



UK Collaborative on
Development Research

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020/21**

About UKCDR

UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) is a collaborative of government and research funders working in international development, governed by the Strategic Coherence for ODA-funded Research (SCOR) Board. Our core contributing members include the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO); the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC); UK Research and Innovation (UKRI); and Wellcome. UKCDR exists to amplify the value and impact of research for global development by promoting coherence, collaboration and joint action among UK research funders. For further information on UKCDR, please visit ukcdr.org.uk.

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Geometric shapes lie across the emptiness of the Sahara Desert in southern Egypt. USGS

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Letter from Executive Director Marta Tufet



We have all faced many challenges this year, from the shift to virtual working, the difficulties of lockdown and importantly the concerns about the safety of our families and loved ones. I am very proud of the work we have achieved this year under these circumstances and that we have been able to hold true to one of our key strategic aims: to adapt and react to a changing landscape and support our members to better coordinate a research response in the face of emerging crises.

At the core of our 2018-2022 strategy is a principal commitment to data mapping, analysis and foresight, with our remaining activities built upon this strong foundation of knowledge and evidence.

At the start of the pandemic, UKCDR was well positioned to provide support to the global research funding response. With our commitment to high quality data and evidence, our team's expertise for mapping and analysis of funding, our networks and partnerships that we have built, and our Epidemics Preparedness and Response Group at the ready.

We may be a small organisation, but we have been able to deliver big impact. As our work on COVID-19 shows, we have convened partners from across the world, tracked billions of dollars of funding from over 200 funders and thousands of research projects to inform funding decisions and advocate for setting priorities for low-resource settings where there is further research need.

Opening the dialogue on race and inequality in international development research

In light of global Black Lives Matter protests against institutional and systemic racism, our team collectively agreed to reflect on how we personally and as an organisation could do more to open dialogue and encourage review and change practices across our sector. For Black History Month, we published a long-form article exploring some of the ways in which racial inequality is perpetuated and efforts to decolonise and mobilise global voices and a series of invited blog pieces bringing the issues in question to life that are well worth a read.

Research enablers for impact

We are all concerned about the risk that the reduction in the ODA target poses to the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals made so far. This is a critical moment for international development research. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, continued R&D ODA investments for the generation of new knowledge is critical to effectively direct limited resources to where they are most needed and ensure greater potential for impact.

We continue to improve the understanding of the very significant impact that UK research has had in modern times towards achieving global goals, for example, through the publication of cross-government success studies that showcase the contribution of UK funded research to meet the SDGs and hosting the high-level virtual dialogue with the UK Government's Chief Scientific Advisor and several well-known political and scientific figures from the UK and its international partners.

Looking forward it will be important to continue to provide a better understanding of the impact from UK funded research. I hope we will continue to make our voice heard on the value of investing in research for international development.

Strategy

In the past 4 years, UKCDR has undergone significant structural changes and successfully transitioned from an organisation with a severe risk rating (with 4 directors and a 70% staff turnover in less than 2 years) into a vibrant and influential organisation with a clear vision and strategy, solid operational structures and a loyal and motivated team delivering a record number of high-profile reports and activities, and secured an A/A+ rating against objectives at the last funder review.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support and contributions of our members, our wider stakeholder group and international partners and data and time provided to all our reports, advice and guidance and constructive discussions in our funder fora over the past years.

UKCDR's current strategy ends in 2022. This year, under the direction of the new Executive Director, we will define a new strategy fit for the increasingly complex world we live in post-Brexit and hopefully post pandemic. This provides opportunities for UKCDR and SCOR to continue to drive collaboration and a more joined-up approach, whilst taking the lead on change and innovation in development.

My thanks go to the board members of SCOR and the UKCDR Officials group for their leadership and support to UKCDR's vision. Professor Peter Piot stepped down as independent Chair of the Board after four years. His immense experience in global development and his passion have been invaluable to all of us at UKCDR.

I am delighted to be leaving the Board and UKCDR in Marie Staunton's incredibly capable hands. I have no doubt that her leadership will ensure that SCOR is more than the sum of its parts and will be able to tackle the challenges facing UK funded development with alacrity.

Introduction: Marie Staunton, CBE, Independent Chair of the SCOR Board



Marie Staunton CBE was formally appointed the new Chair to lead the Strategic Coherence of ODA-funded Research (SCOR) Board in May 2021. The SCOR Board brings an overall perspective on the funding, expertise and experience across HM Government as well as helping ensure that coordination efforts are impactful and that the UK provides a strong voice of leadership to the international development research community. The SCOR Board also provides strategic oversight to and is supported by UKCDR. Ms Staunton replaced Professor Peter Piot, who served as the SCOR Board's first chair since November 2017.

Message from Marie

UKCDR and its members have played a key role in the global research response to the pandemic between April 2020 and March 2021 while supporting research to improve lives, delivering impact and value for money.

I am honoured to be taking over the vital role as Chair of the SCOR Board from Professor Piot, who has built the organisation's reputation for impact and value for money. Over the past 30 years as a development practitioner I have seen how excellent research has led to better decisions, impact and outcomes for the world's poorest girls and boys, women and men. The SCOR Board's role in coordinating the UK's research effort has never been more important.

2020 and 2021 presented extraordinary challenges and hardship for so many around the world. Communities from Aberdeen to Zanzibar face increasing global problems such as COVID-19 and climate change, that only effective international research can help solve.

Not only do these complex challenges pose a threat to development progress and risk pushing people back into poverty, they may lead to increased global insecurity, affecting citizens across the world.

In the aftershocks of Brexit, COVID-19 and the severe cuts to the UK's aid budget, research and innovation will be crucial in helping decision makers understand what interventions are most effective for the global good and directing limited funds to where they are most needed.

This context gives the SCOR Board a particular opportunity. It is more important than ever that research funding efforts are joined up and not duplicated.

UKCDR members have learnt lessons on effectiveness including through the scrutiny of ICAI. UKCDR has a good track record on value for money. For example, UKCDR's small expert staff reacted rapidly to COVID-19 by tracking research across the world so that funders could coordinate and researchers and innovators can learn from each other.

The SCOR Board has access to the breadth of disciplines and depth of research expertise that major challenges such as pandemics and climate change require. It can interpret government's research agendas and coordinate solutions that require multidisciplinary, local and global teams.

Partnerships between academic institutions in the Global North and the Global South are bedevilled by a perceived conflict between excellence and equity. Scholarship schemes can lead to a brain drain of graduates from the Global South to the Global North. During the COVID-19 pandemic universities have swiftly developed blended learning and split site working. The SCOR Board is in a strategic position to encourage different forms of collaboration and global networks of knowledge.

Looking forward, the SCOR Board and I will continue to focus on how UK research can have the maximum impact on lives and livelihoods in developing countries.

About Marie

Marie Staunton has over 25 years of international development and human rights experience, with a broad career in the public, private and NGO sectors. Having qualified as a lawyer, she has worked on many human rights issues and held senior positions at Pearson and UNICEF UK. She has also served as Chief Executive Officer of the child-centred development agency, Plan UK and Plan Canada. Marie currently Chairs the Board at SOAS University and has been on the boards of a variety of local, national and international organisations including the Disasters Emergency Committee, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and Amnesty International.

Commenting on the appointment, SCOR Board member and Chief Scientific Advisor of the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, Charlotte Watts said:

"I am delighted to welcome Marie Staunton as Chair of the SCOR Board. It is a vital role and a critical time for international development research. It is more important than ever that research funding efforts are joined up and focused towards critical development challenges. I look forward to working alongside her to help build

1. About UKCDR

1.1 Who we are

UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR), is a collaborative of government and research funders working in international development. Our core contributing members include:

- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)¹
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Wellcome Trust

1.2 Our vision & mission

Vision: Accelerated global development through the power of research and knowledge.

