI.

6.0 Application components

All applications must be submitted in English and costed in pounds sterling (£) using the official NERC application form, submitted through the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. **DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED USING SINGLE-SPACED TYPESCRIPT, MINIMUM FONT SIZE 11 POINT (ARIAL FONT), WITH MARGINS OF AT LEAST 2CM.**

Applications must be completed through the Je-S system.

The application has several elements.

- The pro-forma – an on-line form comprising a number of structured boxes for key information; the pro-forma will need to be completed by all lead PIs and co-PIs.

The following elements are completed offline and uploaded as attachments to the pro-forma (specific details on these for the 2 grants currently open are given in the following sections):

- the 'Case for Support', which describes the proposed research and previous track record of the key team members. The Case for Support only needs to be submitted by the lead PI.
- Justification of the resources requested (up to 2 sides A4), which is submitted by the lead PI
- UK/Non-UK costs breakdown spreadsheet (Annex 4) identifying full costings for the proposed research (to be submitted with each application in a single or joint proposal)
- CVs for all PI's, co-PI's and Co-Investigators, for all named research staff post and Visiting Researchers (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV).
- Letters of support from any named Project Partners (up to 2 sides A4 each)
- Application forms for any NERC Facility/Ship-time requested.
- Price quotations for equipment costing more than £25,000. For single items costing more than £100,000 a minimum of 3 quotations must be provided.
- Impact Plan (up to 2 sides A4), submitted by the lead PI only

Full step-by-step guidance on how to complete a Je-S application form for this Scheme is available in the document '**Guide to creating a Je-S application**' in Annex 2. Generic guidance is also available from the Je-S Help screens.

A checklist is provided in section 11.1 detailing the requirements for each Je-S application.

The deadline for all research applications to this call is **16:00 hours UK local time on 3rd March 2010.**

Applications can only be accepted by electronic submission in the manner indicated on the form and accompanying guidance notes, and it must be clear and unambiguous that the submission took place prior to the deadline. Electronic acknowledgements will be sent to the lead Principal Investigator and submitting organisation.

Please note that when a researcher submits his or her component of the application, a message is sent to their host organisation's designated 'submitter', who must then complete the submission process. Therefore, there is a further layer of administration between the researcher submitting the application and it being received by the NERC, via Je-S. This layer of administration is at the applicant's host institution, and the NERC cannot accept responsibility for any delays which may occur as a consequence. This process is further described in the Figure 1.

We strongly advise applicants to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the application has been submitted successfully to the NERC by 16:00 UK local time 3rd March 2010.

All elements of the application form must be properly completed. Specific care should also be taken with the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime, which will be the basis for any grant given to successful applications. Guidance on FEC for UK applicants is available in the Research Grants Handbook on the NERC website (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/researchgrants/>).

For non-UK organisations and UK organisations not normally eligible for RC funding, it is expected that they will be able to comply with full and transparent costing for budget elements (see Section 6.3.). Please note, all costings should be in pounds sterling (£).

6.1 Je-S Proforma

NB: Further step-by-step guidance on completing the Je-S Application form is available in the separate documentation 'Guide to creating a Je-S application' (Annex 1)

In order to prepare a Je-S proposal submission, the person preparing the proposal has to log onto Je-S and create a new proposal.

Note this person must have previously created an individual Je-S account for themselves.

An organisation's administrator is able to prepare the online documents on behalf of the principal investigator if necessary, if they have previously created an 'Administration' account for themselves (note this account type does not need third party verification).

On logging into Je-S, follow this procedure:

- Click on 'Documents', then create a 'New Document'
- Click on 'Call Search' and enter 'ESPA'. This will bring up the two ESPA calls currently open.
- Alternatively you can follow this procedure:
- Select the Research Council – NERC.
- Select Document type 'Standard Proposal'
- Select Scheme - 'Directed'.
- Select call 'ESPA Programme Framework' or 'ESPA Partnership and Project Development'.

There will then be a list of sections to complete that make up the pro-forma. See Annex 2 for further guidance.

6.2 Case for Support

The Case for Support should include the following two components, Track Record and Description of Proposed Research, and these components should be uploaded as a single attachment on Je-S.

