

Announcement of Opportunity

ESPA 2012 Grants

Critical Deadlines:
Outline Proposals to be submitted
by 13th August 2012
16:00 (4pm) UK Local Time (GMT+1 /UCT+1)

Information about your application, including the personal information provided on the forms, will be processed and stored electronically by the ESPA Secretariat, Directorate and representatives of ESPA's Funders (NERC, ESRC and DFID). The Information contained in your application may be passed on to external reviewers in confidence. Reviewers will be asked to destroy information after the review and selection process is complete.

Your application and personal information will be stored by the ESPA programme for management purposes but will not be shared with other organisations outside the ESPA partnership. We will only use details provided in the application for correspondence about the call. In order to take advantage of all ESPA online services, including our partnerships service to link with other researchers and users of research, you will need to register to join the ESPA Global Forum on our website at: <http://www.espa.ac.uk/user/register>

By submitting your application to the ESPA Programme you have indicated your acceptance of these data protection terms and conditions.



A research programme co-funded by DFID, ESRC & NERC and accredited by LWEC

DFID Department for
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Summary

The Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) research programme is funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). ESPA is an international programme funding cutting-edge interdisciplinary research generating new primary data and knowledge to enhance global understanding of how ecosystems function and provide services that contribute to human well-being, poverty alleviation and sustainable growth that benefits the poor.

This call for ESPA 2012 Grants provides an opportunity for the world's best researchers to collaborate in interdisciplinary teams linking their research excellence to potential development impact intended to benefit poor people in low income countries.

ESPA was launched in 2007 and will run until 2017 (see ESPA Timeline, Section 8). The ESPA 2012 Grants call is for projects designed to complement and build upon research already funded by the ESPA programme, including six Situation Analyses (2007–2008), 11 Strengthening Research Capacity projects (2008–2010), 26 Partnership and Project Development projects (2010–2011), 18 Programme Framework Grants (2010–2013) and three Consortia Projects (2012–2017). (For information about funded ESPA projects see: www.espa.ac.uk/projects).

This Announcement of Opportunity (AO) is for empirical ESPA projects where original *in situ* research will lead to a significantly increased understanding of ways to enhance the benefits that poor people in low income countries will derive from multiple ecosystem services (see Section 1.3). ESPA projects will be required to deliver research excellence with impact.

Projects will generate new data and knowledge from integrated studies of a wide range of ecosystem services. This call is specifically focussed on understanding how ecosystems function to provide services in multi-functional landscapes so that they can better support enhanced multidimensional well-being of poor people in low-income countries. This requires detailed *in situ* studies of ecosystems, their functions and processes, the goods and services that emerge, and the governance and decision-making processes involved (see Section 2.1).

Applications are invited for funding in the range of £1 M to £2 M Full Economic Cost (FEC). This call has a total available budget of up to £10 M. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of three years, with an expected start date between 1 April and 30 June 2013. In administration of the grant, standard NERC guidelines will apply.

Projects will be selected through a three stage process, which began with a short Expression of Interest to attend the Grant Development Workshop. This document describes the second stage of the process: submission of outline proposals.

**Outline Proposals must be submitted via email to espa@nerc.ac.uk
by 16:00 GMT+1 /UCT+1 on 13th August 2012**

Abbreviations

AO	Announcement of Opportunity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCCEP	Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy
CO-I	Co-Investigator
CV	Curriculum Vitae/Resume
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
EOI	Expression of Interest
ESPA	Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
FEC	Full Economic Cost
FTE	Full time equivalent
GBP	Great British Pound
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IBPES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IGBP	International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme
IHDP	International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change
Je-S	Joint Electronic Submission
LIC	Low-Income Country
LWEC	Living with Environmental Change
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MIC	Middle-Income Country
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEB	Programme Executive Board
PDRA	post-Doctoral research Assistant
PI	Principal Investigator
RC	Research Council
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RO	Research Organisation
ROD	Research Outputs Database
STEPS	Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
TRAC	Transparent Approach to Costing
UN	United Nations
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time

Important Terminology (Related to the Call)

