



**ANNUAL REPORT
2022/23**



About UKCDR

The UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) brings together government and research funders working in international development. We exist to amplify the value and impact of research for global development by promoting coherence, collaboration and joint action among UK research funders. Our core contributing members include the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology; the Department of Health and Social Care; the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK Research and Innovation; and Wellcome.

For further information on UKCDR, please visit ukcdr.org.uk.

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Foreword by Marie Staunton, Chair of the SCOR Board



In recent times, examples of how development research contributes toward the SDGs have abounded.

Research funders urgently need to find ways to accelerate solutions to today's global challenges. According to [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) estimates, climate change is expected to cause approximately [250,000 additional deaths](#) per year between 2030 and 2050. Meanwhile, there are only seven years left to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and progress to date has been slow.

In recent times, examples of how development research contributes toward the SDGs have abounded. For instance, the Newton Fund supported interdisciplinary research that gathered data from satellites, supercomputers, and the behaviour of plant stomata to help develop warning systems for Brazilian communities in the path of landslides, floods and fires. Additionally, UKCDR's analysis of UK universities' submissions to the most recent [Research Excellence Framework](#) (REF2021) found that many research for development programmes, in areas as disparate as bovine TB and child disability, have demonstrated impact in the UK as well as in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

Over the last few years, the reduction in the overall UK [Official Development Assistance](#) (ODA) budget, the impact of reductions for research funding, and increasing demands on the ODA pot have made researchers and their partners less certain of UK funding. We also know that the COVID-19 pandemic affected travel and research priorities. In this context, the [Strategic Coherence of ODA-funded Research](#) (SCOR) Board has reflected on how, in a time of uncertainty, funders can set up the types of transformative research now to impact the SDGs in 2030.

One answer is investing upfront in equitable partnerships. Long seen as the right thing to do, COVID-19 showed equitable partnerships to be a vital component of an effective research response to a crisis.

In virtual events hosted as part of UKCDR's [COVID CIRCLE](#) programme, researchers from some 80 countries said it was the upfront work they had done on learning how to work together, value each other, build trust and respect, co-design and co-deliver that enabled them to turn on a sixpence and together produce the research needed to combat COVID-19. This was reflected in UKCDR's COVID CIRCLE [report on lessons learned](#) from funding and undertaking research during the first two years of the pandemic. I'm pleased to say that the COVID CIRCLE programme is now evolving into a tool for improving future pandemic preparedness. UKCDR has handed over leadership to our partner, the [Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Diseases](#) (GloPID-R), but still adds value to this vital work on inter-pandemic security and future global health resilience.

At the [UN General Assembly Science Summit](#) in September 2022, UKCDR launched its much anticipated [guidance on equitable research partnerships](#), produced in collaboration with [ESSENCE on Health Research](#). The event was well attended by funders who had moved from principles to practice, funding LMICs directly, providing upfront investment for co-creation. Discussions continue on how best to implement the guidance and monitor progress.

As we entered 2023, the SCOR Board recognised the immense contribution of Sir Jeremy Farrar, a founding member of the Board and Director of Wellcome, who left to become Chief Scientist at the World Health Organization. We welcomed to the Board Cheryl Moore, Chief Research Programmes Officer from Wellcome; Adam Jackson, Director of International Science and Innovation from the new Department of Science, Innovation and Technology; and Frances Wood, International Director at UK Research and Innovation.

This year we look forward to innovative work tracking UK ODA and Wellcome spend on climate research. As the SCOR Board, we will focus on finding ways to improve the coherence and impact of funding for research for development.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely London, showing a river (the River Thames) winding through the urban landscape. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden light. A large white rectangular box with a thin red border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

At the UN General Assembly Science Summit in September 2022, UKCDR launched its much anticipated guidance on equitable research partnerships, produced in collaboration with ESSENCE on Health Research.

Introduction from Maggy Heintz, UKCDR Executive Director



Whether for transparency purposes or the need to ensure coordination and avoid duplication, tracking funding data is core to UKCDR's mission.

Over FY22-23, UKCDR has worked to embed the principles outlined in our strategy (2022-2025) across all activities. Driven by our ambition to **increase our impact** by working with influential funding bodies and fostering relationships with core users, we have taken steps to collaborate with a range of organisations and networks to demonstrate the impact of global development research, with a focus on identifying research enablers.

UKCDR has achieved a lot since the publication of our last annual report. Highlights include the publication of our Good Practice Document, [Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships](#), produced in partnership with [ESSENCE on Health Research](#). From the launch of the guidance at the [UN General Assembly Science Summit](#) in September 2022 to its presentation at the [Science Granting Councils Initiative](#) in Cape Town three months later, and many more engagements besides, the impact of this guidance has undoubtedly scaled over time. This reflects the importance this topic has across the sector, from funders to research teams. While there is still a long way to go to ensure that equity is fully and routinely embedded in practice, engagement with this guidance is testimony to the shared understanding that **power imbalances in global development research must be addressed**.

Whether for transparency purposes or the need to ensure coordination and avoid duplication, tracking funding data is core to UKCDR's mission. We believe that data and mapping are key to identifying the impact of the UK's investment in global development research. In this financial year, we've strengthened our collaboration with GloPID-R by continuing to improve our world-class [COVID-19 Tracker](#). As the urgency of the pandemic response has waned over time, we've turned our sights to long-term pandemic preparedness, which UKCDR and GloPID-R are supporting through the development of the [Pandemic Preparedness: Analytical Capacity and Funding Tracking Programme](#) (Pandemic PACT). Pandemic PACT aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness in research and funding responses to disease outbreaks. By the end of the next reporting period, we aim to have fully embedded our COVID-19 Tracker within Pandemic PACT.

In alignment with our strategy, we have also re-initiated our [MODARI](#) (Mapping ODA Research and Innovation) project. The level and quality of engagement on the project reflects the value our members place on collecting and reporting data to support common goals.

Back in March 2022, we set the intention to work with partners to understand the **UK research funding commitments to the climate change agenda** with specific emphasis on research with impact in LMICs. Over this reporting period, we've taken steps towards the upcoming publication of a study looking at the return on investment (RoI) of climate research for global development and the development of a proof-of-concept for a climate research tracker with focus on low resource settings. With the support of an international taskforce, we aim to provide an enhanced understanding of the climate change research funding landscape, and provide an instrumental tool for funders as they take decisions on future funding programmes.