Mission: We exist to amplify the value and impact of research for global development by promoting coherence, collaboration and joint action among UK research funders.

1.3 Our strategy



At the core of our strategy (2018-2022) is a principal commitment to data mapping, analysis and foresight, with our remaining activities built upon this strong foundation of knowledge and evidence. We have four integrated and overlapping aims:

- Mapping, analysis and foresight
- Convening for collaboration and joint action
- Sharing information, learning and best practice
- A collective voice to shape policy

¹ The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office was created through a merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in September 2020. Prior to the merger, DFID was a core contributing member of UKCDR, while FCO was not. Where DFID has been used, this indicates that the activity/event discussed was prior to the formation of FCDO.

1.4 Our current priority areas



1.5 Our contribution to research for global development

The UK has long been a global leader in international development research. UK-funded research has been effective in achieving a global impact, both in terms of direct human development and influence on policy geared towards meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the spectrum of international development.

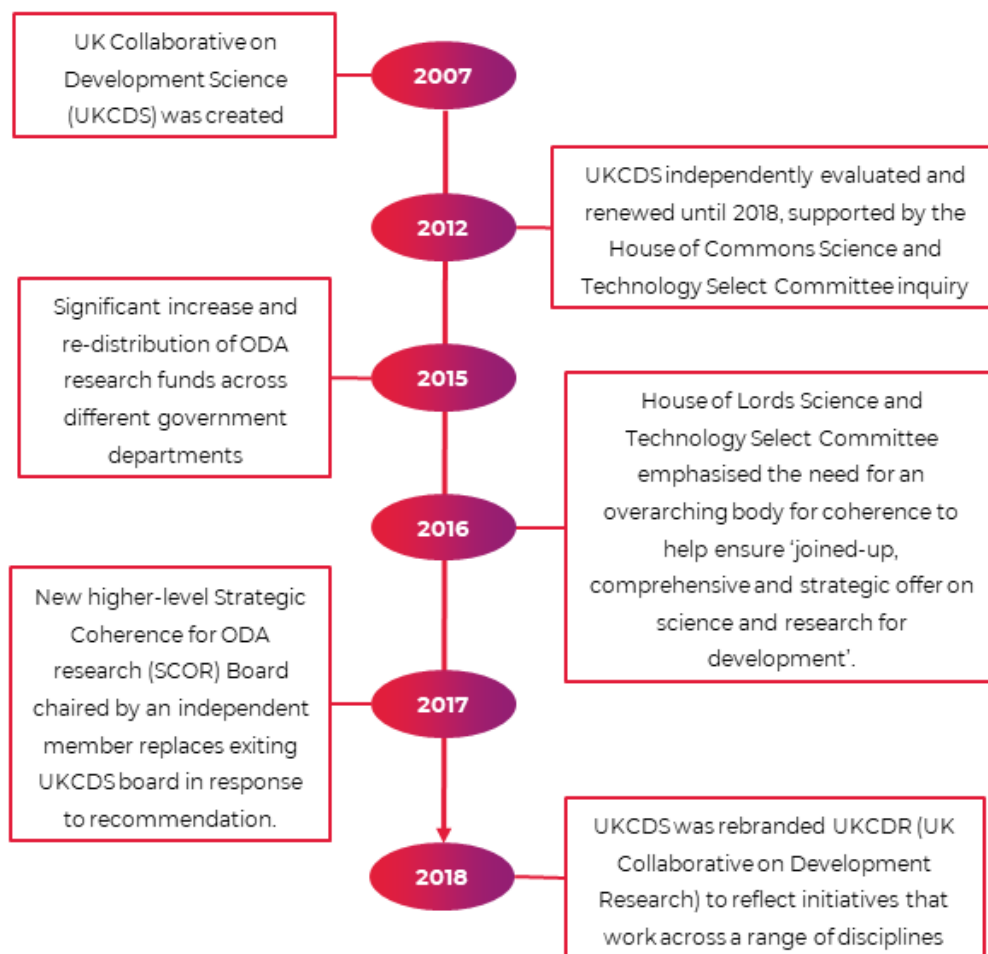
At UKCDR, we firmly believe that research across disciplines and in partnership with low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is essential to drive global development progress. The UK ODA funding landscape provides the opportunity to address the SDGs through the generation of knowledge.

We draw on the complimentary skills of our UK members and wider international stakeholders across civil society, business, philanthropy and academia by supporting them to work collaboratively and in partnership. We encourage our members and stakeholders to work collaboratively to make a difference in gap or opportunity areas, to reduce the risk of duplication and share accountability.

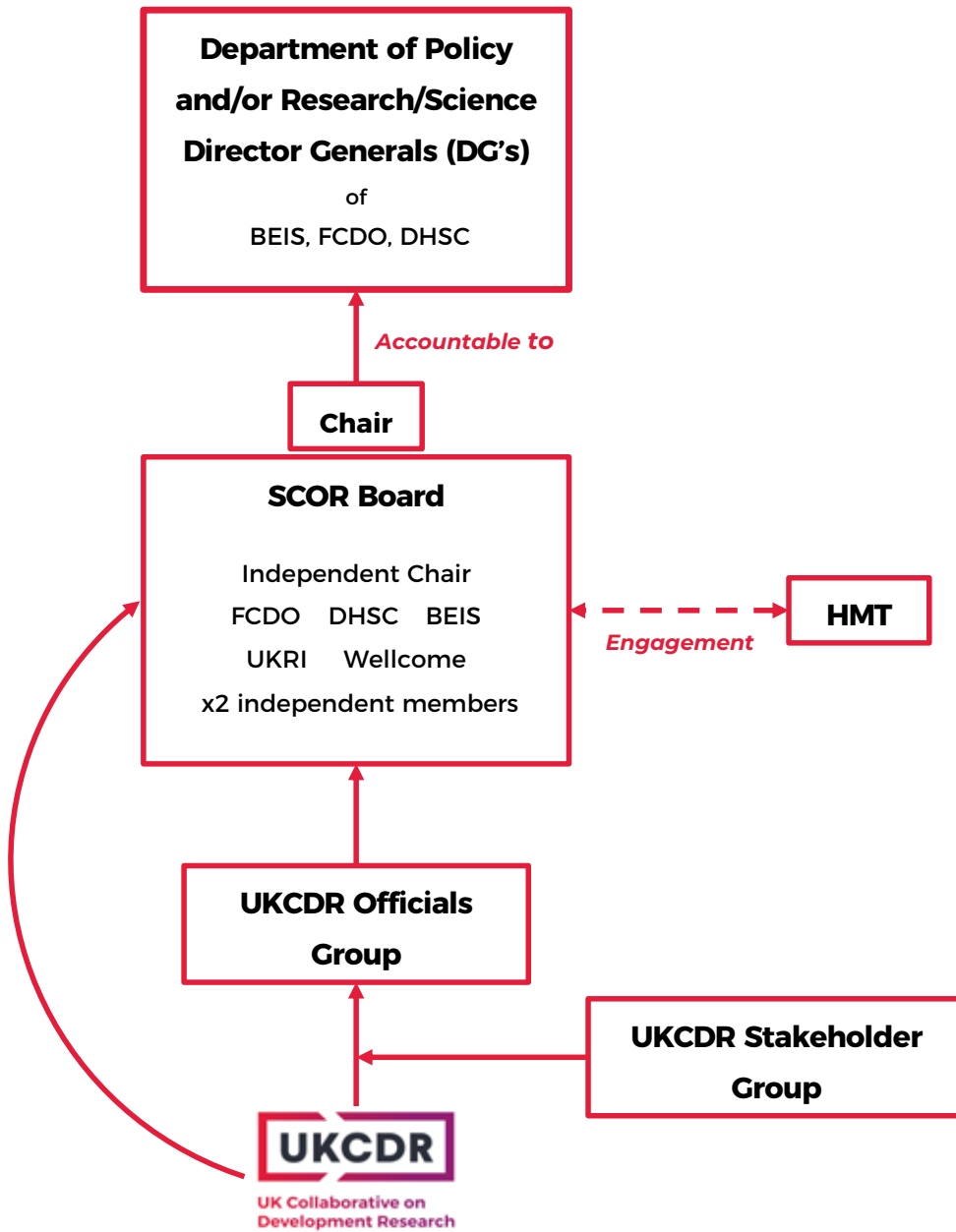
We contribute to this landscape by promoting and improving good practice around enablers of research including research capacity strengthening, equitable partnerships and safeguarding.

