

Small Grant Scheme on Pandemics, Cities, Regions & Industry

Introduction

The Regional Studies Association (RSA) is committed to supporting the global community in researching and disseminating evidence on how regions, cities and industry are addressing the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). This Small Grant Scheme has been launched to support our community in this work. The money to fund this scheme has been repurposed from the Research Network scheme and Travel Grant scheme funding set aside for 2020 and has been topped up to allow more grants to be awarded.

As territories are at different stages of this pandemic, the Association plans to release funding in tranches so as to even the playing field for those that remain in tight lockdown and who may not have access to resources, or as much time, for example, if they have caring responsibilities. The Board will make decisions on the second tranche of funding at the end of June 2020.

In offering this funding, the RSA is seeking to promote and encourage research and dissemination activities, both within and across trans-national borders and to further the overall aims and objectives of the Association.

Examples of research projects could cover economic, environmental, social, political, cultural, behavioural and technological change, and address conceptual, methodological, empirical or policy impacts. Topics could address specific countries, regions or cities, providing that wider implications for global audiences are addressed.

Typical project topics could relate but not be exclusive to, for example:

- the impact on small businesses, including new or emerging consumer behaviour, trading patterns and times, deliveries/logistics, and changing retail footfall;
- changing patterns of air pollution and noise pollution in cities;
- the importance of access to green and blue space for health and wellbeing purposes;
- impacts of lockdown on households caused by housing density and house space standards of recent building;
- the impact on the gig economy, and employment security, including new patterns of where people work now and in the future;
- the geography of production of health-related medical supplies and innovation in science and engineering;

- regional differentials in employment and lockdown impacts and the future of smaller cities and towns, particularly in disadvantaged areas;
- changing patterns of transport use, changing mobilities, and the future of rail and air;
- the impact on specific sectors of the economy (e.g. tourism) and the challenges to pre-existing business models.
- insurance companies' risk assessments of cities and regions, for future scenarios;
- the changing geography of business activity, through counter urbanisation and the need for enhanced digital connectivity;
- links between mental health and urban areas;
- alternative democratic futures including virtual governmental working and scrutiny, and public engagement in decision-making;
- the opportunities to 'reset' policy, the economy and society in nations and regions for regional policy or industrial policy, or welfare;
- a comparative assessment of different responses by individual nations countries, including differences between decentralised and centralised states;
- the creation of new emerging social contracts through street and community level engagement and self-organisational support;
- the emergence of new relational geographies and a need to revisit firm/innovation cluster theory and agglomeration economies;
- the hollowing out of manufacturing and the rethinking of global supply chains.

The award in brief

- This award is open to single applicants or team of researchers.
- All applicants must be based within an eligible higher education institution (HEI) and must be a current individual (non-corporate) member of the Regional Studies Association and remain a member throughout the duration of the grant and reporting period.
- Where possible, teams of researchers should include an early career researcher
- This Scheme aims to support a discrete piece of regional studies and/or regional science research on the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on regions cities and industry
- The value of the award is up to £4,000.
- Six awards will be made subject to the quality of applications.
- The award has a maximum research time span of up to 9 months and reporting conditions apply. The reporting conditions have to be fulfilled within 11 months from the date of the award letter.
- In addition to the grant sum, the RSA will cover one Article Publishing Charge (APC) for the journal *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science*.
- RSA Members may only hold one RSA grant at a time.
- Forthcoming deadline: 22nd June 2020

Application process

The application should be a maximum of 3 pages long and should include the following:

- Applicant information details (Team applications are allowed but all must be RSA members):
 - Title, name, surname
 - RSA membership number if known (You can find your membership number by logging into Members Lounge and clicking on Member's Details)
 - Postal address, telephone number and email for correspondence
 - Details on previously awarded RSA Grants (Early Career Grant, Membership Research Grant, Fellowship Research Grant, Policy Expo, Travel Grant and Research Network)
- Name of Higher Education Institution (HEI), Job Title, Position
- Title of the research project
- Timings of the research
- Summary - details of research and the advances it is hoped to make – word limit 500
- Brief overview of costs and budget

Incomplete applications or applications arriving after the closing date will not be considered. Applications will be assessed on the basis of quality and the deliverability of the proposed project.

The decision will be taken by the RSA Board based on the recommendation of the Association's Research Committee. The Committee will reach its decision based on refereeing by its members; additional referees will be sought where the subject area demands this. We regret that as a micro-research funder, and a registered charity relying on the volunteer labour of our members, the Association is not able to offer feedback on individual applications and correspondence will not be entered into.

Successful applicants will receive an award letter, which will act as a contract between the Association, the grant holder and their Higher Education Institute (HEI). The award letter and any subsequent agreement will need to be signed by both the grant applicant and the higher education institution (HEI). Normally payment will be withheld until the project report is submitted and accepted.

Expectations and obligations

Applicants must be members of the Association and remain in membership throughout the period of the grant and reporting period. Recipients of this grant must be an Individual, Early Career, Emeritus or Student member of the Regional Studies Association in any membership band - A, B, C or D at the time of application and remain a member until the end of the reporting period and acceptance of the end of award report, whichever is the latest.

Members in any territorial band may apply for grant funding. Applications from Corporate members are not eligible. For clarity, Corporate members may not apply for this award either as organisations, nor may individuals apply as representatives of Corporate members.