Looking towards the year ahead, we will ensure all our areas of work strengthen the collective voice of the global development research sector, including through two major upcoming publications, which I'm pleased to announce here.

As part of our commitment to sharing best practice, UKCDR has worked throughout FY22-23 towards producing a report on the [Global Challenges Research Fund](#) (GCRF) and [Newton Fund](#). In addition to synthesising lessons from eleven evaluations of the two funds, our report will go a step further by presenting policy pointers to support HMG and UK funders to **maximise the impact of global development research** by ensuring funding is structured in the most effective and efficient way.

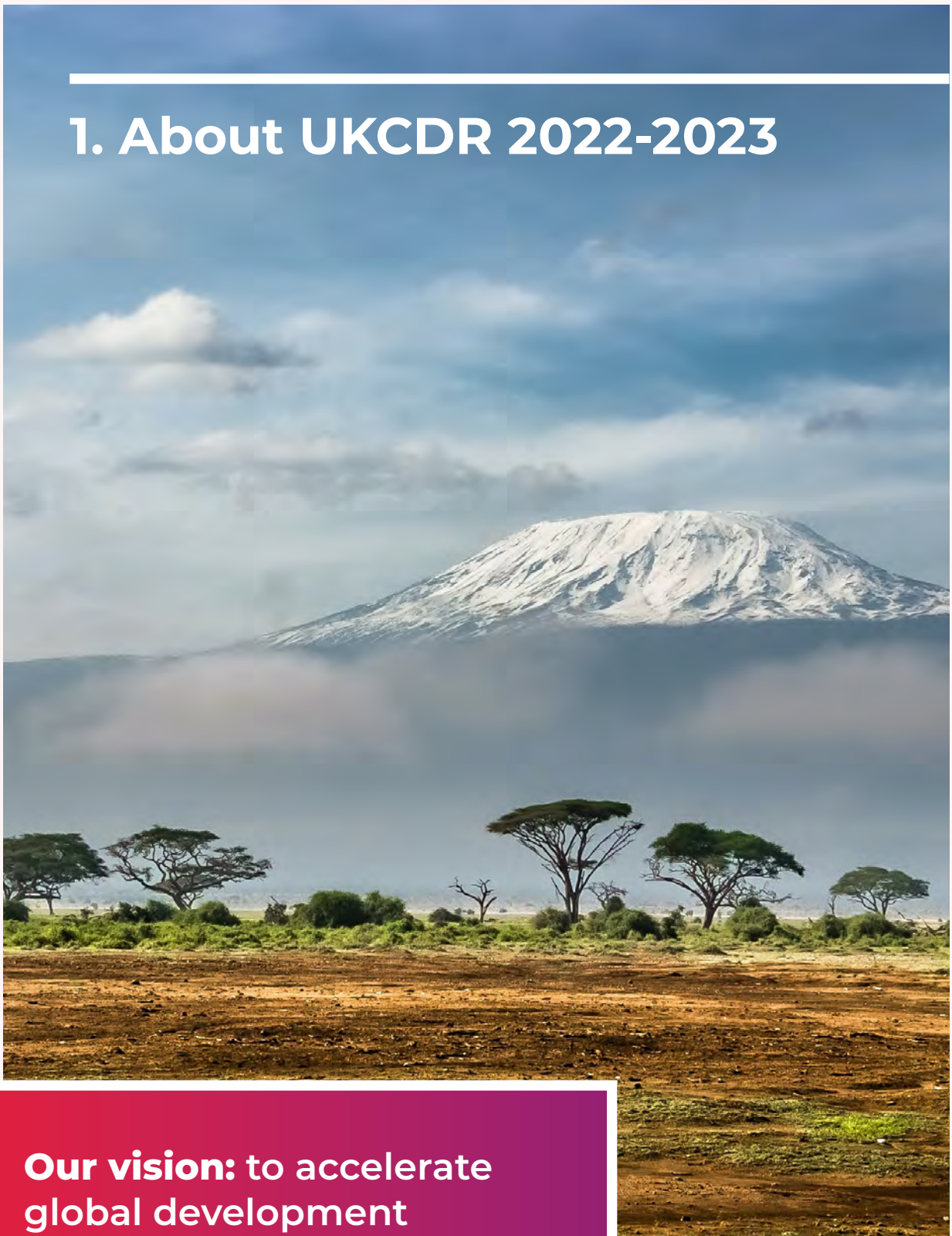
The second report reflects UKCDR's commitment to using evidence to strengthen the collective voice of our sector. Drawing on the impact case studies that accompanied last year's publication of the [REF2021 results](#), UKCDR will soon publish a report that highlights the impact of research conducted in UK higher education institutions on global development over the last decade.

Across our upcoming publications and all other activities, UKCDR will continue to work collaboratively with our members and partners to **build an evidence-based case for maintained investment in global development research**. Mapping funding investments, reflecting on lessons learned, and highlighting the secondary benefits to the UK of development research will form part of this picture.

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We will ensure all our areas of work strengthen the collective voice of the global development research sector.

1. About UKCDR 2022-2023



Our vision: to accelerate global development through the power of research and knowledge.

This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (FY22-23). This section presents an overview of the [UK Collaborative on Development Research](#) (UKCDR), including information on our current funders, strategic direction, and priority areas.

1.1. Who we are

UKCDR is a dedicated team of experts working to amplify the impact and value of the UK's research investment to address global challenges.

We are a neutral and impartial entity providing the secretariat for, and governed by, the [Strategic Coherence of ODA-funded Research](#) (SCOR) Board. Our core contributing members include:

- [Department for Health and Social Care](#) (DHSC);
- [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#) (DSIT)¹;
- [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (FCDO)²;
- [UK Research and Innovation](#) (UKRI); and
- [Wellcome](#).

1.2 Our strategy (2022-2025)

In March 2022, UKCDR developed a [strategy](#) for the period 2022-2025. It aims to position UKCDR as a generator and repository of knowledge and good practice within the global development research landscape. This position supports us to achieve our **vision: to accelerate global development through the power of research and knowledge**.

Our mission is to amplify the value and impact of research by promoting coherence, collaboration and joint action among UK funders. As a generator and repository of knowledge, we support and enable the development of an evidence-based, transdisciplinary ecosystem for development research to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To meet the strategic priorities as set by the SCOR Board, the UKCDR Strategy stands on 3 pillars:

- Mapping, analysis and foresight;
- Convening for joint action; and
- Sharing information and best practice.