Term	Definition	Reference
Developing Country Research Institutions	A national or regional research institution or an NGO with the capacity to undertake high-quality research that is operating in a low-income or a middle-income country. ESPA does not consider that offices of international agencies and research organisations or international NGOs that are located in developing countries should be considered to be developing country institutions.	
Developing Country Researcher	An individual holding the nationality of a developing country (low income or middle income countries) who will undertake a research role in the ESPA project.	
Low Income Country (LIC)	As classified by the World Bank. http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications LIC countries have an average annual <i>per capita</i> income of less than US\$1,005 calculated using the World Bank Atlas Method .	World Bank Lending Groups
Middle Income Country (MIC)	As classified by the World Bank. http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications . MIC countries have an average annual <i>per capita</i> income of between US\$1,006–\$3975 (lower middle income) or US\$3,976–\$12,275 calculated using the World Bank Atlas Method .	World Bank Lending Groups
Poverty	Poverty can be generally understood as the lack of, or inability to achieve, a socially acceptable standard of living, or the possession of insufficient resources to meet basic needs. Poverty is a contested concept and is experienced and conceived differently according to context. Researchers will be expected to adopt a multidimensional approach to poverty.	ESPA Poverty Framework
Ecosystem Services	Ecosystem services are the final point in the delivery chain from ecosystems that are used for material or non-material goods. They result from underlying biophysical processes and structures. See the Research Strategy and UK National Ecosystem Assessment.	Research Strategy
Ecosystems	The places where abiotic and biotic components of the environment come together spatially. They involve both biophysical processes and structures that underpin a variety of final ecosystem services.	Research Strategy

Change Log

In addition to the Change Log for this document, the ESPA Secretariat has published a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to support the call available at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao-2012.asp> or by emailing espa@nerc.ac.uk.

All potential applicants are strongly encouraged to [register](#) to receive the ESPA Directorate's mailing list and newsletter. Any important information relating to the call during the first stage of the proposal process will be publicised the Directorate's mailing list.

Date	Section	Page	Detail
6/7/2010	5.2.3	9	Case for Support has a 2000 word limit. We welcome the use of 1 clear diagram
6/7/2012	5.4.1	10	Case for Support has a 2000 word limit. We welcome the use of 1 clear diagram
6/7/2012	5.5.1	10	The budget outline needs to detail approximate costs, allowing for a 10% (+ or -) variance.
6/7/2012	7.1.1	11	The deadline for submission of Full proposals has been extended until 6 th November 2012

1 Scientific Scope of the Call for ESPA 2012 Grants

1.1 Objective

- 1.1.1 This Announcement of Opportunity (AO) is for empirical ESPA projects where original, *in situ* research will lead to a significant increase in the understanding of ways to enhance the benefits that poor people in low income countries will derive from multiple ecosystem services (see Section 1.3).
- 1.1.2 The successful research projects will generate new data and knowledge from integrated studies of a wide range of ecosystem services. The research funded by ESPA 2012 Grants will reveal the socio-ecological processes and functions that support sustainable delivery of ecosystem services and the alleviation of poverty in low income countries (see Section 2.1). Research will need to include analyses of the links between ecosystem services and human well-being (positive or negative). These may include understanding the links between the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services and poverty alleviation and the way that sustainable growth can deliver multi-dimensional benefits to the poor.

1.2 Overview

- 1.2.1 To facilitate the development of the most promising projects, and to streamline the selection process, there will be a three-stage review involving: an assessed expression of interest to attend a Grant Development Workshop, an outline proposal and a full proposal.
- 1.2.2 In this call, applications are invited for funding in the range of £1.0 million to £2.0 million Full Economic Cost (FEC). A total budget of up to £10m is available. Projects will be funded for a maximum duration of three years, with an expected start date between 1 April and 30 June 2013. In administration of the grant, standard NERC guidelines will apply.

1.3 ESPA's Vision

- 1.3.1 ESPA is an international research programme providing evidence of how ecosystem services can be used sustainably to support well-being and sustainable poverty alleviation among poor people in developing countries. Our projects are interdisciplinary, linking the social¹ and natural sciences to address a series of focused research questions and evidence challenges. They are delivered through collaborative partnerships of the world's best researchers. *ESPA's success will be measured by the way that its research can be turned into results that benefit the poor in a sustainable manner* (see www.espa.ac.uk/vision).
- 1.3.2 Our vision combines research excellence with development impact², with a focus on:
- generating world-class science in ESPA's key research areas (see [ESPA's Knowledge Strategy](#)); and
 - working with partners to ensure that ESPA's new knowledge is put into use to support significant and sustainable delivery of ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and growth (see ESPA's [Impact Strategy](#)).

¹ The term "Social Science" is considered by ESPA to include a wide range of disciplines, including economics, the social and political sciences.

