

## Cylchlythyr | Circular

# International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) Institutional Support Grant funding for financial years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

**Date:** 06 December 2023  
**Reference:** W23/32HE  
**To:** Heads of higher education institutions in Wales  
**Response by:** 12 December 2023  
**Contact:** Name: Hywel Edwards  
Email: [hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk)

HEFCW has received funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to support Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities within Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) for financial years 2023-2024 (£1,455,001) and 2024-2025 (£1,182,247). This circular provides details of how the funding will be allocated to Higher Education Institutions in Wales, the information required from institutions to accept their funding allocations and our approach to monitoring.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please email [info@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:info@hefcw.ac.uk).



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## Introduction

1. HEFCW has received funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to support Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities within Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) for financial years 2023-2024 (FY2023-24) and 2024-2025 (FY2024-25).

## Use of funding

2. The grant can only be used to fund ODA activities, with the primary purpose of targeting the economic development and welfare [of approved ODA recipient countries](#) as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
3. DSIT expects that the International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) Institutional Support Grant allocations for FY2023-24 be spent by the end of March 2024 in order to contribute to the UK Government's target of spending 0.5% of Gross National Income on ODA. Please note that the FY 2023-24 allocation can be backdated to support activities that commenced after HEFCW received confirmation of this funding from DSIT (30 October 2023).
4. This funding provides flexible institutional grants that can be used strategically to support ODA-eligible activities. This may include underpinning ISPF activity funded through other delivery partners, or by directly supporting research that addresses the problems faced by developing countries that are not funded through the ISPF grants of other delivery partners.
5. The ISPF Institutional Support Grant cannot be used to deliver activities within, in partnership with or that otherwise benefit China.

## International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) Institutional Support Grant Allocations for FY2023-24 and FY2024-25

6. DSIT has provided HEFCW with budget allocations of £1,455,001 for FY 2023-24 and £1,182,247 for FY 2024-25.
7. DSIT has stipulated that the funding should be allocated according to historic ODA funding received by HEIs, including Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Newton Fund, as well as UKRI Research Council competitive grants not originally designated as ODA that were subsequently found to meet ODA eligibility criteria (also referred to as other ODA).
8. UKRI has provided HEFCW with a breakdown of historic Global Challenge Research Fund and Newton Fund returns. ISPF funding will be allocated pro-rata based on these historic returns identified by UKRI.
9. Given that a straight pro-rata allocation would result in small allocations in some cases, HEFCW has decided to only provide funding to those institutions which

would receive an annual allocation of at least £50k, see **Annex A**. This is consistent with the approach taken with previous GCRF allocations (see circular [W18/02HE](#)) and takes account of the potential administrative overhead of managing ODA activities.

10. HEFCW acknowledges the challenges associated with spending funding for FY2023-24 by the end of the financial year. As such, HEIs offered ISPF Institutional Support Grant funding must confirm they wish to receive this funding by **12.00noon Tuesday 12 December**, see **Annex B**.
11. Institutions that elect to receive the funding must provide a short summary of how the funding will be managed and details of the processes and procedures for ensuring that it will only be used to support ODA-eligible activities.
12. Allocations for FY 2023-24 will be paid in January 2024. Allocations for FY 2024-25 will be paid in May 2024.
13. If institutions believe that they may not be able to use their full allocations by the end of the financial year then they should contact HEFCW as soon as possible. HEFCW reserves the right to recoup any part of an HEI's allocation that is not spent on ODA activities within the respective financial year, and any funding reclaimed in this way will be returned to DSIT.

## **Annual monitoring**

14. Institutions in receipt of funding will be required to maintain appropriate records detailing the activities that have been supported including relevant information related to ODA compliance.
15. To support the collection of data, HEFCW have provided a monitoring template (see **Annex C**) which includes:
  - Summary of individual activities supported
  - A brief abstract of individual activities
  - [DAC](#) list countries involved, including any partners in DAC and non-DAC countries
  - Confirmation that the activity is ODA compliant as defined by the [OECD](#)
  - Budget allocation for each activity
  - A brief progress report
  - Identification of any major project risks
16. HEIs will need to provide HEFCW, and in due course the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER), with updated monitoring templates by the following dates:
  - 1 March 2024
  - 1 September 2024
  - 1 March 2025

17. Institutions may be subject to monitoring spot checks by HEFCW on behalf of DSIT to capture case study information demonstrating Fund impact, ODA compliance, value for money etc. HEFCW is currently working with DSIT to finalise any monitoring requirements and will inform HEIs as soon as they become aware of any additional monitoring requirements.
18. DSIT sometimes receives ad hoc queries from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) or OECD on its ODA data. If further information is required, then HEIs will be expected to work with HEFCW to respond to additional data queries from DSIT on ODA eligibility, data transparency etc.
19. As part of monitoring requirements on this funding, HEIs in receipt of this grant are required to include this funding in their routine annual accounting reporting. Further details of HEFCW's monitoring requirements set by DSIT can be found in **Annex D**.