These pillars feed into our overarching ambition to **use our expertise and collective voice**. We do this to:

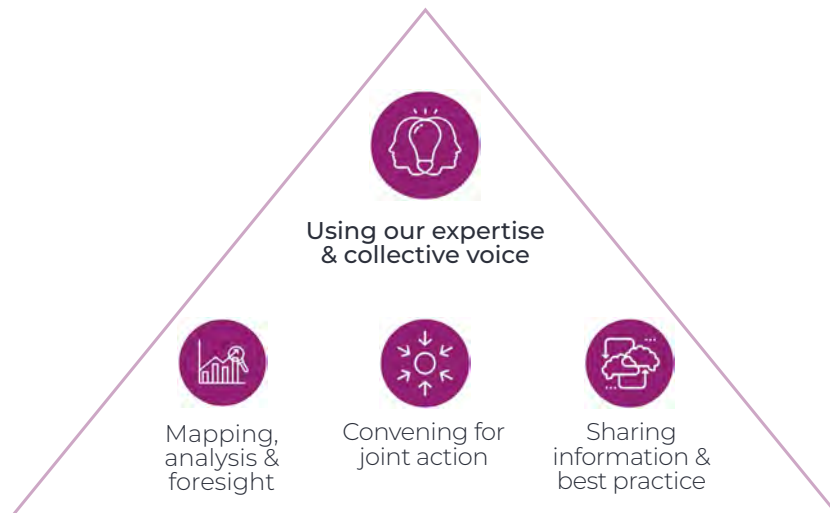
- Identify where UK research for development has been effective and shown value for money;
- Identify the overall impact of the UK's investment in research for development;
- Bridge the gap between *what* is funded and *how* it is delivered;

¹ As of 7 February 2023. Formerly Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

² The Foreign, Commonwealth and 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, only DFID was a core contributing member of UKCDR. Where DFID is used, this indicates that the activity/event discussed took place prior to the formation of FCDO.

- Increase our impact by working with a range of influential funding bodies and foster relationships with core users (the academic research community (UK and international) and the global development community); and
- Foster dialogue, draw on complementary skills, initiate discussions and ensure representation and understanding of our international stakeholders' needs and priorities to jointly address global challenges.

Figure 1: UKCDR's strategy (2022-2025)



1.3 Our 2022-2023 priority areas

During FY22-23, UKCDR engaged in a range of projects in line with our three pillars, as embodied in the UKCDR Strategy and Theory of Change, endorsed by the SCOR Board.

In particular, we focused on:

- Providing recommendations and good practice on embedding equity in research partnerships;
- Facilitating transparency on data and global collaboration, sharing of learnings and informing funder priorities and practices through our COVID-19 Tracker;
- Evidencing the effectiveness, value for money and impact of the UK's investment in global development research by analysing impact case studies to highlight trends and best practices and develop recommendations around maximising impact in development research; and
- Synthesising lessons learned from ODA Research funds to ensure knowledge was retained and to guide discussions on the design of future ODA funds.

We convened thematic funder groups – on health, research capacity strengthening, disaster research, epidemics, and communications – which provided a good basis for decision making by sharing information on research funding and improving funders practices.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in the UK, showing a cluster of white buildings along a sandy beach. The ocean is visible on the right side of the image, with waves breaking onto the shore. The sky is clear and blue.

2. Programme Highlights

UKCDR's key FY22-23 achievements, or programme highlights, including several major publications.

This section outlines UKCDR's key FY22-23 achievements, or programme highlights, including several major publications.

2.1 Equitable partnerships

UKCDR believes that equitable partnerships are fundamental to research that can address the major challenges of our time. The way in which research is undertaken shapes research outputs, and equity in research is central to achieving development impact.

Research funders have a key role to play in supporting equitable partnerships. Given UKCDR's relationship to major **UK-based global development funders** and our connections with **global funders**, for example through the [International Research for Development Funders Forum](#) (IRDFF), we are well placed to support funders with best practice guidance in this area and build coherence across funders' approaches to equitable partnerships. Having worked on this topic since 2017, UKCDR continues to prioritise equitable partnerships within our current strategic period.

In September 2022, UKCDR and ESSENCE on Health Research published our Good Practice Document, [Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships](#). This document was created with the expert input of a taskforce of Northern and Southern research funders. Research activities included the synthesis of evidence from a global survey, discussion groups, and a desk-based review.

The guidance, which is available in [English](#) and [French](#), aims to help funders, research institutions and research teams move from principles to practice in their pursuit of equitable partnerships. It does this by providing practical recommendations and case study examples structured around four inter-connected approaches:

1. Support the research partnership ecosystem;
2. Strengthen research relationships and research systems;
3. Budget for partnership building; and
4. Implement processes and procedures that sustain partnerships.

The Good Practice Document was launched at a session hosted by UKCDR and ESSENCE at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Science Summit on 20 September 2022 (see Section 3.1). Since then, UKCDR has continued to engage across the research community to support the dissemination and uptake of the document recommendations. This has included proactive engagement with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and the research management community, engaging internationally via conference and webinar opportunities, and continuing to support our members with driving forward the equitable partnerships agenda.

At the beginning of 2023, UKCDR initiated a new project exploring equity in funder-level partnerships, guided by an expert group of research funders from high-income countries (HICs) and LMICs. This project seeks to understand the types of partnerships funders are developing (e.g., co-funding, networking, strategic); the extent to which equity is defined and/or put into practice in these partnerships; and lessons learned on supporting equity between research funders. This work will be informed by in-depth consultations with research funders from LMICs and HICs to identify case studies that can help us understand and learn from funders' experiences of partnership-building processes.

IN NUMBERS **Equitable partnerships**

 **4,480**

page views across UKCDR and ESSENCE on Health Research websites since September 2022

'The equitable partnership guidelines were so useful, these will really inform our work going forward.'
- DHSC

 **19**

presentations at meetings and events including 8 conferences, highlights:

- Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) Conference – November 2022
- GloPID-R Asia-Pacific Regional Kick-off Conference – November 2022
- Science Granting Councils Initiative Symposium – December 2022
- Africa Research and Impact Network International Conference – December 2022
- Association of Western African Universities, January 2023

 **9**

references to Good Practice Document publication in other reports, journal articles or publications, including:

- *The Perivoli Charter*
- *Towards a Cape Town Statement on Research Integrity* (Pre-Conference Discussion Paper)
- Article in *European Journal of Development Research*

'Thank you for creating this Good Practice Document which I have shared at the highest levels at USAID!'
- USAID

2.2 Learning on research capacity strengthening (RCS)

[Research capacity strengthening](#) (RCS) has been an important area of UK ODA investment. Investing in research capacity in LMICs helps drive innovation and research uptake, supporting the sustainability and impact of other research investments. Effective and coordinated RCS approaches are needed to support greater research effectiveness and impact within LMICs and realise the UK's commitment to invest in evidence and expertise to advance development.