² See also the Research Councils UK document "[Excellence with Impact: Framework for the Future](#)".

1.4 Research themes for ESPA 2012 Grants

- 1.4.1 All people everywhere rely on ecosystems for their well-being. The provision of food, fresh water, protection from natural hazards, pest control, climate regulation and many other benefits all ultimately derive from natural capital in ecosystems. Other inputs via manufacturing, production and transport are then necessary to convert the outputs from ecosystems to the goods upon which people depend (see [ESPA's Knowledge Strategy](#)). In the case of many poor communities the links between ecosystems and well-being are more direct and are often adversely affected by markets and interventions outside their own control. ESPA projects therefore focus on these links between ecosystems and the poor people in developing countries who depend on them and are concerned with both ecosystem science and the relevant governance mechanisms that will deliver sustainable ecosystem and poverty benefits. ESPA's research also seeks to explore new ways of stimulating links between the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services and growth that benefits the poor.

ESPA's Knowledge Strategy is essential reading for all applicants for ESPA funding:

<http://www.espa.ac.uk/knowledge>

- 1.4.2 There are increasing pressures on ecosystems and growing demands for ecosystem services. In this context the needs or wishes of some groups of people may be at odds with those of others or with prevailing customs and trends. Conflicting demands between stakeholders can result in the need for difficult decisions or trade-offs in environmental and resource management. Improved knowledge and understanding of the basis of these tensions and trade-offs will support better decision-making. The goal of the ESPA 2012 Grants is to use enhanced knowledge of ecosystems, their processes, services and benefits to people, to guide decisions that lead to overall improvements in well-being.
- 1.4.3 This call is specifically focussed on how ecosystems function to provide services in multi-functional landscapes so that they can better support enhanced multidimensional well-being of poor people in low-income countries.

ESPA's funders expect that the **collection of new primary natural and social science data** will be essential to advance the field significantly and, therefore, this is a fundamental component of any successful ESPA 2012 Grant application.

Projects will require detailed *in situ* studies of ecosystems, their functions and processes, the goods and services that emerge, and the governance and decision-making processes involved.

1.5 The following themes are central to the ESPA 2012 Grants call:

- 1.5.1 Alleviating poverty and sustainably enhancing well-being are expected to require integrated research that addresses multi-functional landscapes. ESPA projects must include multiple ecosystem services in one or more locations and investigate not only the functional relationships and interactions among them but also with relevant social³ processes. This, in turn, requires recognition that solutions are likely to be context specific and that biophysical constraints and socio-political processes are critical and often interdependent.
- 1.5.2 Rising populations, rapid development and falling poverty levels all add pressure to the environment. The burden both on people and on the environment is likely to be greatest in those areas of the world that are developing rapidly, subject to demographic challenges associated with population growth and migration. In these regions, approaches to delivering ecosystem services that focus on one service at a time, for example whole landscapes converted for food production or flood plains managed for flood regulation

³ The term "Social Science" is considered by ESPA to include a wide range of disciplines, including economics, the social and political sciences.

alone, are unlikely to be sufficient to meet growing demands for the full range of services that societies need.

- 1.5.3 Ecosystems in the future will increasingly need to be managed with multiple services in mind. These will include the full range of provisioning, regulating and cultural services. This is very different to 'business-as-usual' and, for example, to land-use decision making, which tends to be designed and managed largely independently for different service types (food, water, biodiversity conservation, energy extraction).
- 1.5.4 Governance activities for ecosystem services are frequently organised in multiple layers, nested at relevant scales. For the many environmental resources that are used outside the local community, mechanisms are required to guide appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, and conflict resolution. Recent analyses of linked socio-ecological systems that incorporate resilience thinking and integrated assessments suggest there are a number of key features that characterise governance and decision-making that support sustainable use of ecosystems and ecosystem services and their link to the well-being of the poor.
- 1.5.5 Emerging themes, including those discussed above, have great significance for ESPA. Projects should be addressing integrated services, including the biophysical basis, the social, political and economic dimensions of governance and decision-making processes and the interactions between them. Research may also consider how the links between ecosystem services and poverty alleviation can be made more resilient in a changing world.