UKCDR facilitates and supports several initiatives to develop transparency in UK Aid spend on research. Through UKCDR funder fora, consultations and events, the largest government funders of research for international development – FCDO, BEIS, DHSC, UKRI - come together with other major international development research funders and delivery partners to share updates on their work, best practice and accountability, and to work collaboratively to improve international development outcomes.

1.6 UKCDR Origins



1.7 Governance



1.7.1 SCOR Board

The SCOR Board supports coherence across all government ODA-funded research programmes and those of Wellcome, adding value to departmental level governance, and avoiding fragmentation. It was established in December 2017 with the appointment of its first independent chair.

It is also responsible for providing high-level oversight of UKCDR, advising on its strategic direction and performance.

Members of SCOR Board:

- Prof Peter Piot (until April 2021) / Marie Staunton, CBE (from May 2021) - Independent Chair of SCOR Board
- Prof Charlotte Watts - Chief Scientific Advisor, FCDO
- Prof Chris Whitty - Chief Scientific Adviser, DHSC
- Harriet Wallace - Director International Research and Innovation, BEIS
- Prof Andrew Thomson - Chief Executive, AHRC (UKRI representative)
- Prof Fiona Watt - Executive Chair, MRC (UKRI representative)
- Prof Jeremy Farrar - Director, Wellcome Trust
- Prof Jo Beall - Director Cultural Engagement, British Council (Independent Member)
- Prof Melissa Leach - Director of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (Independent Member)

The SCOR Board engages strategically with HM Treasury through its chair to give assurance as to the overall coherence of funding and reports annually to the Director General Delivery, FCDO, the Director General Global and Public Health, DHSC and the Director General Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation, BEIS.

Since its establishment in 2017 the SCOR Board has met 13 times, including two Strategy Days with representatives of other HMG departments in February 2020 and April 2021.

1.7.2 UKCDR Officials Group

The UKCDR Officials Group was established in mid-2018 to provide an executive function to the SCOR Board. It also provides operational and financial oversight and assurance for UKCDR including ensuring funds can be managed jointly in support of UKCDR's Strategic Plan as set by the SCOR Board.

Members of the Officials Group during the financial year 2020/21 included:

- Dr Marta Tufet, Executive Director, UKCDR
- Andrew Shaw, Evaluation Adviser, Research & Evidence Directorate, FCDO
- Peter Cozens, Head of Policy and Governance, Research and Innovation for Development, International Research and Innovation Directorate / Chris Maskell, Head of Research and Innovation ODA Funds (alternates), BEIS
- Dr Mark Claydon-Smith, Associate Director International Development, UKRI
- Dr Val Snewin, Head of Global Health Research Partnerships, DHSC
- Alex Edge, Private Secretary (until March 2020) / Anna Lee, Global Policy and Advocacy Manager, Wellcome Trust (from March 2020)

The Officials Group was chaired by the UKCDR Executive Director². It meets at least six times per year, a month before SCOR Board meetings and two weeks after SCOR Board meetings, or more frequently if required. In addition, there is an annual joint meeting between the SCOR Board and Officials Group and/or annual attendance by the SCOR Chair at an Officials Group meeting.


In FY20/21, the Officials Group met 7 times (02.07.2020, 06.08.2020, 18.09.2020, 11.11.2020, 08.12.2020, 4.02.2021 and 02.03.2021). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic there was no Joint SCOR Board and UKCDR Officials Group meeting.

1.7.3 UKCDR Stakeholder Group

The UKCDR Stakeholder Group represents a broad range of organisations with ODA research funding and other organisations interested in funding international development research. It promotes learning, collaboration and information sharing between members, as well as allowing UKCDR to consult a wider range of stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Group typically meets twice a year, with recent meeting organised on 06.03.2020 and 20.10.2020. Recent attendees included representatives for the Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the British Academy, the British Council, the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC), the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Government Office for Science (Go Science), Innovate UK, Met Office, the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng), the Royal Society, the Scottish Government, the UK Space Agency, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Universities UK International and the Wellcome Trust.

² The UKCDR Officials Group Terms of Reference specify that all members of the Officials Group will chair on a rotating basis. The Officials Group opted not to implement this system in FY20/21.

An aerial topographic map of a mountainous region, likely the Himalayas, showing a river valley. The terrain is color-coded by elevation, with red and orange representing higher altitudes and blue and green representing lower altitudes. A prominent river valley is visible on the left side of the image.

2. A year at a glance: Programme highlights April 2020 to March 2021

COVID-19 has been a challenge for everyone over the past 12 months. Despite the difficult circumstances, UKCDR demonstrated its extraordinary agility to adapt and react to a changing landscape.

We supported UK and global funders to better coordinate a research response in the face of emerging crises, opened the dialogue on race and inequality in international development research and helped increase coherence in climate change research funding in the lead up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). We also continued our work on research enablers, particularly in the areas of Research Capacity Strengthening, Safeguarding and Equitable Partnerships. Finally, we continued to communicate the very significant impact of UK research for continued investment, crucial in light of announcements of cuts to the UK aid budget.

These projects were delivered in the context of our ongoing support to collaboration and alignment of development research funders in the UK and demonstrate our commitment to help UK-funded research deliver lasting impact in international development.