For over ten years, UKCDR has played a role in supporting coordination and learning through hosting the RCS [Funder Group](#) (see Section 3.4) and mapping RCS spend across our contributing members. We now support the development of best practice on this topic: firstly, through our 2022 learning report on RCS (see below) and, secondly, by situating RCS as a key enabler for supporting an impactful development research ecosystem.

Building on the publication of our [2021 briefing paper](#) highlighting the extent of UK funders' investment in RCS in LMICs between 2016-2021, in FY22-23 UKCDR collated lessons learned from UK-funded RCS over the same timeframe. UKCDR was guided by a steering group of its members and lessons were synthesised from a desk-based review. This review was complemented by 46 stakeholder interviews with funders, delivery partners and RCS recipients.

To build on this analysis, we hosted a learning workshop in May 2022 to develop concrete recommendations for UK funders. The workshop was attended by 28 RCS experts and practitioners from LMICs and the UK (61% of participants were from LMICs).

Insights from this workshop were incorporated into a learning report, [Research Capacity Strengthening: Lessons from UK-funded Initiatives in Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#), published in August 2022. This report aims to support UK funders, senior decision makers, programme leads, and practitioners in RCS and oversight bodies for global development research funding. It provides recommendations for designing, implementing, and evaluating future RCS funds and programmes.

IN NUMBERS **Learning on RCS**

 **638**
page views on
UKCDR website

'In the RCS space, I see UKCDR as the primary UK platform for networking, learning and sharing. I've seen a lot of evidence of this in practice.' - UK HEI

'It's a great resource! We will certainly draw on it when updating our award guidance documents' - NIHR

2.3 COVID-19 and the shift to pandemic preparedness

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of incoherence and duplication in the research response was significant. In FY22-23, UKCDR and the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (GloPID-R) continued building on COVID CIRCLE's strong foundations to support a coherent research response in, for, and with LMICs. COVID CIRCLE [celebrated several successes](#) during this reporting period and UKCDR and GloPID-R had already begun to pivot toward future pandemic preparedness as the COVID CIRCLE programme wound down in March 2023.

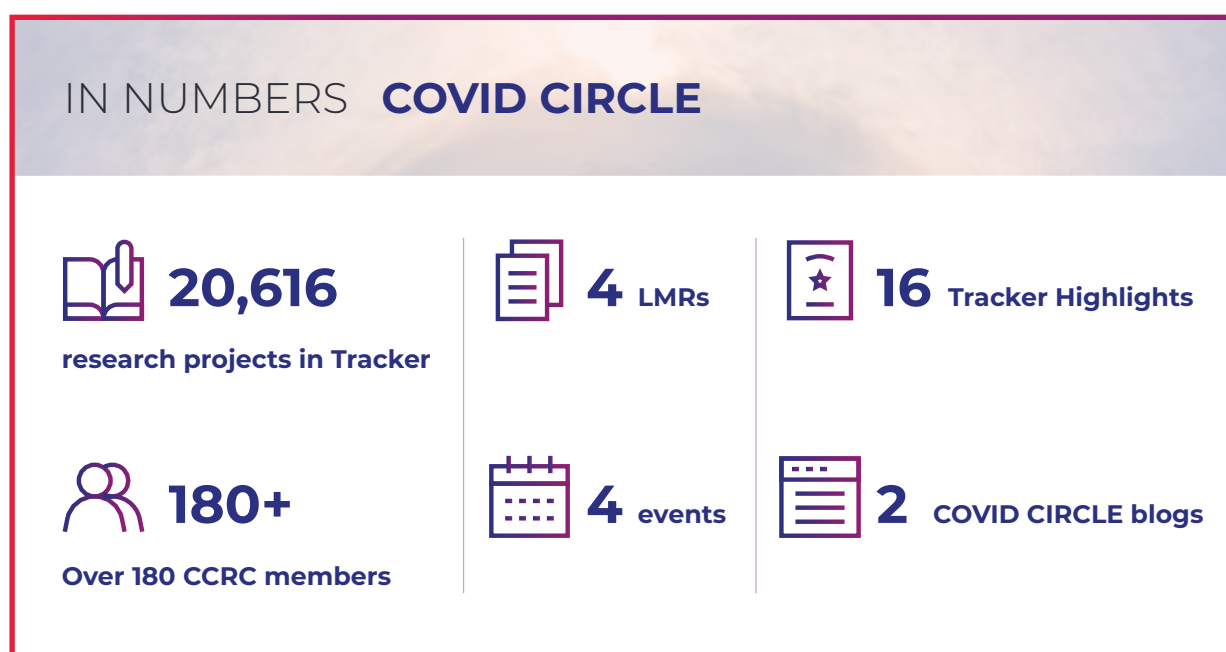
FY22-23 featured the publication of four quarterly [Living Mapping Reviews](#) (LMRs), which highlighted key emergent trends based on data from our COVID-19 Funded Research Project Tracker (see Section 4). These analyses captured trends such as the location of research projects and the characteristics of projects taking place in LMICs. Each iteration of the LMR was accompanied by a suite of four [Tracker Highlights](#), short documents providing a more in-depth look at COVID-19 research. These regular analyses provided valuable insight into the global research funding response. UKCDR also produced several bespoke analyses on specific aspects of the research landscape, including on the intersections between COVID-19 and engineering; trends in diagnostics development; and the extent of North-South collaboration.

COVID CIRCLE published an updated report in January 2023, [Funding and Undertaking Research during the First Two Years of The Pandemic](#). It included a new section analysing the evolution of the funding response towards a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future, understood through the lens of the [UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery](#). It also provided recommendations to help funders improve implementation of UKCDR and GloPID-R's [Seven Funder Principles for Research in Epidemics and Pandemics](#).