ESPA 2012 Grant Applications will therefore:

- include clear hypotheses and objectives that determine the design of the project, including specifying need (who) and relevance (to whom);
- include clear methodologies and rationale for the methods proposed;
- involve the collection, analysis and use of new primary data;
- involve *in situ* studies on defined area(s) or ecosystem(s) from which people derive multiple kinds of benefits;
- be focussed on delivering world-class research excellence that has a pathway to impact that will deliver benefits to poor people living in low-income countries;
- include and define a wide range of significant ecosystem services, including regulating, cultural and provisioning services;
- include multiple dimensions of poverty and human well-being and methods to track or model trends resulting from changes to or within ecosystems (see [ESPA's Poverty Framework](#));
- incorporate studies of the ecosystem processes that underpin different services in order to identify synergies and trade-offs between them (see [ESPA's Knowledge Strategy](#));
- elucidate external drivers and forces that significantly affect ecosystem service delivery and the potential to have impact—benefiting, or conversely disadvantaging, the poor;
- make explicit links from research and its expected outcomes to poverty alleviation, economic growth that benefits the poor and enhanced resilience of delivery of ecosystem services of importance to the poor;
- examine governance and decision-making in the linked socio-ecological system.

2 Poverty Focus and Geographic Scope of this Call

2.1 Poverty focus of the research and its location

- 2.1.1 ESPA's research needs to be focused on poverty *and* have a pathway to impact that will help to reduce poverty and through this improve the lives of poor people, particularly those living in Low-Income Countries (LIC).
- 2.1.2 ESPA considers that poverty is multidimensional, going beyond single measures of income or consumption (see [ESPA's Poverty Framework](#)), and recognises that poverty is experienced differently according to context. ESPA therefore expects researchers to adopt a multidimensional understanding of poverty, and one that is relevant to the specific research context. It is likely that a mixed methods approach will be the most appropriate for improving the understanding of the underlying determinants and dynamics of poverty.
- 2.1.3 ESPA's [Impact Strategy](#) highlights the need to identify and characterise the groups of poor people most likely to represent the intended ultimate beneficiaries of the results of ESPA research whose lives should be improved through the application of these results(of ESPA research). Proposals for ESPA funding should identify these groups *and* describe their current poverty status.

It is a requirement for funding that ***ESPA 2012 Grants demonstrate how the results of proposed research will have a pathway to impact that can improve the lives of poor people in low-income countries***, even if some of the research is conducted in one or more middle-income countries.

2.2 Where can research be conducted?

Applicants should note that the previous requirement for ESPA research to be located in one of four specific geographic regions does not apply to this call.

- 2.2.1 The primary criterion is that ESPA's research will generate new knowledge of international relevance that has the greatest potential to benefit the lives of poor people in Low-Income Countries. Low-Income Countries (LIC) are classified by the World Bank as having an average annual *per capita* income of less than US\$1,006.

Proposals will need to describe ***what their projects will do (if funded) to ensure that poor people living in low-income countries*** benefit from their research as part of their Case for Support and [Pathway to Impact](#) statement.

- 2.2.2 The World Bank's [income classifications](#) are available online. A list of countries currently classified as being Low-income is provided as Annex 1.
- 2.2.3 ESPA's research may also be conducted in middle-income countries (MIC), when it can be clearly demonstrated that the research will generate new knowledge of global relevance that has the potential to benefit the lives of poor people in Low-Income Countries. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how research undertaken in Middle-Income Countries has the potential to reduce poverty in one or more low-income country and what will be done during the lifetime of a funded project to ensure that this happens.

- 2.2.4 Developing country researchers and developing country research institutions need to be significantly involved in ESPA 2012 Grants.

It is a requirement for the current call that there is ***at least one developing country institution significantly involved in the project.***

For the purpose of this call, the term **developing country** has been defined to include all [Low-income](#) and [Middle-income](#) countries. The income status of countries can be checked on the World Bank's website which lists current [income classifications](#).

It is not essential for project teams to include researchers or research institutions based in the United Kingdom or any other developed country.

- 2.2.5 There are no other restrictions on where researchers are located or their nationality. Similarly, there are no geographic restrictions on where research institutions are based, as long as they meet the administrative eligibility requirements for funding (For further information or to check your eligibility, please contact the ESPA Secretariat directly at espa@nerc.ac.uk).

ESPA actively encourages international collaboration and the active involvement of developing country researchers and institutions in the design and implementation of projects.