### **Assessing the impact of our policies**

20. As HEFCW has no influence on the method of funding allocation in this instance, we have not carried out an impact assessment. Responsibility for impact assessment rests with DSIT, as the owners of this fund.

### **Further information and responses**

21. Institutions should submit their completed **Annex B** by email to [hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk) by **12 noon on Tuesday 12 December 2023**.
22. For further information contact Hywel Edwards, Head of Research, Innovation and Engagement ([hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk)).

## Institutional allocations

	(ISPF) Institutional Support Grant funding for financial years 2023-2024	(ISPF) Institutional Support Grant funding for financial years 2024-2025
	£	£
Aberystwyth University	277,258	225,284
Bangor University	377,628	306,838
Cardiff University	450,904	366,378
Swansea University	349,211	283,748
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,455,001</b>	<b>1,182,247</b>

## Summary of ISPF ODA Institutional support grant monitoring & reporting requirements

For the avoidance of doubt, the Department for the Economy (NI), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council, and Research England are referred to Higher Education Funding Bodies (HEFBs) below. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) refer to Higher Education Providers (e.g., a UK or NI University, higher education corporation etc). which is eligible to receive support from funds administered by a HEFB.

### **1. Acknowledgement of ODA eligibility by HEIs**

HEFBs will ask recipient HEIs to confirm in writing, that they will use the ISPF support grant to fund Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) activities only, with the primary purpose of targeting the economic development and welfare [of approved ODA recipient countries](#) as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). DSIT will use each HEI's annual account report to provide further assurance that funds have been utilised in line with agreed terms and conditions. Please note that DSIT does not use ODA funding to support research and innovation partnerships with China. Ex-BEIS announced in May 2022 that it was ending BEIS ODA spending in China in March 2023. The Written Ministerial Statement outlining this position is available online [here](#).

### **2. Quarterly RODA reporting by HEFBs**

HEFBs will submit quarterly financial and activity updates on DSIT's reporting system (RODA) for each recipient HEI. RODA should reflect the total amount of ISPF funding each HEI receives and spends as a single activity (see diagram below). When setting up RODA, HEFBs will need to complete mandatory reporting fields using the most appropriate response from a default list to cover the broad range of activities that a HEI may fund using their ISPF allocation. Once set up, HEFBs will need to provide quarterly spending profiles (actuals, forecasts) and document any received refunds. This information is used by DSIT to comply with mandatory ODA reporting requirements e.g. [International Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI), [Statistics on International Development](#) (SID) reports, monitoring UK's total ODA spend on a Calendar Year and Financial Year basis to achieve the 0.5% Gross National Income target.

### **3. Bi-annual update reports (activity commentary, risks) by HEFBs**

Twice a financial year, in quarters two and four, HEFBs will submit Progress reports that provide additional details on spending profile variations, activity achievements and any perceived risk to all ISPF activities. For financial year 2023-2024, DSIT only expects one progress report to be submitted in quarter 4 given the delays. DSIT does not expect progress reports to be submitted by individual HEIs.

### **4. Ad hoc responses to additional data queries by HEFBs and HEIs**

DSIT sometimes receives queries from FCDO, OECD or IATI on its ODA data. DSIT will endeavour to answer these queries using data that the HEFBs have already provided. If further information is required, then HEFBs and HEIs are expected to respond to additional data queries from DSIT on ODA eligibility, data transparency etc.

**5. Ad hoc spot checks on HEI ISPF activities**

DSIT will perform assurance spot checks on HEIs delivering ISPF activities, to capture case study information demonstration Fund impacts, value for money etc. This would be done infrequently (maximum once per financial year, but unlikely in 2023-2024) using a random sampling method to collect information on the highest spending HEIs and different types. DSIT will work closely with each HEFBs gathering the information from the HEIs, and DSIT undertaking the analysis.