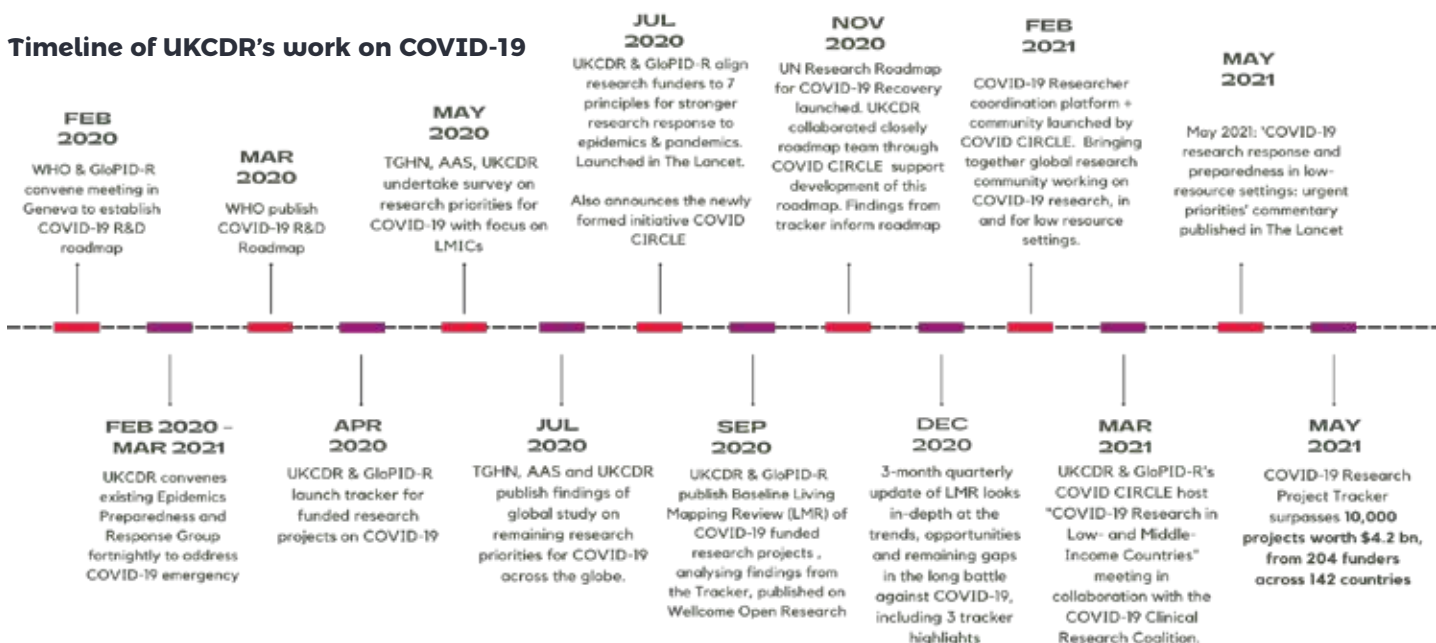
2.1 Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic



Over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, an inclusive and coordinated global research response remains crucial. From the early days of the pandemic, UKCDR has played a key role in this response, particularly through our [COVID-CIRCLE](#) initiative (COVID-19 Research Coordination and Learning), in partnership with the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious

Disease Preparedness (GloPID-R). We have been supporting global and UK research funders, by coordinating funding efforts, promoting research priorities relevant to LMICs, connecting networks of researchers, and collating learnings with a focus on lower-resource settings to improve responses within this outbreak and for future outbreaks.

Timeline of UKCDR's work on COVID-19



Epidemics Preparedness and Response Group

We were able to support the immediate response of UK research funders through our [Epidemics Preparedness and Response Group](#). The group met fortnightly throughout most of 2020 and brought together government, the devolved administrations, research councils, learned societies, Public Health England and selected NGOs. Key outcomes from the group include:

- Cross-government **Global Effort on COVID-19 (GECO) Health Research Calls³** (funded by DHSC/ National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the Medical Research Council (MRC)/ UKRI). This call aimed to support applied health research that addressed COVID-19 knowledge gaps, focused in LMIC contexts.
- Establishing and funding UKCDR and GloPID-R's COVID CIRCLE mechanism for longer-term learning and collaboration.

³ Research proposals addressing COVID-19 in low and middle income countries (LMICs) - supported by NIHR and UKRI. https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/global-effort-on-covid-19-geco-health-research-call-specification/24832#Contacts_and_guidance

Mapping & Analysis

UKCDR's strongest contribution to the COVID-19 research response was the rapid development of the most comprehensive, publicly available database of COVID-19 research funding. The [COVID-19 Research Project Tracker](#) was developed in partnership by UKCDR & GloPID-R and as of May 2021, the tracker contained over 10,000 research projects, each of which was classified against the WHO Research & Development Roadmap priorities. The value of the research was approximately \$4.2bn and the tracker data had been downloaded by users over 28,000 times.

IN NUMBERS: UKCDR & GloPID-R Research Project Tracker (May 2021)

No. of projects
>10,000

Worth
\$4.2 bn

No. of funders
201

No. of countries
142

Heatmap: Funded COVID-19 Research Projects vs. WHO Research Priorities



World Health Organisation: A Coordinated Global Research Roadmap: 2019 Novel Coronavirus, March 2020

Each project has been designated with one or more primary priority areas and, where appropriate, secondary priority areas. The Focus dropdown menu below can be used to filter on these.

Notes on data

CREDIT: UKCDR and GloPID-R COVID-19 Research Project Tracker, 2020

Funder(s) [All] Focus [All] Search Title/Abstract

Click on a research area or coloured tile to view the list of projects

WHO priority research area	WHO priority sub-area							Total Funding Amount (\$)
	a	b	c	d	e	f	N/A	
1. Virus: natural history, transmission an..	1,226	905	321	1,042	181	125	61	1,312.5M
2. Animal and environmental research	108	14	18				4	37.4M
3. Epidemiological studies	901	361	84	347			225	527.3M
4. Clinical characterization and managem..	707	1,513	11	1,101	28	7	253	1,505.0M
5. Infection prevention and control	277	421	636	387			269	400.6M
6. Candidate therapeutics R&D	1,220	133	19	342	54		134	948.0M
7. Candidate vaccines R&D	312	52	39	7	19		242	2,083.2M
8. Ethics considerations for research	66	16	37	78	17		37	43.6M
9. Social sciences in the outbreak response	1,121	278	689	229	31	43	3,556	1,063.7M
Unallocated							1,940	0.0M

We collaborated closely with Dr Steven Hoffman and his team at the Global Strategy Lab to support the development of the UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery¹ by using emerging findings from our mapping work to inform the final Roadmap. We are committed to incorporating the UN Roadmap priorities into our ongoing mapping and analysis going forward. The COVID-19 Research Project Tracker was also featured in WHO's COVID-19 Research & Innovation Achievements report² as 'instrumental in reaching global funding decisions'.

1 UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery. COVID CIRCLE's work is highlighted on p.117 of the UN R&D Roadmap and our contributions acknowledged in pages 121 and 123 <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/UNCOVID19ResearchRoadmap.pdf>

2 WHO's Overall Achievements Report <https://www.who.int/teams/blueprint/covid-19/covid-19-global-research-innovation-forum>

We have published quarterly [Living Mapping Reviews \(LMR\)](#), breaking down and analysing this exhaustive data, as well as providing a deeper look at key emerging themes (Indirect health impact, Capacity strengthening and Long COVID). A key feature of the LMRs is to identify opportunities and research gaps to continue to support researchers and funders prioritise resources to underfunded areas where there is greater research need, and to facilitate further strategic collaboration. We also provide bespoke analyses upon request with strong engagement across international funders, informing strategic funding decisions.

Funder Principles

UKCDR & GLoPID-R launched [a set of principles to align research funders](#) towards a coordinated effort for supporting high-quality research for the most pressing global needs in epidemics and pandemics, especially in low resource settings. The principles were launched on the 17th July 2020 in The LANCET '[Strengthening the global effort on COVID-19 research through joint principles for funding global research in epidemics and pandemics](#)'. The principles have been used in funder calls, including the NIHR Global Effort on COVID-19 (GECO) call⁴.

Priorities

COVID CIRCLE facilitated collaboration with The Global Health Network (TGHN) and the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) to identify research priorities for COVID-19 of particular relevance to researchers from LMICs. This work built on the WHO Coordinated Global Research Roadmap, and the work of the AAS identifying research priorities for Africa. These priorities informed the Global Effort on COVID-19 (GECO) call panel meetings and the early July 2020 WHO R&D Blueprint meetings.