RSA Members should note that they are not permitted to hold more than one consecutive RSA research award at a time. For clarity, members holding a Research Network Grant, Policy Expo, Early Career, MeRSA, FeRSA or Travel grant may not apply for this funding until their existing award has expired and all reporting requirements have been satisfactorily delivered and accepted by the Association. This is in the interest of enabling access to the Association's limited resources to as many members as possible and thus to support a multiplicity of scholars and their different approaches and topics of interest and is consistent with the Association's pluralist approach to regional studies.

Reporting

The following reports are required to comply with the grant scheme:

1. An article for submission preferably to an RSA journal. The journal RSRS is gold open access and it may be possible to get support with APCs via HEIs or a waiver programme.
2. A short news article published either in the e-Zine Regions or the RSA Blog with appropriate photographs, graphs or figures;
3. The End of Award Report within six weeks of completing the research. This report should include both a narrative and financial section. The financial report is expected to be completed by the HEI.

Please note, that if the grant holder does not fulfil all the requirements, the RSA reserves the right to not refund any claims.

The grant holder will be expected to play an RSA ambassadorial role for the duration of the grant – this may include speaking about the grant scheme at RSA events, recording a video, writing short pieces for e-Zine Regions, the RSA Blog or the RSA website with appropriate photographs, graphs or figures; sharing across social media such as Facebook or Twitter; and by making other nonspecific contributions to the profile of the Association.

Financial guidelines

This grant may be used to conduct a piece of research that would lead to a larger grant application, or to explore niche and development areas that are not yet ready for a larger application.

The Association is willing to consider applications with matched funding subject to appropriate acknowledgments and agreed IP arrangements between the researcher and the funders.

Eligible Costs

Funds may be spent to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting, and developing the research, including but not limited to:

- Project planning and development costs
- Teaching or research buy-out
- Research assistance
- Consumables – purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms etc and any minor items that will be used during the course of the project
- Costs of interpreters in the field and transcription costs of interviews
- Costs of preparing camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof reading, indexing where this is not borne by the publisher
- Cost of setting up the research website
- Software – of any description
- Costs of deposit of digital material in a suitably accessible repository may be considered
- Cost of reproduction rights will be considered provided that there is a contract for publication in place
- Article Publishing Charge (APC) for an RSA journal

Ineligible Costs

Applicants registered with special needs may consult the Association about possible exceptions. Ineligible costs are:

- Institutional overheads
- Payment to the principal researcher in lieu of salary or for personal maintenance at home
- Equipment including but not limited to computing, printing, cameras, telephones of any type, recording equipment etc
- Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc)
- Books
- Childcare
- Insurance
- RSA Membership Fee

Claims and payment

The Regional Studies Association is a learned society and a registered charity. The funding for this Scheme has been generated by the Association and its members. Grant holders and their institutions are expected not only to comply with the terms of the scheme but also with the spirit of the scheme. If you and/or your HEI are not certain if an expense is eligible or not, please consult the Association prior to financial commitment. Expenses deemed as ineligible will not be covered.

A grant up to £4,000 (or its equivalent in dollars or euros) will be paid on acceptance of the end of award report by Research Committee. In case the Research Committee finds the report unsatisfactory, resubmission will be requested and funds will be withheld until the report is acceptable. If the applicant's HEI is outside the UK it should be noted that the grant is awarded in British Pounds Sterling (GBP) and that the exchange rate risk must be assured by the HEI. Transfers will be made in GBP sterling at the prevailing exchange rate. Where transfers are made by bank transfer, the costs will be borne by the HEI.

A detailed budget should be submitted as part of the application form. The budget is a part of the research contract and applicants should expect to spend the money in accordance with what was set out in their application. Spending outside these parameters may not be reimbursed. Any budget changes should be communicated to the RSA in advance and are subject to approval.

Recognition / Intellectual property / Knowledge transfer

The Association's grant funding will be acknowledged in all reports, presentations, and publications.

The project must be solely funded by the Association, but applicants may use this funding as leverage for further funding for future projects. The grant must be used to fund a discrete project which could for example, be a pilot study. The RSA reserves the right to be a named partner in future projects.

Ethics, misconduct and liabilities

Grants will normally only be awarded to higher education institutions (HEI) or recognized research institutions as grant holders will be subject to the research rules and ethics of their employing institutions. Applicants must be based within an eligible HEI. The grant will be administered through the HEI which will normally be an institution with degree awarding powers or a national research institute. The grant holders will be subject to the research rules and ethics of their employing institutions.

The RSA accepts no responsibility for the views or opinions expressed by the grant holder. It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors, including rigour, respect and responsibility, that may influence or impact on a research project. Grant holders will be required to comply with their HEI's ethics code and this will be referenced in the document signed off by the HEI.

It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the application is sent to the Association and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the research are clear. The grant holder and the HEI are responsible for any matters arising out of the process of a grant holder's research, the institution holding the grant or from the results of the research.

The grant holder and the HEI are responsible for any human resources related health and safety issues (the HEI health and safety regulations will apply). The Regional Studies Association accepts no responsibility for issues directly or indirectly resulting from the funded research, the grant holder or other organisations and individuals involved. It is the HEI's responsibility to ensure that the research complies with the all correct GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), the Data Protection Act and PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations).

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