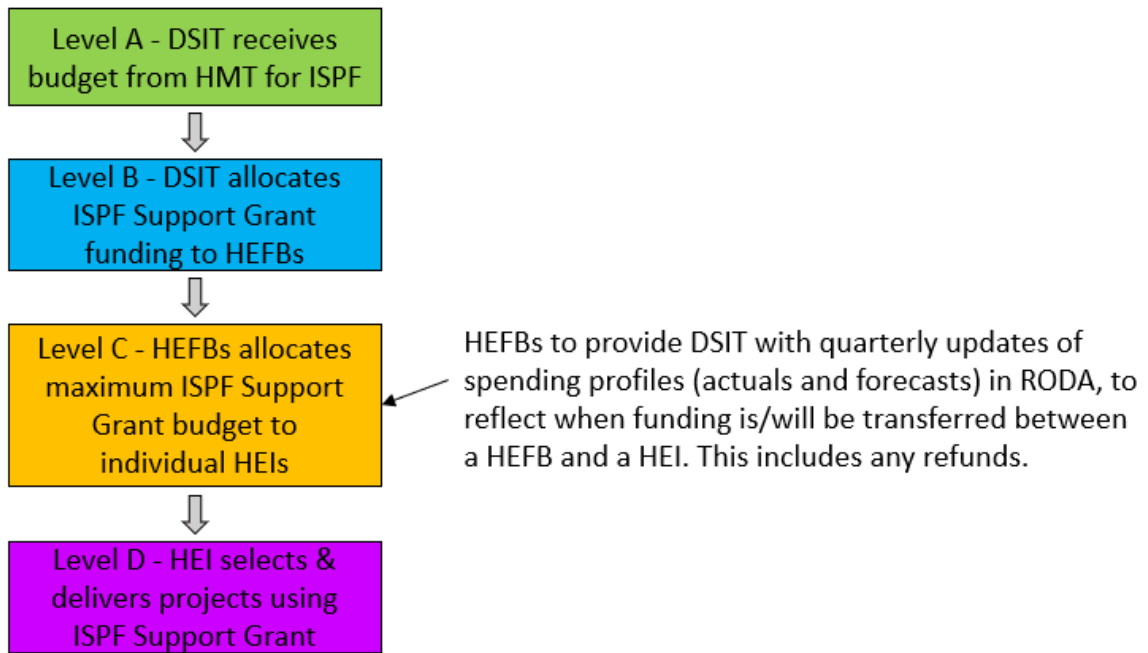


Figure 1 - Summary of what level of data is reported on RODA

Annex B

**International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) Institutional Support Grant**

This completed form should be emailed to [hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:hywel.edwards@hefcw.ac.uk) by 12 December 2023.

Name of institution	
<b>Contact person for correspondence regarding the ISPF Institutional Support Grant.</b>	
Name	
Position	
Email	
<b>ISPF Allocation for FY 2023-24</b>	
<b>ISPF Allocation for FY 2024-25</b>	

1. Provide details of how the funding will be managed and the institutional processes and procedures for ensuring that all activities are ODA-compliant

Maximum 250 words
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The Vice Chancellor (or nominated representative) is asked to confirm the following:	
The university confirms that it wishes to accept the funding subject to the conditions stated in this circular.	Yes / No
The university acknowledges that it has the necessary processes and procedures in place to ensure that the funding will only be used to support activities that are ODA compliant	Yes / No
<b>Signature Vice Chancellor</b>	
<b>Date</b>	



Institutional Support Grant Monitoring Template

HEFCW circular W23/32HE:  
Annex C

Institution:

List of projects supported						Funding allocated		Delivery
Unique project identifier	Project title	Project abstract	DAC benefitting nations	Organisations involved (in DAC country)	Organisations involved (in non-DAC country)	Individual project cost (£)	Financial year	Progress report / Major risks
							2023/24	
							2023/24	
							2023/24	
							2023/24	
							2023/24	
<b>Total</b>								

Institution:

List of projects supported						Funding allocated		Delivery	
Unique project identifier	Project title	Project abstract	DAC benefitting nations	Organisations involved (in DAC country)	Organisations Involved (in non-DAC country)	Individual project cost (£)	Financial year	Progress report 2 / Major risks	Progress report 3 / Major risks
							2024/25		
							2024/25		
							2024/25		
							2024/25		
<b>Total</b>									