At the end of March 2021, COVID CIRCLE hosted a global virtual meeting "[COVID-19 Research in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#)", in collaboration with the COVID-19 Clinical Research Coalition. Over 1,300 people registered for the meeting, which brought together global research funders, including those who are funding research on COVID-19, and the community of researchers who are actively undertaking this research across LMICs. Findings from the participants on the barriers to, and enablers of, effective research in COVID-19 research in and for LMICs, will be used to identify lessons learned to inform future research responses to epidemics and pandemics in LMICs.



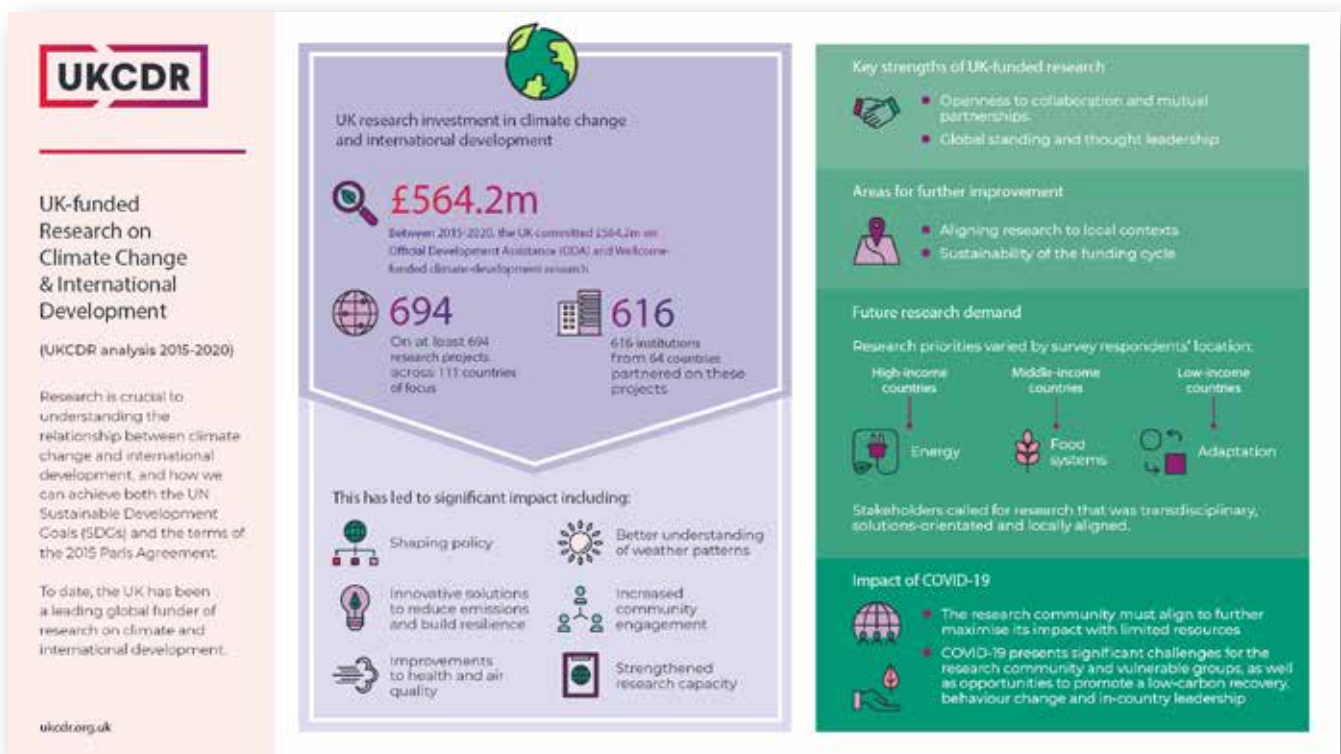
⁴ Principles referenced in Annex 2 of GECO call https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/global-effort-on-covid-19-geco-health-research-call-specification/24832#Contacts_and_guidance

2.2 Research for Climate Action



Research is crucial for allowing us to understand the complex interactions between climate change and international development – and to respond urgently to both. This is particularly important in the context of constraints on the UK Aid budget.

In November 2019, the SCOR Board agreed on climate change as a strategic priority for 2020, and commissioned UKCDR to carry out a comprehensive analysis on this subject. This took place amid increased demand from UKCDR members to understand the collective UK offer for research on climate change and international development, particularly leading up to COP26.





Our project mapped and analysed the scope and impact reach of UK ODA and Wellcome-funded research for climate change and international development. Demonstrating once again UKCDR's agility, the team also were able to provide an early opportunity to reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on this research landscape.

We hosted a webinar in November 2020 to showcase impacts resulting from UK-funded research, to provide learning around research to achieve the COP26 priorities, and to provide opportunities for networking among the climate change and international development research community during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was attended by more than 150 participants.

Along with the event, we published a [booklet](#) with a compilation of examples of UK-funded research projects that showcase just some of the outstanding contributions which research is making to delivering impacts in the context of the COP26 priorities.

Key outcomes include:

- Over **300 stakeholders** engaged directly during the project
- Report findings being used to **inform decision-making** in BEIS
- Partnerships mapping being used in **preparations for COP26**
- UKCDR engaging in cross-government activities for COP26 on adaptation and resilience, nature-based-solutions, and cities
- **Linking stakeholders**, for example Health Funders Forum engaging with Adaptation Resilience Alliance
- UKCDR being regularly **sought out to present and consult** on climate-development research, an area it had not worked in since 2011

2.3 Enablers of research

UKCDR is dedicated to supporting enablers of research for greater impact of UK-funded research for global development. Over the last year we have been doing this by demonstrating the value of UK's investment in research for global development, promoting equitable partnerships, supporting research capacity strengthening, advocating for equity and against racism in international development research and making research safe through guidance for Safeguarding in International Development Research.

Accelerating the impact of the UK's investment in international development research

The UK is recognised as a leader in science and research for international development, and the current COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of research in responding to a global crisis.

There is concern about the risk that the reduction in the ODA target poses to the progress made so far and a feeling that this is a critical moment for international development research. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, continued R&D ODA investments for the generation of new knowledge is critical to effectively direct limited resources to where they are most needed and ensure greater potential for impact.







Building the Case for Climate Change Action

PROJECT PARTNERS

Funders: Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK Met Office, Department for International Development (DFID)

Collaborating research institutions: Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, UK Forest Research, British Antarctic Survey, the Met Office Hadley Centre, the University of Bristol and the University of Leeds, University of Exeter, UK's National Oceanography Centre, the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), Queen Mary University, the University of Liverpool, the University of Oxford and the University of Southampton

[Find out more](#)

The climate science behind the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports has shaped the global discourse on climate and provided the basis for international action.

The recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report states that an increase in global temperatures of more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will increase the risk of extreme weather events, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss and land degradation. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Enabling the IPCC

According to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the IPCC's assessment reports are the

most credible source of information on climate change and the baseline for making evidence-based decisions in international negotiations. They have provided the scientific consensus needed to convince governments to ratify landmark agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Marrakesh Accords, and the Paris Agreement.

Underpinning all international climate change strategies is climate science, to which the UK has made a crucial contribution. UK-driven climate research in the areas of climate modelling, sea-level projects, extreme weather forecasts, and greenhouse gas emission estimates has formed the bedrock of IPCC reports.

Influencing global climate policy

A number of UK research programmes have fed into IPCC assessments

- Quantifying and Understanding the Earth System (QUEST) Programme (2006-10) enhanced understanding of the Earth as an integrated system and improved climate change predictions, which proved critical in securing an EU position at the Cancun Conference in 2010.
- Understanding the Pathways to and Impact of a 1.5°C Rise in Global Temperatures (2016-18) identified the climate research and evidence needed to inform global policy following the Paris Agreement.

