Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

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International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) 2025-26

Date: 27 November 2025
Reference: Medr/2025/32

To: Heads of higher education institutions

Respond by: 31 March 2026
More information: Hayley Moss | research@medr.cymru

Summary

Medr has received funding from the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to support Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities within eligible Welsh higher education institutions (HEIs) 2025/26. This publication provides details of how the funding will be allocated to HEIs.

Introduction

1. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has confirmed that it will provide £1,182,247 to support Official Development Assistance (ODA) Institutional Support Awards under the International Science Partnership Fund (ISPF) for FY 2025-26.

Use of funding

2. The grant funding provided under ISPF is to be used solely to fund activities that are ODA compliant as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the primary purpose of targeting the economic development and welfare of countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recipient list. In line with DSIT policy the funding cannot be used to deliver activities that are within, in partnership with, or that would otherwise benefit China.

3. Activities funded through ISPF Institutional Support Grant (ODA) must also adhere to the legislation governing UK ODA funding:
   - the International Development Act 2002 as amended
   - the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014. This requires that aid must be "likely to contribute to reducing poverty in a way which is likely to contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender".

4. The funding provides flexible institutional funding that can be used strategically to support ODA eligible activities. This may include underpinning ISPF activity funded via 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. DSIT expects the ISPF institutional support grant allocations for 2025-26 will be spent by **31 March 2026**. Funding may be backdated to 1 April 2025.

6. Institutions are able to use this funding to support activity that takes place after 31 March 2026, providing that it is in line with the institutions accounting rules and procedures and the spend will be recorded in FY 2025-26. Activities should be complete by the end of AY 31 July 2026.

7. Medr reserves the right to recoup any part of an HEI's allocation that is not spent on ODA activities and any funding reclaimed in this way will be returned to DSIT.

Allocations

8. Funding is allocated according to historical 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. Data was provided by UKRI in 2023/24.

9. Given that a straight pro-rata allocation would result in small allocations in some cases, Medr has decided to provide funding to only 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 HEFCW circular W18/02HE) and takes account of the potential administrative overhead of managing ODA activities.

10. Institutional allocations for 2025/26 will be paid in **November 2025**.

Monitoring arrangements

11. HEIs 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.

12. Medr have provided a monitoring template (**Annex B**) which includes:
    - The title of the project
    - A brief abstract of individual activities
    - OECD DAC recipient 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
    - Project outcomes

13. HEIs are required to submit their monitoring returns to Hayley Moss, research@medr.cymru by **31 March 2026**.

14. DSIT may receive ad hoc enquires from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) or OECD. If further information is required HEIs will be expected to work with Medr to respond to additional data queries from DSIT.

15. DSIT may conduct spot checks to ensure compliance with ODA eligibility requirements. These checks will be proportionate and focussed on the value received by the institution. DSIT will determine the information required and the process for selecting institutions, with Medr providing support. Medr may also capture case study information to demonstrate the impact of funded activities. Medr is currently working with DSIT to finalise the monitoring requirements and will update institutions as soon as any obligations are confirmed.

Impact assessment

16. Responsibility for impact assessment rests with DSIT as owners of the fund. We have not identified potential adverse impacts or discrimination in our management of the fund.

Payment arrangements

17. Funding will be distributed to HEIs via one payment in **November 2025**

Further Information

18. For further information contact Hayley Moss (research@medr.cymru).

Annex A

International Science Partnership Fund – Institutional Allocations 2025/26

Institution	ISPF Allocation 2025/26
Aberystwyth University	£225,284
Bangor University	£306,838
Cardiff University	£366,378
Swansea University	£283,748
Total	**£1,182,247**

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