3 Demonstrating the Pathway to Impact

3.1 ESPA's approach to impact

- 3.1.1 ESPA's projects are required to deliver *both* academic impact (e.g. research papers, significant new data) and a pathway to significant and sustainable development impact. When ESPA talks about its development impact, this will be measured by the way the programme's research is directly relevant to, and thus is able to demonstrate the likely contribution to the sustainable alleviation of poverty, improved health and well-being and creation of new opportunities for poor people in low-income countries to benefit from sustainable growth of the global economy.

ESPA's Impact Strategy is essential reading for all applicants for ESPA funding:

<http://www.espa.ac.uk/impact>

3.2 Academic Impact

- 3.2.1 Successful applicants will be required to demonstrate how their teams of researchers will deliver their project's academic impact. All projects are required to demonstrate their potential to produce research that can be published in high-profile international peer-reviewed academic journals. Where possible, publications should be published in open access format.
- 3.2.2 In addition to peer-reviewed publications, it is expected that projects will also deliver academic impact through the generation of new high-quality datasets as well as new tools, approaches and methods (including models). All new data should be placed in the public domain, including where possible being deposited in one of the UK Research Council data libraries. More information is available from [ESPA's Data Policy](#).

3.3 Development impact

- 3.3.1 The Pathway to Impact Statement will be a core component of the full proposals for the current call. It needs to show how development impact will be generated from their academic research. ESPA's research will help decision and policy-makers to implement better development processes that lead to both benefits for poor people, poverty reduction processes, and sustainable management of ecosystems and ecosystem services. ESPA's research will also empower poor people and communities, especially those in low-income countries, to improve their own lives and assist them to cope with a changing world.
- 3.3.2 ESPA 2012 Projects will be expected to draw upon the ESPA [Theory of Change](#) document in structuring Pathways to Impact.
- 3.3.3 Effective engagement with potential users of ESPA research is seen as being an important factor contributing to the subsequent development impact pathway of all ESPA projects. This may also require projects to work with a range of knowledge intermediaries, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government departments and agencies. The way that ESPA projects plan to do this will be described in their [Pathway to Impact Statement](#) as part of the full proposal.
- 3.3.4 The Pathway to Impact Statement should be used to answer ESPA's three Impact questions relating to people and partnerships:
- **Who** will use ESPA's research and new knowledge?
 - **How** will ESPA's new knowledge be used?
 - **What** will projects, the ESPA Directorate and development partners need to do to ensure that ESPA's knowledge is put into use to generate significant and sustainable impact benefiting the poor?

3.3.5 The timeline for research and development impact described in the ESPA [Impact Strategy](#) highlights how development (impact) partners should be involved in the design of ESPA projects and that there should be regular interaction with them throughout the lifetime of a project.

4 Why partnership matters

4.1 People and partnerships

- 4.1.1 People and partnerships are central to ESPA's research and to delivering its impact. The importance of this is illustrated both in ESPA's Impact Strategy (www.espa.ac.uk/impact) and in the related Research Strategy (www.espa.ac.uk/knowledge).
- 4.1.2 The ESPA programme considers that building appropriate and effective partnerships with stakeholders and users during the design and implementation of projects is one of the most important determinants of potential success. Applicants for ESPA 2012 Grants will need to describe the nature of the partnerships that underlie the delivery of the proposed programme of research and its potential impact.
- 4.1.3 ESPA's [Impact Strategy](#) illustrates how projects will need to work with a range of potential impact partners. Researchers and development practitioners will need to work together in the co-generation of both research and impact linked to an ESPA project.

Proposals for ESPA 2012 Grants will be **assessed on whether the proposed disciplinary and institutional partnerships are likely to be adequate to ensure effective delivery of the proposed programme of work.**

4.2 Interdisciplinary research teams

- 4.2.1 The ESPA programme, and specifically the ESPA 2012 Grants funded under this call, will require the involvement of interdisciplinary research teams. Applicants will need to demonstrate how interdisciplinary teams will be brought together, supported and managed to deliver the integrated science programme that is relevant to the ESPA programme.

Proposals for funding under the call will **need to show how work from the different disciplines will be integrated**, both between disciplines and within the teams, and what approaches will be used to do this.

4.3 Developing country leadership

- 4.3.1 All research supported by the ESPA programme needs to adhere to proper ethical practices as outlined in the [ESPA Ethics and Guidelines Checklist](#) ESPA expects that the amount and balance of project leadership and resource allocation will be fair and equitable between institutions/organisations. Projects will need to demonstrate that an appropriate proportion of total expenditure and effort is allocated to developing country partners and to activities undertaken in developing countries.