6.2.1 Track record

Outline of the nature of the consortium, with details of relevant experience, key publications and details of any external funding held for key individual and their organisations. For non-UK organisations or UK organisations not normally eligible for Research Council funding²⁷, the track record should also include brief information and assurances of the organisational and fiduciary competencies of the organisation.

Programme Framework grants - maximum of 2 sides A4

Partnership and Programme Development grants – maximum of 2 sides A4

²⁷ Contact JE-S Helpdesk if you are not sure if your organisation is normally eligible for RC funding.

6.2.2 Description of proposed research

The Description of Proposed Research included in the Case for Support contains the substance of the research application. It is essential that a coherent exposition of the proposed project is presented, addressing the intellectual and academic case, potential for impact on the ESPA research agenda, any collaboration or partnership configuration, an appropriate management plan. Applicants are also referred to section 4 on assessment criteria.

Applicants are advised that they should pay attention to the environmental implications of their research. They should take reasonable steps to minimise or offset the carbon footprint of all travel supported by the Scheme. Where the project has control documents, reports and paper outputs, these should be printed on paper made from sustainably managed forests and/or recycled paper.

Programme Framework grants

The Description of Proposed Research project should not exceed **8 sides A4**.

This should include objectives and outputs of the proposed research and how it fits with the ESPA Research agenda as detailed in this call, Section 2.

Partnership and Project Development grants

The Description of Proposed Research project should not exceed **2 sides of A4**.

This should include preliminary ideas for a proposed project to be submitted to the December consortium call or a subsequent ESPA funding round. You should also include information about where you may be lacking appropriate team members, along with an explanation of how you would go about identifying the key personnel needed for the proposed project.

6.3 Finances

The budget limits on grant applications under this scheme refer to the total cost of the project – known as the **full economic costs (FEC)**. All of the UK Research Councils research grant applications are awarded on a full economic cost (FEC) basis. This will apply to ESPA.

Research grant funds are provided to meet the costs incurred by the specific research project. Funds may not be used to meet costs on any other project or activity. All costs associated with the project must be itemised and fully justified

Requested funds will be scrutinised during the assessment process, and if recommended for funding, NERC, on behalf of the ESPA funders, will request adequate evidence of the costing basis for all direct and indirect costs. Note that budgets may be reduced if considered excessive.

Further Guidance on fund headings are provided in Annex 5

The financial cost of the proposed project should be identified through the following components:

- Je-S pro-forma
- full cost of project on template Excel spreadsheet (Annex 4)
- justification of resources document

6.3.1 UK Organisations costing

UK universities are required to calculate the FEC using the “TRAC” (Transparent Approach to Costing) methodology. Other recognised UK research organisations (ROs) use an equivalent methodology, which has been validated by the Research Councils. For more information, please go to the RCs’ Dual Support Reform web pages, which include guidance notes and FAQs (<http://www.pparc.ac.uk/jes/DualSupport.asp>).

UK organisations will be supported at **80%** of the FEC costs. All costs from UK organisations should be submitted in the Je-S form under the appropriate fund headings as for other RC grants rounds.

All applicants should enter the full economic costs of the proposed research into the budget sections of the Je-S form as instructed in the Je-S help text.

All applicants should complete the costings template spreadsheet (Annex 4) and upload as an 'Other Attachment' to their proposal.

6.3.2 Non UK Organisations costing

Non-UK institutions will be supported at **100%** for the **direct** costs of the research. In addition, indirect costs may be charged on staff salary and other staff-related costs (i.e. statutory contributions analogous to UK National Insurance or Superannuation contributions).

Indirect costs (overheads) may **not** be charged on non-staff related direct costs, e.g. equipment, travel and subsistence, consultancies, conferences etc.

The following rates for indirect costs should be applied:

- for applicants from **developing** countries, the rate is **50%** (a list of developing countries for the purpose of this costing regime is available in Annex 3.);
- for applicants from **developed** countries, the rate is **20%**.

It is essential that applicants make clear, when completing the Je-S application form, which costs will be incurred by UK institutions and which will be incurred by non-UK institutions. This will ensure that, if your application is successful, the NERC Finance Office can identify any non-UK direct costs that should be funded at 100% and the appropriate level of indirect costs.