UK funding has supported research to assist climate adaptation and resilience in Africa and Asia.

- The Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) Programme (2015-19) aimed to provide more reliable information about climate processes and extremes in order to help policymakers understand climate change impacts and build climate-resilient development.

Driving national adaptation plans

IPCC research has also informed the guidelines for national adaptation plans (NAPs), designed to help countries conduct adaptation planning and integrate climate change into national decision making.

Low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are more vulnerable to an increased frequency of extreme weather events caused by climate change.

Through International Climate Finance (ICF) programmes, the UK has supported more than 57 million people to cope with the impacts of climate change and helped reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions totally 16 million tonnes.

Reaching a consensus on a zero-emissions future

The impact of climate research can be seen at the highest levels of government. In May 2019, the UK announced a climate change emergency and became the first G7 nation to legislate reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

In September 2019, the UK Government announced the Ayrton Fund (DFID/BEIS), which will provide up to £1 billion of aid funding for British scientists and global innovators to develop and test new technologies targeted at tackling climate change in LMICs.

ukcdr.org.uk

UKCDR published a series of success stories to highlight the considerable contribution of UK research to meeting global development challenges laid out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is a multitude of evidence of research impact through case studies, but these cross-funder multidisciplinary success stories particularly focus on impact through long-term and large-scale investments, showcasing the UK's engagement with the world through research.

Following the publication of our [impact success stories](#), in September 2020 we hosted a virtual dialogue '*Research enablers for impact: Accelerating the impact of the UK's investment in international development research*' which was attended by over 200 people. It included strategic discussions on how to enable, accelerate and evaluate the impact of the UK's investment in international development research.

A keynote speech was delivered by Sir Patrick Vallance, UK Government Chief Scientific Advisor, and a dynamic panel discussion was moderated by Prof. Melissa Leach, Director, Institute of Development Studies. Panellists included Nupur Barua, Head of South Asia Research Hub and Eunice Muthengi, Ag. Head – East Africa Research Hub, Research and Evidence Division (RED) from FCDO, Helen Fletcher, Head of International Development, UKRI, and Nyovani Madise, Director of Research and Development Policy & Head of the Malawi office, African Institute for Development Policy.

Opening the dialogue on race and inequality in international development research



Global Black Lives Matter protests against institutional and systemic racism, triggered by the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020, forced critical conversations in nearly every sector across the world – including the international development research sector. International development research is the pursuit of a better world for all, but persisting structural racism opposes this vision.

We launched a series looking at race in international development research and particularly the effects on Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. We explored some of the ways in which racial inequality is perpetuated and efforts to decolonise international development research and mobilise global voices. With a combination of blogs exploring personal experiences of Black researchers and a longform article examining racial inequality in research, this series intended to spotlight Black researchers, challenge, and evoke discussion.

- [“Everything breathed science!”: Attracting African graduates to research through internships](#) by Dr Sam Kinyanjui – Head of training and capacity building at KWTRP
- [Decolonizing research – Perspectives from an early career researcher](#) by Emilia Antonio
- [Reshaping the future of international development research](#) by Dr Bintu Mansaray

Photo above: Courtesy of Dr. Sam Kinyanjui

Anticipate, Mitigate and Address Harm in Research



In April 2020 we finalised and published our guidance and principles to anticipate, mitigate and address harm in research, as well as a companion piece on the practical application of the guidance during COVID-19. Since then we have continued to build awareness and encourage uptake in the international development research sector.

Awareness of, and engagement with, the guidance was built through a series of webinars in 2020 aimed at funders, communications professionals and the research community. The final webinar, held on 1st July 2020, targeted the international development research community. It aimed to increase understanding of the definition of safeguarding in the context of research and highlight how the research community can use it. With 700 participants, the interest has been remarkable and speaks to the importance of the issue at hand.

With over 4,000 downloads from the UKCDR website by the research community, our guidance has also been used by our members to develop or update their own safeguarding policies and practices. In May 2020, drawing on our guidance, UKRI published its Preventing Harm (safeguarding) in research and innovation policy⁵ and DHSC/NIHR published its Safeguarding Guidance in September 2020⁶. Wellcome, BEIS⁷ and other BEIS delivery partners are in the process of using the guidance to develop or update their policies and practices. The resource is also hosted on FCDO funded Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub, which brings together key safeguarding guidance across the international development sector.

UKCDR has contributed to FCDO's 1 and 2 year progress reports since the FCDO Safeguarding Summit on behalf of UK Research funders, and continues to engage in the FCDO Cross Sector Safeguarding Steering Group.

A number of UK research institutions reference UKCDR guidance on the safeguarding pages of their websites including The University of Sheffield, Imperial College London, the University of Cambridge, The University of York, The University of Bristol, The University of St. Andrews, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

UKCDR is now an established source of expertise for safeguarding in the context of international development research.

5 <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-050920-PreventingHarmSafeguardingInResearchAndInnovationPolicy.pdf>

6 <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-safeguarding-guidance/25744>

7 <https://www.newton-gcrf.org/funding-guidance/safeguarding-guidance/>



2.4 Forward Look

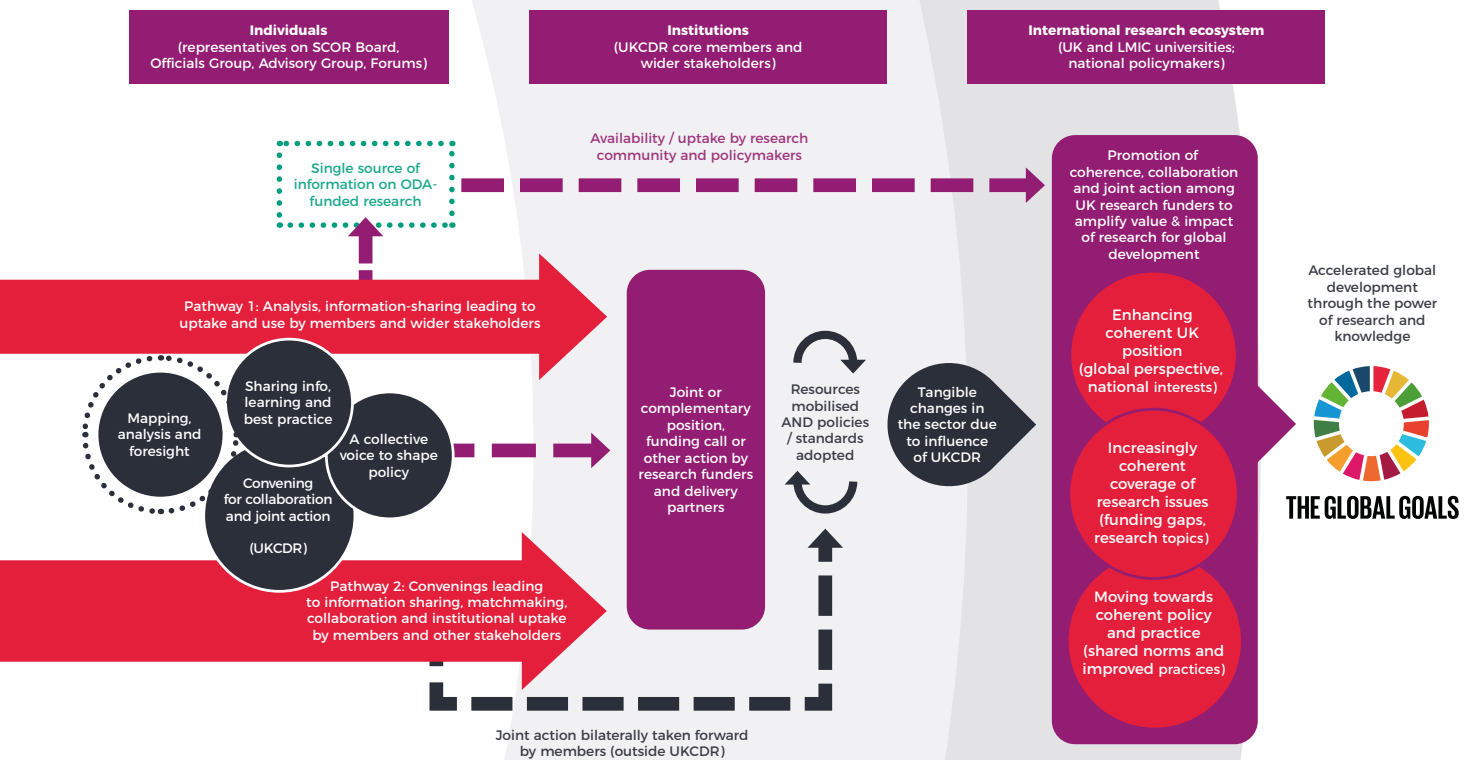
In FY21/22 it will be important to continue to provide a better understanding of the impact from UK-funded research, and we also look forward to delivering the outputs of initiatives we have been working hard on throughout 2020 to enable high-quality research in our sector. This includes