Proposals for funding under the call for ESPA 2012 Grants will be required to demonstrate how [developing country researchers](#) or staff from a [developing country research institution](#) will contribute to the leadership of the project.

4.4 Working with other ESPA projects and the ESPA Directorate

- 4.4.1 All ESPA 2012 Grants will be required to work with the ESPA Directorate as part of a wider ESPA Global Forum. Applicants should consider how working with other ESPA projects or using results from earlier closed projects might assist in enhancing their project's or the ESPA programme's overall delivery of research excellence and potential development impact.

5 Summary of the Stage 2 (Outline Proposal) Application Process

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The ESPA 2012 Grants will provide funding of between £1m and £2m for a maximum duration of three years, it is a requirement of funding that projects start between 1 April and 30 June 2013. This budget limit refers to the total (100%) financial costs incurred to undertake the project (including overheads, any project studentships and major NERC facility costs such as ship time and air time). This is known as the full economic cost (FEC).
- 5.1.2 The application process for funding of ESPA 2012 Grants will involve three distinct stages, which are designed to support potential applicants to develop excellent proposals relevant to the call. The first stage of the process, now concluded, involved submission of Expressions of Interest and attendance at the ESPA 2012 Workshop. Submission of Outline Proposals constitutes the second stage of the process. Detailed information about subsequent application requirements (Stage 3 – full proposals) will be released at the relevant stage.
- 5.1.3 Outline Bids must be submitted via email to espa@nerc.ac.uk. Full proposals will need to be submitted through the Joint Electronic Submission system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk>).

5.2 Stage 2. ESPA 2012 Grant Outline Proposals (**Closing Date 13th August 2012, 16:00 UK local time (GMT+1/UTC+1)**)

- 5.2.1 The second stage of the application process involves production of outline proposals, which may be submitted only by individuals who were invited to *and* attended⁴ the ESPA Grants 2012 Project Development Workshop.
- 5.2.2 Applicants must use the standard format templates for ESPA Grants 2012 outline bids, available from <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao-2012.asp> and submit all required elements in order to be eligible. Applicants are encouraged to submit their Outline proposals in black & white and as a PDF document.
- 5.2.3 The Outline bid will include a short case for support (maximum of 2000 words) that should describe the proposed research and location, the poverty status of people whose lives depend on the ecosystem and the way that the research is likely to deliver development impact. In particular, the outline case for support should summarise how the project will address the criteria detailed in section 1.4 and summarised at the end of section 1.5. We welcome the use of 1 clear diagram.
- 5.2.4 The ESPA Secretariat will convene an Assessment Panel comprised of expert peer reviewers whose expertise will reflect the scope of the outline proposals that are submitted. On the basis of strict selection criteria and scoring mechanisms, this panel will assess (on the basis of the material submitted) which proposals have the greatest potential to meet the objectives of this ESPA Call. This recommendation will go to the ESPA Programme Executive Board (PEB) who will then invite the successful teams to submit full proposals.
- 5.2.5 Successful applicants who are invited to produce a full proposal will be informed shortly after the Assessment Panel (c. mid-September).
- 5.2.6 Applicants should only submit one Outline Proposal per project.

⁴ or their nominated representative.

5.3 ESPA 2012 Grants Outline Proposal Pro Forma

5.3.1 Applicants should fill out the standard template available at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao-2012.asp>. Within this you will have to include:

- Names and institutions of key members of the research team
- Proposed start date and length of research grant
- Research Objectives and Hypotheses
- Core Project Deliverables
- Details of Additional External Support/Funds (see section 4.4.3 below)

5.4 Case for Support

5.4.1 You should submit a short case for support (maximum 2000 words). This should describe the proposed research and research location; the range of ecosystem functions, processes and services considered; the poverty status of people whose lives depend on the ecosystem; and the way that the research is likely to deliver development impact. In particular, the outline case for support should summarise how the project will address the criteria detailed in section 1.4 and summarised at the end of section 1.5. We welcome the use of 1 clear diagram.

