

immana

Innovative Methods and Metrics for  
Agriculture and Nutrition Actions

## Competitive Research Grants to Develop or Validate Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions

Led by London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

### Frequently asked questions



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The London Centre for  
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### 1. Who is funding the IMMANA Grants Programme?

The Grants programme is part of a larger programme on Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions (IMMANA), an initiative co-funded with UK Aid from the UK Government, through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of the programme is *to contribute to the global effort of harnessing agriculture-food systems to reduce all forms of malnutrition and related health consequences, by building research capacity and generating and sharing knowledge and evidence that informs policies and programmes to better serve the world's growing population.*

### 2. What kind of research can be funded by the IMMANA Grants Programme?

The grants programme is looking to fund innovative research initiatives to **develop or validate tools, methods** and **metrics** for measuring agriculture or food systems, nutrition and health interactions of importance in LMICs. We are particularly interested in the following type of proposals:

1. Proposals for validation or assessing cross-context equivalence of such existing innovative methods, metrics and tools.
2. Innovative proposals for applying existing methods, metrics and tools in novel or under researched contexts to generate new insights.
3. Proposals aiming to develop new quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies and construct new metrics and tools that bring together ideas and resources from different relevant disciplines, especially those guided by IMMANA Gap Map findings.

IMMANA places particular importance on research which brings together expertise across sectors, including agriculture, food systems, water, sanitation, nutrition and health, and between disciplines relevant to development of novel methods, metrics and tools, including, for instance, economics, sociology, agricultural science, psychology, physiology, gender studies, and political science.

### 3. What is the IMMANA Evidence and Gap Map (EGM), and must proposals address gaps identified in the EGM?

The aim of the IMMANA Evidence and Gap Map (EGM) is to articulate and summarise the innovation in tools, metrics and methods that have been created and applied to understand food systems and agriculture-nutrition linkages in the last ten years. The EGM also highlights gaps and opportunities for future development. We request that you explore the [interactive EGM](#), before developing your applications, as the panel will particularly welcome applications which are seeking to address one or

more of the identified research gaps. However, we will also consider other topics that have a well-justified potential to expand the [IMMANA Grants portfolio](#).

**4. Does IMMANA consider qualitative methods, tools and approaches?**

Yes, we particularly welcome applications proposing the innovative use of qualitative or mixed methods as long as they can demonstrate a practical potential to address programmatic and development needs.

**5. IMMANA is focused on the development of metrics and methodologies - is the emphasis exclusively on metrics that are fully generalisable to all locations or is there also interest in locally valid metrics?**

There will be trade-offs as metrics have to be developed within a context. A key motivation behind the IMMANA grant programme is for researchers to develop metrics/methods/tools that can be eventually used or adapted by researchers in other contexts. A balance between locally-valid metrics (which could be considered as development of new methods or metrics) and generalisable metrics (which we refer to as validation and cross-context equivalence in this RFP) will be important. When developing your concept memo, it might be useful to ask yourself: What is the translational feasibility of what you are developing? How will the research community benefit from it? What is the potential for this methods or metric to move the field forward? In Round 4, IMMANA aims to increase the portfolio of proposals validating methods, metrics and tools and establishing cross-context equivalence. Please refer to the RFP for elaboration of what will be broadly considered for validation in Rounds 4.

**6. Does natural resource use fall within the grant's conception of "agriculture and food systems" or is it outside of the topic areas that the programme aims to fund?**

Natural resource use is within IMMANA's conception of agriculture and food systems and therefore the topic is within the scope of IMMANA Grants. When putting together your application, you'll need to be ensure that you situate natural resources in the context of the linkages between agriculture/food systems and nutrition outcomes.

**7. Can my organisation put in an application for both the development and validation tracks of the IMMANA Grants?**

Yes, you are able to submit more than one application for the development and validation tracks, however you cannot apply for both of these in the same application. You must submit separate applications to address each of these tracks.

**8. Which countries are eligible? Does the research collaboration need to be linked to a UK organisation?**

There are no specific geographical eligibility criteria and no requirement to be working with UK collaborators. Applicants should be aware that the proposed research must be strongly linked to agriculture and food systems in low and middle-income countries, particularly South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, and partnerships with researchers/institutions in those countries will strengthen applications. We encourage collaborations and partnerships across different countries and sectors and this will be one of the assessment criteria. A list of low and middle-income countries can be found on the [World Bank website](#).

**9. Do all proposals need to include partners based in low and middle -income countries?**

The selection Panel will particularly welcome proposals that demonstrate strong and equitable partnerships with LMIC institutions and all proposals will be scored on collaborative approaches.

**10. What is the upper limit of the individual grant applications?**

The budget is up to £250,000 per grant. The IMMANA programme as a whole will award up to £2m of competitive research grants to Round 4.

**11. Does the £250,000 exclude indirect costs?**

No. The £250,000 grant limit is the total amount that can be allocated to any one grant. This limit will need to include any indirect costs.