- Embedding good **equitable partnership** principles
- Providing a better understanding of **capacity strengthening** investments and opportunities
- Driving data transparency through our **Mapping ODA Research & Innovation (MODARI)** project
- Increasing coherence in **climate change research** funding in the lead up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), through our funding landscape analysis
- Continuing to **map and analyse global COVID-19 research funding data** to inform funder priorities and practices, as governed by the COVID CIRCLE principles.

Having reliable data, as well as a good understanding of opportunities for collaboration, joint action and sharing of good practice will inform the UK's engagement with international partners and benefit the global effort to address global challenges.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

UKCDR measures Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with the impacts, outcomes and outputs described in our Theory of Change. We focus on evaluating UKCDR convening activities, mapping, analysis and foresight projects, UKCDR communications, and overall UKCDR impact.



UKCDR has met or exceeded all performance targets for FY20/21. The KPIs are strong evidence that UKCDR has:

- Delivered valuable and impactful outputs and activities
- Focused on topics that are of high relevance for UK funders of development research
- Managed its portfolio of projects effectively
- Communicated effectively with the international development research community
- Contributed to increased funder coherence at strategic and tactical levels
- Promoted best practices and facilitated cross-sector information sharing

Impact: Accelerated global development through the power of research and knowledge

KPI: Coherence of UK position for the development research sector (UK position)	Delivered several projects that included aligning external positions across funders. These include the COVID CIRCLE initiative (common principles) and the climate change initiative (joined up funder messaging)
KPI: Coherence & coordination around research issues and challenges (responding to funding gaps)	COVID-19 Research Project Funding Tracker contributed to COVID-19 related funding decisions by providing the most comprehensive overview of research funding, and funding gaps. Climate Change project helped UK funders identify gaps and opportunities in UK funded climate change
KPI: Coherence of policies and practices (setting standards)	Developed set of principles and best practice guidance on safeguarding to anticipate, mitigate and address potential and actual harms in the process of international development research. Established Equitable Partnership working group to take forward insights from the 2019 IRDFF meeting Aligned funders on a common approach to collecting data on ODA funded research and innovation.

Outcome: Joint or complementary positions, funding or action across funders of International Development Research

KPI: Member perceptions of outcomes and value of UKCDR convening (survey)	Planned: 90% of all survey responders answering “yes” to at least one feedback question Achieved: 100%
KPI: Uptake and influence of UKCDR outputs (survey)	Planned: Average rating of 2.5 Achieved: not sufficient data available

Output: Effective convening and networking among funders of International Development Research

KPI: Meeting themes & outcomes (% of meetings with completed Synthesis Forms)	Planned: Project Synthesis Forms are completed for 90% of meetings. Achieved: 100%
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Output: UKCDR outputs effectively support joint or complementary policy and action (mapping, analysis and foresight, sharing of learning and best practice, collective voice)

KPI: UKCDR has delivered outputs that are aligned with SCOR Board strategic priorities

Planned: 90% of projects included in the UKCDR annual workplan have been delivered

Achieved: 91%

KPI: UKCDR has effectively managed its projects (% of project milestones met)

Planned: 90% of project milestones met

Achieved: 95%

Output: Communications that are effective in reaching key audiences

KPI: UKCDR delivers successfully on its communication plan (% of key objectives documented in annual communications plan completed / performing on target)

Planned: 90% of key objectives documented in annual communications plan completed / performing on target

Achieved: 100%

3.1 Effectiveness of the SCOR Board

In December 2020 the independent Chair of the SCOR Board, Prof. Peter Piot, wrote letters to government departments to account for the effectiveness of the SCOR Board.

He highlighted the SCOR Board's role in providing an overall perspective on the funding, expertise and experience of all parts of Government to ensure that research can have the maximum impact on international development objectives and outcomes in developing countries. He also described the SCOR Board's role in governing and providing strategic direction to UKCDR.

Having described the SCOR Board's composition and method of operation, Prof. Piot confirmed the SCOR Board's ability to carry out its core functions. He confirmed that in 2020 the Board had been successful not only in tackling specific research areas, but also in promoting transparency and dialogue at a departmental level and importantly coordinating the research response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also concluded that the Board had provided a unique forum for the major UK development research funders and created and actively supported a range of collaboration mechanisms.

He specifically discussed the Board’s work in the following areas:

- Promoting strategic coherence in UK-funded research and innovation for development
- Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Increasing coherence in climate change research
- Prof. Piot also set out the importance of the SCOR Board in the current political environment and his concerns about the risk that proposed budget cuts would pose to the significant progress made in international development.

3.2 Value for money

UKCDR continues to represent good value for money for its funders, as defined by the National Audit Office⁸. Its effectiveness has been showcased in the sections above - it has delivered successfully on all aspects of its workplan, which was in turn driven by key strategic priorities for the main funder of development research in the UK. It is also economical and efficient as a result of its operating model.

UKCDR amplifies the value and impact of research for global development

UKCDR adds value by allowing each member and the UK’s investment in research for development to be greater than the sum of its individual parts. UKCDR provides access to a range of expertise across its members, and the external research and international development community – more quickly than any member could hope to access independently.

By leveraging funds from six funder organisations, UKCDR can also maximise the impact of each core member’s investment, whilst reducing the financial risk of any given member.

UKCDR has a lean organisational structure

UKCDR operates as a Joint-Activity Non-Entity (JANE), and the venture is organised and funded on a not-for-profit basis.