5.5 Budget Outline

5.5.1 Whilst you are not expected to produce a full budget at this stage, you will be required to submit a spreadsheet of approximate costs, broken down by expenditure type. This spreadsheet template will be provided to you, and will be available from <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/espa/events/ao-2012.asp>. The core areas of expenditure we will ask you to report at this stage are:

- Staff
- Travel and Subsistence
- Equipment
- Consumables
- Overheads
- Other Costs

These costs should be reported as UK and non-UK expenditure. Changes of up to 10% in the budget submitted at the outline proposal stage will be accepted at the final stage without discussion with the Secretariat. Should the budget for your final application be more than $\pm 10\%$ of that submitted with your outline proposal, please contact the Secretariat espa@nerc.ac.uk to discuss this prior to submitting your final application.

5.5.2 In addition to reporting the area of expenditure, applicants will be asked to describe the expected percentage distribution of resources between institutional partners.

5.5.3 The ESPA Programme is committed to providing value for money, and ensuring that all expenditure is appropriate and justified. Additional to this, ESPA encourages projects to secure or leverage additional investment from external parties in addition to those funds being requested from the ESPA Programme itself. Leveraging of funds or in kind support (in terms of time or equipment) has the potential to add huge value to any ESPA Project. There is a section of the Outline Bid pro forma where you should declare any such additional support that you have secured.

5.6 Further Details

5.6.1 Any questions regarding the Outline bids should be sent to espa@nerc.ac.uk

Outline proposals must be submitted electronically by email to the ESPA Secretariat at espa@nerc.ac.uk by 16:00 (4pm) UK local time (GMT+1 /UTC+1) on 13th August 2012

Late submissions WILL NOT be accepted.

6 Selection Criteria (Outline Proposals)

6.1.1 The Outline Proposals will be considered by an Assessment Panel. The panel will take the following criteria into account:

- Research Excellence, Fit to Call (as detailed in Section 1.4) and Potential for Development Impact.
- Track Record / ability to lead the project

These criteria will be considered within the framework of the requirements outlined in this document.

6.1.2 Outline Proposals will be awarded a grade for each of the criteria outlined in section 6.1.1 using NERC's standard 10-point scale. Proposals will be ranked according to these scores, with research excellence and pathways to impact providing the primary scores. This ranked list will be used to **inform** the decisions on successful applicants. Other factors, including overall balance of the selected research questions and the fit or overlap with existing ESPA projects, will also be taken into consideration when making the final selection. The ESPA PEB will make a final decision about which grants will be invited to Full proposal.

6.1.3 All applicants submitting an Outline Proposal will be informed whether they have been successful shortly after the ESPA PEB meet to make the final decision. This meeting will take place following the panel meeting in September.

6.1.4 Applicants will be given brief feedback from the panel summarising the reasons that they were unsuccessful. No further feedback will be available.

7 Full Call Timeline and Summary of Requirements

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 Details of the requirements and application procedures for the later stages of the call will be released to applicants in due course. The table below summarises the proposed timeline, the application requirements, and assessment procedures that will be employed at each stage.

Date	Stage	Applicant responsibilities	Assessment
1 st March 2012	Announcement of the 2012 Grants Call		
2 nd April 2012	Deadline for EOI	EOI must be submitted via email to the ESPA Secretariat	ESPA PEB/Directorate/ PMG to select workshop participants
2 nd –4 th July 2012	Grant Development Workshop	PI or agreed alternate must attend the workshop; attendance is required to progress beyond this stage	
13 th August 2012	Submission of outline bids	Submission of Outline Bid pro forma, 4 page case for support and budget outline via email to ESPA Secretariat	Assessment panel
Mid-September 2012	Successful outline bid applicants invited to submit full proposal	Applicants to prepare full proposals	
6 th November 2012	Submission of Full Proposals	Applicants to submit proposals via the Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) System	Full external peer review process
21 st January 2013–11 th February 2013	PI Response	PIs to respond to reviewer comments and submit responses via Je-S	
6 th –11 th February 2013	Sift Stage		PEB will reject at this stage any proposals that are uncompetitive on the basis of the external peer review and PI response
7 th –8 th March 2013 (TBC)	Moderating Panel and Interviews	PIs and two team members will be invited to attend interview on one of two days. The date and time will be confirmed with applicants in late January (c. 5 weeks' notice). It is a requirement for the PI to participate (and only in extenuating circumstances will this requirement be waved).	An external Moderating panel will conduct the interviews and moderate the final grades awarded to proposals
End March 2013	Grants Awarded		

NB: Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

8 Timeline of the ESPA Programme

The current call for ESPA's 2012 Grants will build upon five previous sets of projects since 2007. Two additional calls are currently planned by ESPA before the programme is expected to close in 2017 (Figure 1).