**12. Do you support indirect or overhead costs?**

Budget guidelines can be found in the Call for Applications. The budget must be in pound sterling (£). Indirect or overhead costs are permitted up to 15% of the total budget.

**13. What are the costing guidelines for UK universities? According to the guidance, the costs include estates and overheads. Is the costing at full economic cost (FEC) or 80%?**

The IMMANA grants are available to applicants internationally and are not restricted to UK applicants, which is why there is no specific guidance on the costing procedures followed by UK universities. Indirect costs are permitted but the bulk of the costs of the budget should be for direct costs such as salaries and transport. All applications will be reviewed for value for money and this should be a consideration when putting together budgets. If your application is shortlisted to the full proposal stage then you will be asked to justify the budget, including indirect costs.

For the purposes of IMMANA, **'Direct costs'** include salaries of directly hired project personnel, travel for project personnel, supplies directly related to the project, sub-contracts, publication costs etc. For IMMANA, **'indirect costs'** include overhead expenses which are incurred *as a result of the project*, for example use of existing shared equipment for the purpose of the project, grant management directly related to the project and project related travel insurance. Overall, we expect these costs to be kept to a minimum and the indirect costs are expected to facilitate effective implementation of the proposed project.

Including indirect costs that are not easily identifiable within the budget and are not directly related to the proposed project is strongly discouraged (examples include administrative, legal, audit, human resources, facility and equipment maintenance, library and IT support and grant management expenses that are related to overall general operations of the organisation). Indirect and estate costs approved may be up to 15% of the proposed budget and will be based on rigorous evaluation for value for money.

**14. Is there specific guidance that can be given on the ceiling air fares and per diem costs?**

Air fares, and all travel, must be standard (economy) class travel. You should justify these costs and per diem costs in the application and pay attention to value for money.

**15. The Call for Applications suggests that I should budget for attendance at the annual Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Academy conference. Is this right? If I have more than one organisation involved, does a representative from each organisation have to attend?**

As stated in the Call for Applications, attendance at the annual ANH Academy Week conference is mandatory for grant-holders and this should be budgeted for in your application for each year of your proposed research project. However, we only require one representative per grant to attend the conference, so if you have more than one organisation involved, this does not mean that you will need

to send multiple representatives. We would expect the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator to attend the conferences. Of course, you can send more representatives to the conference if you wish.

To assist with budgeting, please find some useful information below:

- Location: Although we cannot provide the exact location at this stage, we expect to hold a conference in either Africa or Asia. **However, please note that this may change due to COVID-19 and the impact on travel.**
- Duration: We expect the ANH Academy conferences to be five days long. When budgeting, allow at least six nights' accommodation.
- Timing: ANH Academy conferences will be held each year in June or July.
- Types of cost to include: When budgeting, take into account airfare, accommodation, visas, insurance and inoculation, as well as additional costs such as local transport (e.g. airport transfers), meals, etc.

#### 16. Are appendices accepted with the concept memo?

No, for reasons of consistency we are asking all applicants to restrict the concept memo to the template provided. If your application is shortlisted to the next stage, there will be opportunities to provide further detail on the proposed research project. At this stage, we are looking for ideas, not a fully polished proposal.

#### 17. Is there information on previously funded IMMANA projects in order to see what type of proposals were selected?

Yes. Details of successful applicants for Rounds 1 and 2 can be found on the [IMMANA website](#). Round 3 awards are in the process of being finalised and will be uploaded to the IMMANA website once the contracts have been signed off.

#### 18. I submitted a concept memo and/or full proposal in the round 3 of IMMANA grants but was not successful. Can I resubmit the application?

Yes, any application not successful in round 3 can be re-submitted in round 4. Please ensure that you respond to the **specific requirements of this round** as both the Concept Memo template and Call for Applications are different from previous rounds.

#### 19. Can my organisation apply for both an IMMANA Grant AND an IMMANA Fellowship?

Yes, this is possible. However, you need to bear in mind the guidance in the Call for Applications. This states that: "We will not normally provide IMMANA Fellowships to researchers to join IMMANA Grants, but it would be acceptable in principle for an institution to be hosting both an IMMANA Grant and an IMMANA Fellowship, as long as they are clearly separate activities." In practice, this means that if you apply for both a Grant and a Fellowship, we would not expect these two applications to be dependent on each other or to cover the same activities. The two must be distinct.

**20. What will happen to the concept memos and proposals that are not successful? Will feedback be provided and will applicants be able to reapply?**

We will provide brief feedback to unsuccessful applicants at the concept memo stage.

**21. What are the contractual requirements of the grants?**

The standard terms and conditions are provided for information within the call documents. We highly encourage all applicants at the concept memo submission stage to ensure that the lead organization is able to meet the draft terms and conditions, as they are non-negotiable.

**22. Are there any countries which are not eligible to apply for IMMANA Grant funding?**

Unfortunately, the following countries or territories against which the U.S. maintains comprehensive sanctions (currently Cuba, Iraq, Syria, North Korea and the Crimea Region of Ukraine) cannot apply for IMMANA Grant funding.