The following procedure has been agreed to allow applicants to identify costs relating to **non-UK institutions**:

All project costs **relating to non-UK institutions** must be prefixed as non-UK and must be entered into the budget section of the Je-S form as follows:

- PIs, co-PIs and Co-Is must enter their time allocation under 'Directly Allocated' **but must enter the salary rate as zero**. Their salary and any other salary related costs must then be entered under 'Other Directly Incurred Costs';
- all other staff salaries and related costs should be entered under 'Other Directly Incurred Costs';
- any indirect costs (overheads) should be entered under 'Other Directly Incurred Costs' (this should include any expected increases in salary costs as a result of indexation)
- travel and subsistence costs should be entered under 'Travel and Subsistence'.

These costs must be clearly identified on the form as non-UK costs to be funded at 100%. Failure to properly identify non-UK costs may result in the full costs not being paid, even if the application is successful.

In addition to completing the appropriate finance sections on the Je-S pro-forma, all applications should also complete a supplementary spreadsheet (described below), which must be included as an attachment to the Je-S form.

This is because the Je-S form has been developed for applications from UK institutions and hence automatically calculates the 80% 'NERC Contribution', the 80% cost will be calculated for your project and will appear on the Je-S form. The supplementary spreadsheet will be required in order to provide an accurate reflection of the true (100%) cost of the project for both applicants and the ESPA Secretariat,

The **template supplementary spreadsheet 'UK/non-UK Cost Breakdown ' (Annex 4)** which applicants should use to record these costs is provided on the call website. This spreadsheet will record full details of:

- the total FEC of the application;
- all UK institution costs where the NERC 80% contribution will be applied;

- all non-UK direct costs that should be funded in full, plus the indirect cost (overhead) rate applied.

This spreadsheet must be uploaded as an 'Other Attachment' on all applications.

It is important to note that where non-UK costs are specified, these refer to the costs incurred by non-UK institutions.

Overseas travel and expenses costs incurred by members of UK institutions must be met by those UK institutions, and will be paid at 80%

All applicants are advised to consult their institutional finance officers when completing the financial parts of the application.

6.3.3 Justification of Resources

All applicants must clearly state the justification for the costs requested, within the separate document '**Justification of Resources**' to be uploaded on Je-S, as part of the application. This should state the estimated cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed. It is not sufficient merely to list what is being requested. Where you do not provide sufficient justification for any item, it may be cut from any award made.

Resources should be broken down into the summary fund headings as detailed in Annex 5, and clearly show which costs relate to non-UK organisations and therefore attract the 100% direct cost rate. Non-UK costs should be listed under 'Directly Incurred Other' costs (and broken down into staff, equipment and overhead costs). Non-UK travel costs should be listed under the 'Directly Incurred T&S' heading, but must be clearly marked as relating to non-UK organisations.

Please note that if successful, the amount awarded to a project is limited to that amount awarded at the time the award was issued, and will not be increased at any time due to changes in the global financial markets. Therefore applicants should set out how they will deal with any changing currency fluctuations that may occur during the duration of their project, and the possible impact this may have on the plan of works.

Justification of Resources for Programme Framework grants and Partnership and Project Development grants should be described in a maximum of **2 sides A4**. **This document should include justification of costs for the entire project (including that of any joint grants) and is only submitted by the lead PI.**

6.4 Impact plans

All applicants are required to include an **Impact Plan, as set out in section 2.5** which addresses the following three questions:

- Who will benefit from this research?
- How will they benefit from this research?
- What will be done to ensure that they have the opportunity to benefit from this research?

It is recommended that a minimum of 10% of the overall budget for Programme Framework grants should be dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the Impact Plan.

Applicants for the **Partnership and Project Development grants** will **not** be expected to have a fully developed impact plan. They will, however, be expected to address in their impact plan how they will go about identifying and engaging with the potential beneficiaries and impacts of their proposed research agenda and how they will develop the impact plan when preparing an application for a Research Consortium award.

In addition to the Impact Plan developed by individual projects, it should also be noted that ESPA wish to sponsor additional outreach activities involving one or more projects in order to increase the impact of their research outcomes. All grant holders will be expected to cooperate with the Programme

Executive Board (PEB) or ESPA Directorate in such activities, and will also be expected to represent the scheme and their project through involvement, where appropriate, in third-party events.