ESPA Programme Timeline

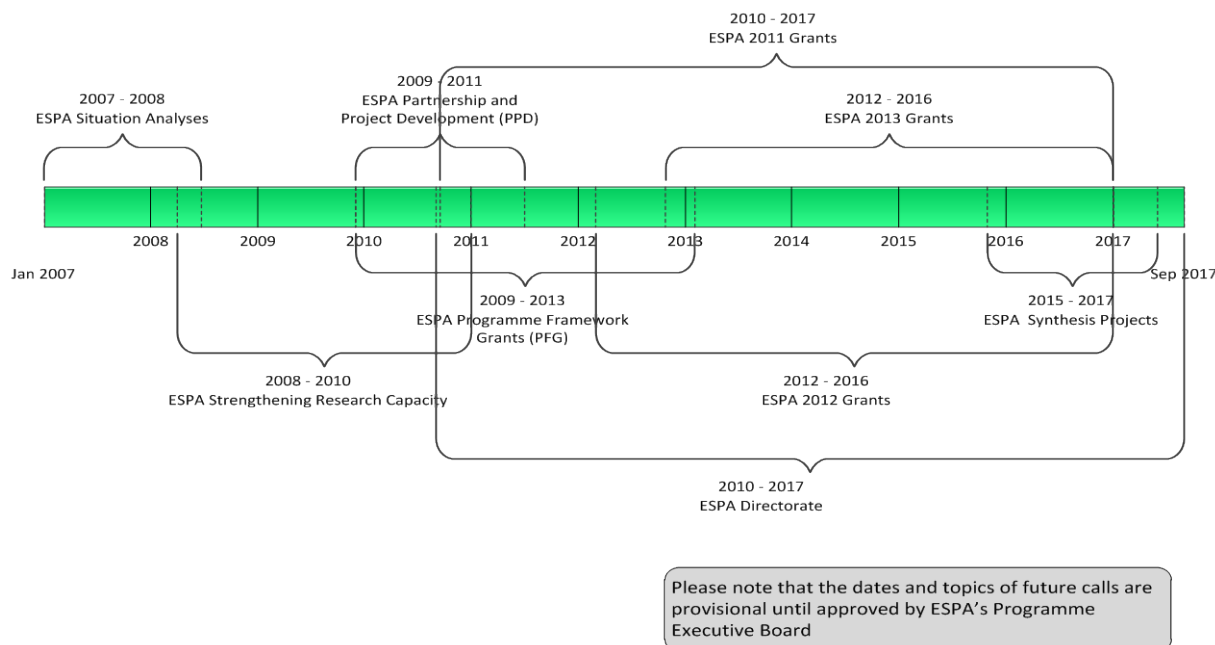


Figure 1 Timeline of past and future ESPA calls

When developing their proposals, potential applicants should consider how their research will complement other projects in the ESPA portfolio. This could be by building on existing research, or by filling critical knowledge and evidence gaps that have been identified by impact partners and potential users of research.

Information about projects that have been funded by ESPA is available from the ESPA website at: www.espa.ac.uk/projects.

Call	Period	Number of projects
ESPA Situation Analyses	2007–2008	6
ESPA Strengthening Research Capacity	2008–2010	11
ESPA Partnership and Project Development	2009–2011	28
ESPA Programme Framework Grants	2008–2013	18
ESPA 2011 Grants (Consortium Grants)	2012–2017	3

Annex 1. Low-Income Countries (World Bank Classification)

ESPA's research needs to be able to contribute to reducing poverty and improving the lives of poor people living in low-income countries. Research will normally be conducted in one or more low-income country. Where research is conducted in a middle-income country, research proposals will need to show how the results have the potential to benefit poor people in one or more low-income country and describe what projects will do to ensure that this happens

The ESPA programme uses the World Bank Group's classification to define low-income status. <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications>

The list of low-income countries recognised by the World Bank in March 2012 is below:

Afghanistan	Kyrgyz Republic
Bangladesh	Liberia
Benin	Madagascar
Burkina Faso	Malawi
Burundi	Mali
Cambodia	Mozambique
Central African Republic	Myanmar
Chad	Nepal
Comoros	Niger
Congo, Dem. Rep	Rwanda
Eritrea	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	Somalia
Gambia, The	Tajikistan
Guinea	Tanzania
Guinea-Bissau	Togo
Haiti	Uganda
Kenya	Zimbabwe
Korea, Dem Rep.	