Figure 1: Actual spend per funder – Core funding (£’000)

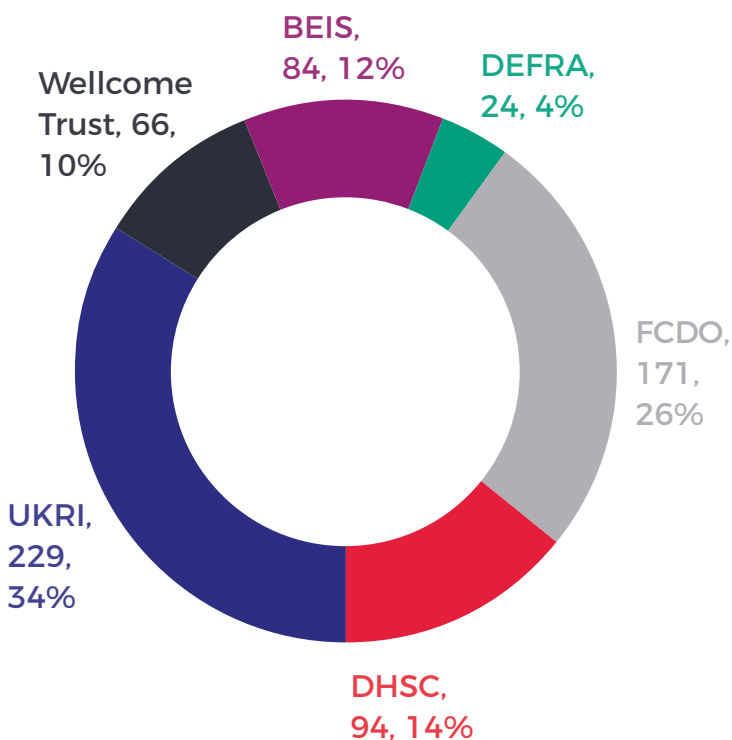
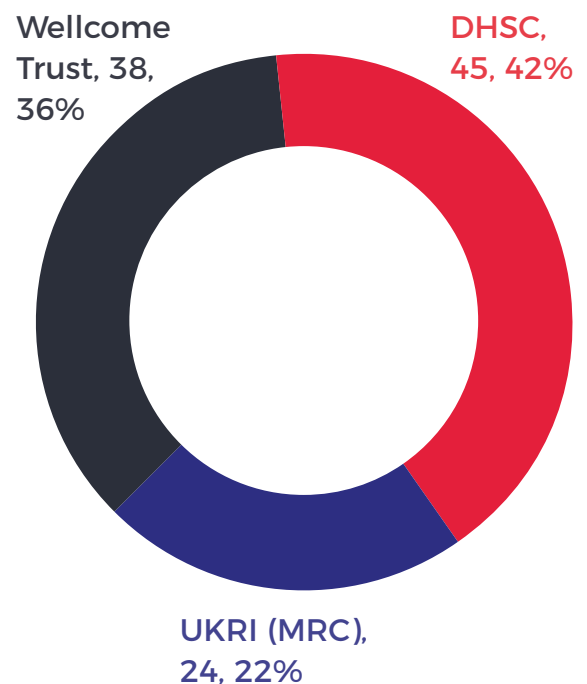


Figure 2: Actual spending per funder – COVID CIRCLE specific funding (£'000)



8 National Audit Office: Assessing Value for money <https://www.nao.org.uk/successful-commissioning/general-principles/value-for-money/assessing-value-for-money/>

The Team

Dr Marta Tufet, Executive Director

Marta joined UKCDR as Executive Director in January 2018 and ended her term in August 2021. Marta lead UKCDR providing high-level engagement and strategic coordination of the SCOR Board. Formerly Marta worked for a range of funding organisations, including Wellcome, Department of Health, the African Academy of Sciences and the Gates Foundation. Marta has a research background in malaria with a BSc and PhD from Imperial College London.

Henrike Grund, Head of Operations

Henrike joined UKCDR in February 2019. She works closely with the Executive Director and across the UKCDR team to manage and improve operational systems, processes and policies in support of UKCDR's mission. Through prior experience as a management consultant in the life sciences industry, she brings her expertise on strategies, processes, structures and performance management. She studied Biology at Philipps University in Marburg, Germany and holds an MBA from Leeds University Business School.

Alice Norton, Head of COVID CIRCLE

Alice joined UKCDR in April 2020 to lead their COVID-19 Research and Policy work and the development of COVID CIRCLE, until July 2021. Alice has substantial experience of global health research, policy, and funding gained through nine years with Wellcome and with the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative in Tanzania. She has an undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Oxford and a PhD in infectious disease epidemiology from Imperial College London.

Laura Scott, Senior Research and Policy Officer

Laura joined UKCDR as Senior Research and Policy Officer in December 2019 until November 2021. Before joining UKCDR, Laura spent four years evaluating government policy and performance for Parliament, on behalf of the National Audit Office and the House of Commons' Environmental Audit Committee. Her specialisms include climate change mitigation, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and big data handling. Laura studied History and International Relations, and holds a Masters of Research in International Crisis Management, both from Loughborough University

Adrian Bucher, Research and Policy Officer

Adrian joined UKCDR in July 2017, he is responsible for coordinating the disasters research group as well as leading on our data mapping work. He is experienced in research, project management, and administration from the international development sector. Adrian holds a BSc in Economics from the University of Essex, and an MSc in Development Management from the London School of Economics.

Yaso Kunaratnam, Research and Policy Officer

As Research & Policy Officer at UKCDR, Yaso is responsible for providing research and policy advice to UKCDR member organisations and key stakeholders. Yaso joined the team in December 2015. Her areas of expertise span across evidence into policy, research uptake, knowledge mobilisation, partnerships, capacity development and networks. Yaso has a BSc in Geography from the University of Exeter.

Sheila Mburu, Research and Policy Officer

As a research and policy officer at UKCDR, Sheila is responsible for providing research and policy advice to member UKCDR organisations and key stakeholders. Sheila joined UKCDR in April 2017 until July 2021. Her areas of expertise span across global health and nutrition research. Sheila has an MSci in Biochemistry & Genetics from the University of Nottingham and an MSc in Nutrition for Global Health from LSHTM.

Nicole Huxley, Communications Manager

As the Communications Manager for UKCDR, Nicole is responsible for delivering strategic communications to share work by UKCDR, members' organisations and key stakeholders. She joined in April 2019 and her areas of expertise are in communication and media strategies, and stakeholder management. She has a BA in International Development and Mandarin Studies from the University of New South Wales.

Mimoza Murati, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director

Mimoza joined UKCDR in February 2019. She supports the UKCDR Executive Director, other staff and the day-to-day running of the office, enabling UKCDR to deliver their strategic responsibilities, and leading on the events that UKCDR produce. Mimoza brings experience in project management, with strong expertise in administration and financial management She has an MSc in Human Resource Management from the University of London and a BA in Literature

Rachel Miles, Programme Manager

Rachel is the Programme Manager for UKCDR's COVID CIRCLE Initiative until December 2021. Prior to this role, for FY 2019/20 Rachel was seconded from Wellcome to provide UKCDR with programme management support. Rachel's experience is in management of large and diverse research funding portfolios, including financial and logistics expertise. She completed a BA in Social Anthropology at the University of Kent, Canterbury and conducted a voluntary HIV research project in Sierra Leone for Christian Aid.

Emma Clegg, Senior Data Specialist

Emma joined UKCDR in March 2020 working jointly with the Department for International Development. She is leading a project to align data on ODA research and innovation activities across UK funders, supporting better analyses of the UK-funded development research landscape. Emma's experience is in data analysis and statistics and operational research. She holds a BSc in Mathematics from the University of Surrey

Hannah Chhoa-Howard, Wellcome Secondee

Hannah was seconded to UKCDR from Wellcome under the Graduate Scheme from February 2021 to August 2021. During her time, she provided project support across the team, with a focus on research capacity strengthening. She has a BSc in Biomedical Science from UCL.

Thank you

We have achieved all this work through successful collaboration and partnership with our core members and wider stakeholder group, who have provided data and time to all our reports, advice and guidance, and contributed to our funder fora.



Get in touch

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