6.5 Letters of Support from Project Partners

Each Project Partner must provide a detailed letter of support of up to 2 sides of A4. The letter of support should confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project, identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the partner, the period of support, the full nature of the collaboration and how the partner will be involved in the project and provide added value. Partner contributions, whether in cash or in kind, should be explained in detail in the case for support, including the equivalent value of any in-kind contributions. The letter should be written when the proposal is being prepared and targeted specifically to the project.

7.0 *Submitting your proposal*

Applications must be completed in full before submission. The Je-S system has a validation procedure which will identify any sections that have not been completed, except for any 'Other Attachments' such as the finance spreadsheet, so you must ensure you have included this.

Once the applicant submits the proposal, notification is then sent to their organisation's 'submitter'. This is the person in that organisation with a Je-S account authorised to approve the proposal and do the final stage of submission.

Note: each component of a joint proposal will need to go through the same submission process. The Lead PI should ensure that all partners have submitted their part of the joint proposal.

Therefore submission of your proposal is a two stage process:
Applicant → Submitter (within the applicant's institution) → NERC

8.0 Assessment Process

8.1 Scheme eligibility

All proposals received will undergo a number of eligibility checks to ensure that application procedures specified in the announcement have been adhered to, e.g. that proposals have included all the correct information requested and that page limits are not exceeded. Any application not adhering to the application guidelines will be rejected (although minor problems will be returned to the applicants through JeS to correct within a specified time frame).

8.2 Peer Review

All Programme Framework and Partnership and Project Development proposals received under this call will be peer reviewed against the criteria in Section 4, by expert members of a Peer Review Panel.

With reference to this information, the Panel is responsible for:

1. providing a final grading and comments on the proposal in a form that will be made available to the proposer (if requested);
2. providing recommendations for funding to the ESPA Programme Executive Board; where there are competing proposals, the panel will make recommendations on priorities in the context of the funding available;
3. satisfying themselves that the financial resources requested for funded proposals are reasonable to meet the project objectives and recommend any areas of budget.

Funding decisions will be communicated to applicants by the end of May 2010, with start dates for awards being from July 2010.

9.0 Reporting

All grant holders will be expected to comply with both the Research Councils and DFID's commitment to open access, and to update information about their outputs on both NERC's online Research Outputs Database (ROD) www.rod.nerc.ac.uk and DFID's Research Portal www.research4development.info (R4D). Previous ESPA grant holders are encouraged to maintain their output record from previous grants.

10.0 Data Policy

The funders of ESPA believe that datasets collected as a result of projects are an important resource that must be adequately managed. NERC has a number of designated data centres where data for the different environmental disciplines is stored (see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/>). Both qualitative and quantitative social science data should be deposited with the Economics and Social Data Service (ESDS) (<http://www.esds.ac.uk/>). Investigators should therefore make sure that the relevant designated data centre is aware of any significant datasets to be compiled as a result of their projects, so that the long-term future of these data can be planned. At the end of an award, Investigators are required to offer the appropriate NERC or ESRC Data Centre a copy of any dataset generated, so that the data can be made available for other researchers. The Intellectual Property Rights to the data need not be transferred.

The ESPA funders reserve the right to access all unpublished papers, records, data or collections resulting from the work carried out under a grant, some of which may be required to be deposited with one of the funding bodies. Similarly, ESPA reserves the right to use information on the outcome of awards to report on achievements, e.g. in annual reports. ESPA may, at any time, require detailed information on the results of work funded through grants for use in scientific or financial audits.

All award holders will be expected to cooperate with the Directorate and data centre staff to ensure that all data generated during the research project is appropriately formatted and deposited in the relevant data centre.

The cost of all data management activities, including any costs associated with transferring the data to a designated data centre, must be fully costed within the research grant.