COVID CIRCLE also hosted four major events during FY22-23 to help researchers connect directly with research funders and decision makers:

- **April 2022** – [The Impact of Social Sciences Research on the Pandemic Response](#) (CCRC members)
- **June 2022** – [The Impact of Evidence in a Pandemic: How Has COVID-19 Shaped the Engagement of Research with Policy and Practice in LMICs](#) (public, hosted in collaboration with IDS)
- **December 2022** – [Beyond the Pandemic: The Impact of the COVID-19 Research Response in LMICs](#) (public)
- **January 2023** – [Utilising the Lessons Learnt from the COVID-19 Pandemic, What are the Future Directions for Epidemic- and Pandemic-related Research?](#) (public)

As of 2023, UKCDR is again collaborating with GloPID-R to deliver the [Pandemic Analytical Capacity and Funding Tracking Programme](#) (Pandemic PACT) to collate global funding data for a wide range of epidemic-prone diseases and broader epidemic and pandemic research preparedness initiatives. Activities so far have included establishing the scope of the initiative, engaging with stakeholders, and shaping the background data processes. An international workshop convened key stakeholders to gain insights into the development of the data tool and how it could best support pandemic preparedness activities by policymakers and research funders.



2.4 REF2021 and research enablers

Amid significant changes in the development sector and global challenges such as epidemics and climate change, it is increasingly important to have a clear and up-to-date picture of the global development research landscape. During FY22-23, UKCDR led a study to understand the connections between how global development research is conducted and what type of development impact is achieved.

Drawing from the REF2021 database of impact case studies, UKCDR has identified research projects that have had a societal benefit in LMICs and global contexts, with an emphasis on differences across disciplines and topics. The study includes two workstreams: a mapping analysis and case study deep dive.

Steps taken so far include extensive consultation with an expert group, including representatives from UK-based research funders and LMIC organisations; the analysis of 891 REF2021 impact case studies; ten case study interviews; and a virtual learning workshop to validate findings from these interviews.

This study will contribute to an upcoming UKCDR report, to be published in summer 2023, that will provide an analysis of the trends and gaps across different types of non-academic impact. It will also identify key elements and mechanisms that support an enabling environment for development research. The findings will support UK funders and the research community by promoting critical reflection on how to understand and support high-quality and impactful international development research.

2.5 Lessons learned from ODA research funds

In 2021, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS, succeeded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology) announced the discontinuation of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Newton Fund following the reduction of ODA spend from 0.7% to 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI). The two funds were of great strategic importance to the UK and represented a significant investment made by His Majesty's Government (HMG): £1.5bn and £735m, respectively. A new [International Science Partnerships Fund](#) (ISPF) was announced in December 2022 combining ODA and non-ODA funding.

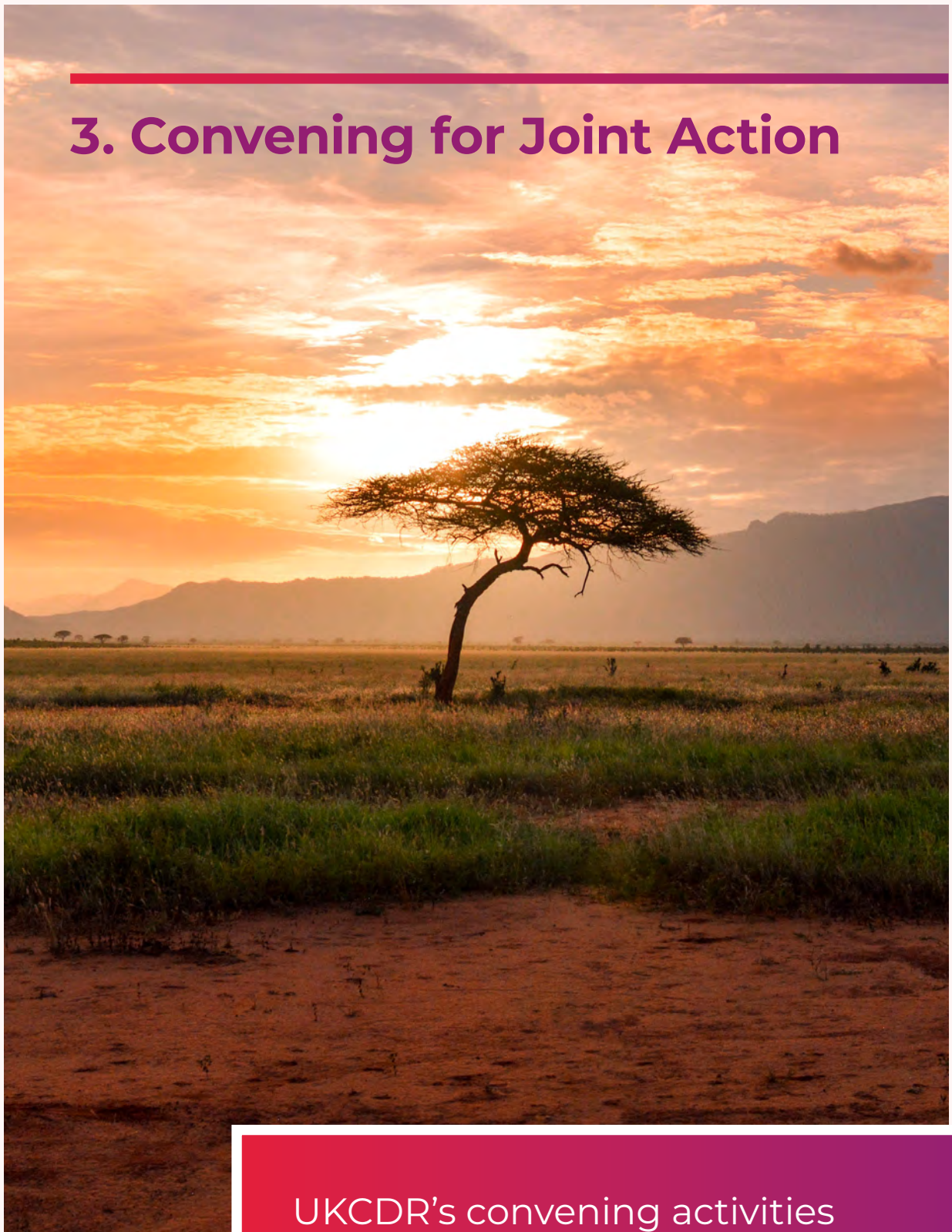
To consolidate the legacy of GCRF and the Newton Fund amid the transition to ISPF, UKCDR conducted research and analyses in FY22-23 that will form the basis of an upcoming report: *Lessons Learned from ODA Research Funds: A Synthesis Report of GCRF and Newton Fund Evaluations*.

This report will synthesise 11 evaluation documents of the GCRF and Newton Fund that were published before July 2022. Structured around seven thematic areas³, it will present lessons learned from the two funds, complemented by forward-looking pointers. The policy pointers will be designed to be applicable to future ODA funds, serving as a tool for decision makers when planning for future funding initiatives.

Steps taken so far to produce this report include extensive consultation with an expert group comprised of representatives from UKCDR's members. This consultation will ensure the highest possible relevance of the synthesis exercise to the global development research community and increase the policy pointers' practical utility. The report will be particularly relevant for decision makers working on the design and implementation of future research and development (R&D) funds, decision makers with an oversight of the ODA landscape across HMG, as well as delivery partners of ODA funded R&D programmes.

³ (1) Fund-level strategy and governance; (2) Approach to funding; (3) Partnering with LMICs; (4) Delivering development impact; (5) Long-term sustainability; (6) Monitoring results and Value for Money; and (7) Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Convening for Joint Action



UKCDR's convening activities during FY22-23.

Convening for joint action is a pillar of the UKCDR Strategy (2022-2025). This section presents an overview of how UKCDR used its convening power during FY22-23 and the results this achieved.

3.1 UNGA Science Summit 2022

On 26 September 2022, UKCDR hosted our first ever session at the United Nations' General Assembly (UNGA) Science Summit in partnership with ESSENCE on Health Research. The session's theme was '[The role of funders in enabling equitable research partnerships for development](#)'. Established to facilitate progress toward the SDGs, Agenda 2030 and Local2030, the UNGA Science Summit provided an opportune platform to discuss how to embed equity in global research partnerships.




This event brought together panellists from research funding organisations around the world to discuss practical ways in which funders and research institutions can embed equity in international scientific collaborations to advance the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Attracting an audience of policy makers and practitioners, the session launched UKCDR and ESSENCE's Good Practice Document (see Section 2.1). The session highlighted the need to prioritise equitable research partnerships as a means of supporting an enabling environment for research uptake and progress towards the SDGs.

The panel was moderated by WHO Chief Scientist, Dr Soumya Swaminathan. Panellists included:

- Dr Rodrigo Correra-Oliveira, Vice-president for Research and Biological Collections, [Oswaldo Cruz Foundation](#) (Fiocruz), Brazil.
- Karine Kålsås, Senior Adviser, [Norges forskningsråd](#) (Norwegian Research Council).
- Dr Edson Faria, Administrador Financeiro, [Fundo Nacional de Investigação](#), (National Research Fund) Mozambique.
- Dr Julia Kemp, Deputy Director, Research and Evidence Directorate, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK.

The session identified a growing consensus around the practical steps needed to advance equitable partnerships, while also making the case for funders to further align their practices and work toward a joint agenda. Panellists agreed on the importance of taking a holistic approach to equitable partnerships across the research ecosystem.

IN NUMBERS UNGA Science Summit

 5 external speakers	 203 attendees	 44/49 attendees polled said the event met some, most or all their expectations
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'Thank you for highlighting this very important topic' - attendee

3.2 UKCDR-LIDC Communications Forum 2023

On 15 February 2023, UKCDR convened its long-standing Communications Forum, hosted in collaboration with the [London International Development Centre](#) (LIDC). The Communications Forum, which has historically taken place once a year, had been on pause since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Envisioned as an informal community platform for bringing research communications professionals together to discuss issues relevant to their practices, the Communications Forum represents an opportunity to think critically and reflexively about the tools and messages we deploy to communicate research, impact, and development. This year's theme was 'stamping out colonialism from communications'.

The event aimed to:

- Improve the language and images that the UK global development research community uses to be more inclusive, representative and decolonised;
- Share best practice in equitable and anti-racist research communications; and
- Provide networking opportunities for research communication professionals.

In addition to participating in a solutions-oriented workshop, attendees heard from three expert speakers:

- Dr Althea Maria-Rivas, Senior Lecturer in Global Development, Peace and Conflict, SOAS, UK;
- Onyekachi Wambu, Executive Director, African Foundation for Development (Afford), UK; and
- Dr Angela Crack, Reader in Civil Society, University of Portsmouth, UK.

Insights from the session have since informed UKCDR's practices, including the use of images in our weekly newsletter. Follow-up engagements with attendees have demonstrated a real appetite for coherent, meaningful action on this topic across the global development research sector.



3.3 UKCDR Annual Stakeholder Event 2023

Research impact is at the heart of UKCDR's 2022 – 2025 Strategy. On 8 March 2022, UKCDR hosted its Annual Stakeholder Event on the following theme: '[Amplifying the impact of global development research](#)'. Over 230 participants joined the session, which convened an expert panel to explore how we can enhance the impact of research on development outcomes in LMICs.

The event included a UKCDR presentation on emerging insights from our REF2021 global development impact analysis (see Section 2.4). The subsequent panel discussion articulated different understandings of the nature and value of impact, the challenges to demonstrating and evaluating impact, and potential strategies to enhance impact effectiveness. Panellists highlighted the importance of embracing multiple forms and interpretations of impact; building strong engagement between researchers and research users; and mobilising research knowledge through storytelling.

The panel discussion was moderated by Dr John Young, Executive Director of the [International Network for Advancing Science and Policy](#) (INASP). Panellists included:

- Leanne Jones, West Africa Research and Innovation Team Leader (FCDO);
- Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, Secretary General of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA);
- Dr Joanes Atela, Convenor of the African Research Impact Network (ARIN); and
- James Georgalakis, Director of Evidence and Impact at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

IN NUMBERS UKCDR Annual Stakeholder Event 2023

 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">5</p> <p>external speakers</p>	 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">230</p> <p>attendees</p>	 <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">63/78</p> <p>attendees polled said the event met some, most or all their expectations</p>
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'Thank you – fabulous discussion and ideas' - attendee

3.4 UKCDR Funder Groups

UKCDR convenes four thematic funder groups. Over the years, UKCDR has established these groups for members and stakeholders to share learning, work collaboratively, and highlight opportunities to reduce the risk of duplication. The funder groups⁴, which consist of representatives from UK-based research funders, are a crucial way in which UKCDR convenes actors in the global development research sector to support coherence, collaboration and joint action.

UKCDR also participates in a cross-HMG communications group, with representation from HMG funders of global development research (including DSIT, UKRI, DHSC and FCDO). This group met five times during FY22-23. While UKCDR does not convene this group, it is a vital channel for sharing best practice and finding opportunities for joint action.