11.0 Checklist and key information

11.1 Summary of Requirements for Applications

Document Type	Common to all proposals	Submitted by Lead Only	Submitted by Individual components	Number limit
Title of proposal (pro forma)	✓		✓	150 chars max
Type of proposal (pro forma)	✓		✓	n/a
Objectives (pro forma)	✓		✓	max 4000 chars
Summary (pro forma)	✓		✓	max 4000 chars
Academic Beneficiaries ²⁸ (pro forma)	✓		✓	max 4000 chars
Impact Summary (pro forma)	✓		✓	max 4000 chars
Nominated referees (pro forma)		✓		max 4
Project Partners (pro forma)	✓	✓		No limit
Facility (pro forma)			✓	
Previous Track Record (Part 1 of the Case for Support).	✓	✓		PF = max 2 sides A4; PPD = max 2 sides A4;
Description of Proposed Research (Part 2 of the Case for Support)	✓	✓		PF = max 8 sides A4; PPD = max 2 sides A4;
Justification of Resources	✓	✓		max 2 sides A4
Impact Plan	✓	✓		PF = max 2 sides A4 PPD = max 2 sides A4
Letters of support from Project Partners	✓	✓		max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for named research staff and Visiting Researchers from all component Research Organisations			✓	Max 2 sides A4 each
CVs for all Principal and Co-I Investigators from all component Research Organisations			✓	Max 2 sides A4
Equipment Quotations			✓	
Facility forms (HPC, Ship-time, FAAM etc)			✓	
'UK/non-UK Cost Breakdown '			✓	

Chars = characters; PF =Programme Framework awards; PPD = Partnership and Project Development awards

²⁸ Should include all beneficiaries for this scheme.

11.2 Key dates

Deadline for Programme Framework Notification of intention to submit is **29th January 2010**.

Deadline for Je-S registration is **8th February 2010**.

Deadline for proposal submission by submitter pool is **16.00 UK local time, 3rd March 2010**.

Note that once the applicant submits the proposal, it goes to the 'submitter' in their organisation, who then has to verify and submit to the Research Council.

Assessment panel – **w/c 17th May 2010**.

Notification of awards – **w/c 24th May 2010**.

Feedback will be available to all applicants upon request only.

11.3 Key points to remember

- All proposals must be costed in pounds sterling (£)
- Documents should be submitted using single-spaced typescript, minimum font size 11 point (Arial font), with margins of at least 2cm
- All documents must be written in English
- All lead and co-PI's, Co-I's, Researcher co-I's and their organisations, must as a minimum, be 'listed' on Je-S.
- All organisations wishing to directly **submit** a proposal (i.e.: the lead and co-PIs organisation) must be 'fully' registered, and have a 'submitter' account set up, which is a person in the organisation, with the designated authority to submit the proposal.
- Any researcher based at a UK organisation, must be named on an application that has a UK based PI/co-PI.
- Applicants may only be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **one** Programme Frameworks grant.
- Applicants may only be named (i.e. as lead PI, co-PI, Co-I or Researcher co-I) on **two** Partnership and Project Development grants, but can only be named as **lead PI on one** of these

11.4 Further Guidance

This document has been created to specifically help applicants applying for the ESPA programme. It may be used in conjunction with generic guidance found in the NERC grants Handbook and in Je-S Help text.

Further information is available in the NERC Grants Handbook <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/researchgrants/>

Je-S Help text is available on every page of your Je-S form – click on 'Help' in the top right corner of each page or go to <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/jesHandBook/jhHome.aspx>

Important note: Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance in the above sources, **the information in this document should be adhered to.**

Further information on the ESPA Programme can be found in the Programme Memorandum
<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/resources.asp>

11.5 Contacts

Je-S Helpdesk (for all technical queries)

E-mail: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4164*

Staffed Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm UK local time (excluding Bank holidays and other holidays)

Out of hours: leave a Voice Mail message

When reporting problems by e-mail or telephone, please supply the following information:

- Your name, organisation and user id
- The date and time
- What part of the form or system you were working on
- The nature of the problem

Scheme specific guidance:

ESPA Secretariat: espa@nerc.ac.uk ;

For phone contact details, refer to the NERC website:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao4.asp>

12.0 Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCCEP	Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy
CO-I	Co-Investigator
co-PI	co-Principal Investigator
CV	Curriculum Vitae/ Resume
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
ESPA	Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation
ESRC	Economics and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FEC	Full Economic Cost
GBP	Great British Pound
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBPES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IGBP	International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme
IHDP	International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change
Je-S	Joint Electronic Submission
LWEC	Living with Environmental Change
MA	Millennium Assessment
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PDRA	post-Doctoral research Assistant
PI	Principal Investigator
RC	Research Council
RO	Research Organisation
STEPS	Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability
UN	United Nations