⁴ From 2019 to early 2020 UKCDR convened the Data Mapping and Analysis Group (D-MAG), however the group has not met since and discussions have been incorporated into the Mapping ODA Research and Innovation (MODARI) project.

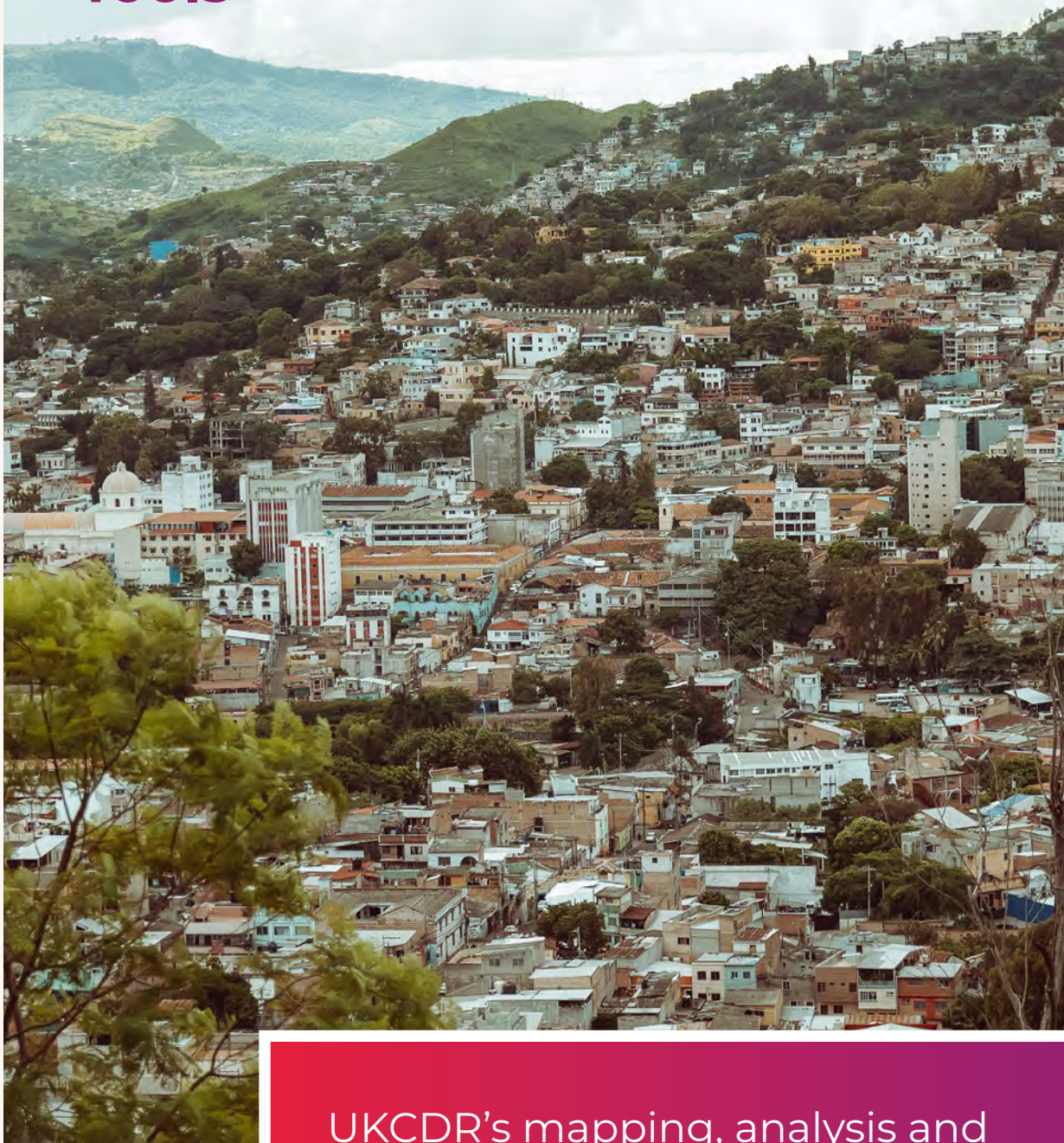
UKCDR Funder Groups

Group name	Purpose	Number of meetings in FY22-23	Topics of discussion
Epidemics Preparedness and Response Group (ERG)	To provide funders with relevant information on programmes, projects, partnerships, and future priorities to support collaboration on preparedness and response and coordination in the event of outbreaks.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary perspectives for epidemic-related research; and • Responses to the Ebola outbreak in Uganda.
Health Funders Forum (HFF)	<p>To provide an opportunity for funders to share information and best practice from members and external stakeholders and to identify potential areas for collaborative working;</p> <p>To provide members with an overview of UK-funded global health research activity, including current or future priority areas, to support coherence of UK-funded global health research.</p>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A (confidential).
Disasters Research Group (DRG)	<p>To deliver components of the UK's commitment to disaster risk reduction (DRR) by sharing information, reviewing trends, and guiding direction of future funding in disaster risk reduction, resilience, and management research;</p> <p>To promote coordination, networking and collaboration opportunities at the UK and international levels.</p>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See below (Section 4.3.1).
Research Capacity Strengthening Group (RCSG)	<p>To bring together UK funders and practitioners to share, learn, connect and improve practice in RCS;</p> <p>To improve coordination in RCS.</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between equitable partnerships and research capacity strengthening; • The role of higher education partnerships in capacity strengthening; • Decolonial approaches to research capacity strengthening; and • Shared lessons from RCS initiatives.

UKCDR Funder Groups: Spotlight on the DRG

Over this reporting period, the DRG focused on expanding its network across the DRR space, both within the UK and internationally. Activities have included engagement with the UK National Situation Centre (within the Cabinet Office) and the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (UNDRR). The group has also acted as a valuable forum for feedback on the design of, and learning from, key events and publications. These include [COP27](#), the [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), and the [UNFCCC Global Stocktake](#). In FY22-23, the DRG also submitted a joint paper to UNDRR as part of the midterm review of the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

4. UKCDR's Data and Analysis Tools



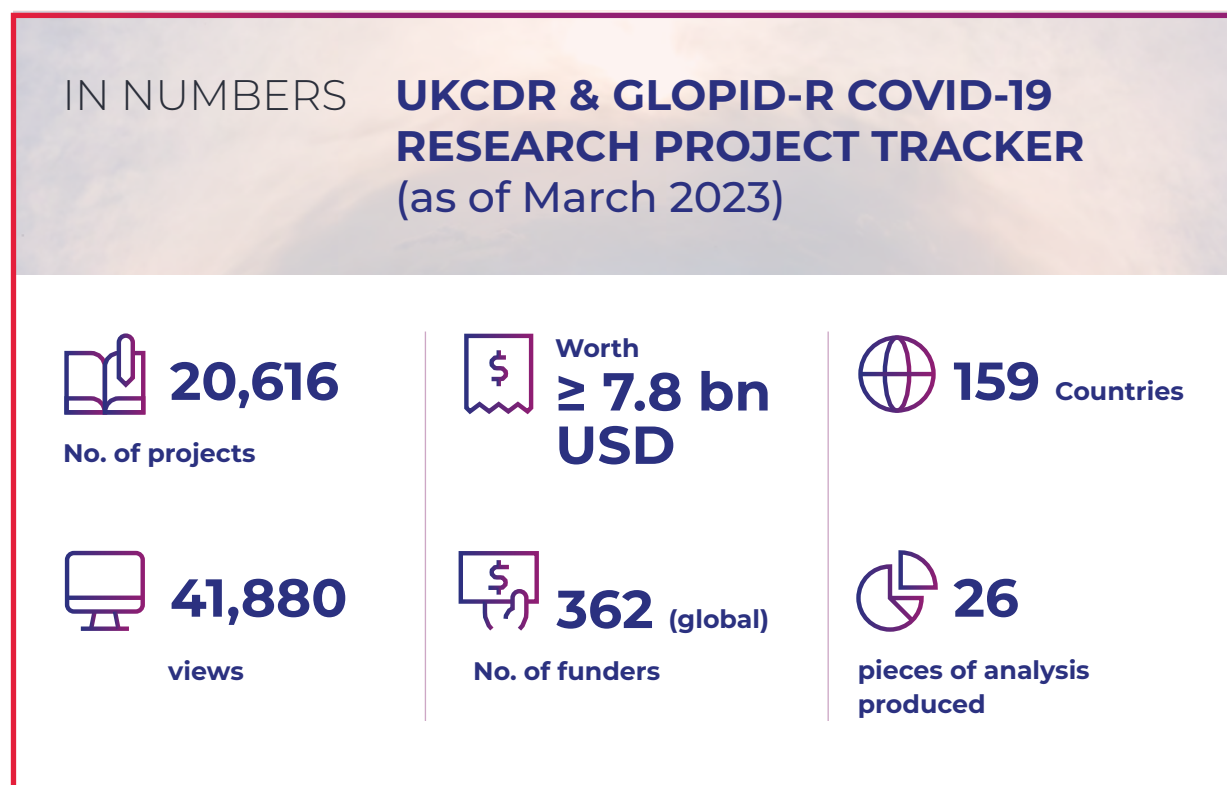
UKCDR's mapping, analysis and foresight activities during FY22-23.

Mapping, analysis and foresight is a pillar of the UKCDR Strategy (2022-2025). This section presents an overview of UKCDR's activities in this area during FY22-23.

4.1 UKCDR and GloPID-R's COVID-19 Funded Research Project Tracker

In April 2020, UKCDR and GloPID-R launched the COVID-19 Funded Research Project Tracker. The Tracker is an online database of more than 20,000 research projects related to COVID-19, which are mapped and visualised against key research priorities identified by the WHO to support a coherent global research response to the pandemic. To enhance the understanding of the evolving research landscape, as of March 2022, projects on the Tracker are also categorised and visualised against the research pillars identified by the UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery, designed to support global recovery.

During FY22-23, over 5,000 projects worth (at least) \$1.8 bn were added to the database.



4.2 Mapping ODA research and innovation (MODARI)

The Mapping ODA Research and Innovation (MODARI) project was founded in 2020 in response to the recognised need for stakeholders to be able to access more joined up and complete information on research and innovation (R&I) ODA-funded activities. UKCDR has since been leading a cross-funder project aiming to:

- Improve the availability of ODA-funded R&I, building on funders' existing data collection and reporting systems; and
- Drive consistency across funders in the classification, monitoring and capture of results from R&I activities.

The MODARI project was on hold for most of the reporting period due to staffing gaps. Due to the pause, no data updates were undertaken during FY22-23, however the MODARI tool remained live on the UKCDR website and there was continued interest from stakeholders, as evidenced by enquiries at UKCDR and third-party events. The MODARI tool was viewed 590 times in FY22-23.

In March 2023, the cross-funder MODARI Stakeholder Group was convened, attended by ODA data leads from FCDO, UKRI, DHSC, DSIT, DEFRA and Wellcome.

During FY22-23, the following activities were prioritised:

- Review of technical and data work under the initial phase of the project;
- Review of project documentation and updating of the project rationale via landscape and roadmap reports; and
- Stakeholder engagement.

The process of updating the MODARI dataset and tool was formally initiated in March 2023 and will be updated early in the next reporting period.

4.3 UKCDR's climate change research mapping

In light of the UK's ambition to take forward its leadership in climate change, as well as the urgency of the climate crisis, this reporting period saw UKCDR begin work on the development of a proof-of-concept for a tool to track investments in climate change and global development research. The aim of this work is to establish a baseline of the current research funding landscape, drawing on lessons learnt from recent projects and the strengths of UKCDR's membership.

By the end of the reporting period, work had already taken place to establish a timebound taskforce to inform the scope of the project and facilitate the development of a proof-of-concept for the climate change research grant tracker. This taskforce will be comprised of stakeholders representing the views of the intended primary users of a tracking tool designed to inform funding programmes and responses. These stakeholders include those from LMICs, international coordination mechanisms, UK government departments, and research funders (both private and public).

In FY22-23, we commissioned a briefing paper looking at the impact of this type of research by analysing the return on investment (RoI) of climate change research. This complements previous UKCDR work, including a [2021 report](#) detailing the scope and reach of UK ODA- and Wellcome-funded research on global development and climate change. Against the backdrop of reductions to the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, as well as the ongoing work and emphasis placed by UK government departments on ensuring that research programmes represent good value for money from the project to the fund levels, this project intends to demonstrate to funders where climate change research investments have yielded the greatest returns and what can be learned from them.

A proposed output for this project is a report that will highlight areas with high returns on investment and provide recommendations for maintaining the UK's international leadership in climate change and global development research.



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