Exploring Inequalities Grant: Water-related marginality and exclusion in REACH Observatories

Applicant Guidance Note

1. Summary

REACH is a global research programme to improve water security for the poor by delivering world-class science that transforms policy and practice. The seven-year programme (2015-22) is led by the University of Oxford, funded by the UK Department for International Development, and brings together a consortium of global leaders in water science, policy and practice. REACH Partnership Funding calls are designed to support novel approaches to water security and poverty research and policy that complement the core research conducted by the REACH programme.

This document provides general guidance for the REACH Exploring Inequalities Grant which is commissioned under the REACH Partnership programme. This study provides the recipient with an opportunity to develop their academic career in water security and in partnership with the REACH programme. Their research will co-build knowledge on socio-economic inequalities and marginalisation, particularly of gender and disabled people, relevant for impact assessment of water interventions by researchers, policy makers, practitioners, civil society organisations and enterprise.

Funding available for this project is subject to a maximum of £50,000 for the entire period.

In this guidance note the term "applicant" refers to a supervising researcher and "ground level researcher" refers to a researcher who will conduct the main fieldwork. The applicant can be also the ground level researcher.

Proposals may be submitted to reachfunding@ouce.ox.ac.uk. Applicants are encouraged to apply early, and to communicate their intention to apply by 15 January with the title of their project and the possible date of sending the final application. All queries can be addressed to reachfunding@ouce.ox.ac.uk. Proposals will be assessed on an ongoing basis and the call will be closed as soon as the suitable candidate is found. Applicants are expected to start the study in February-March.

2. The REACH programme

2.1. Background and context

The REACH programme aims to make five million poor people 'water secure' by 2022.

Water security is widely referred to as "the process of ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of water for health, productive uses and the environment, with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies" (Grey and Sadoff 2007). REACH will advance this conceptual understanding using a risk-based framework for research to understand trade-offs and interactions between water resources and water services.

Achieving water security for the poor requires decision making across alternative and often competing choices with different outcomes at a range of scales. A risk-based definition of water security embeds the management of natural variability and associated political, economic and social uncertainties as the basis for interdisciplinary decision making.

2.2. Objectives of the programme

REACH will generate improvements in the way that national and global sector actors plan, implement or monitor aspects of water security.

At the heart of the REACH programme is its global science-practitioner partnership. Aligning research design and activities with practitioner interventions will enable the programme to have a significant and material impact. REACH's projects are expected to deliver both *academic impact* (eg. globally-outstanding journal papers, theoretical advances, methodological innovations) and pathways to significant and sustainable *development impact*.

We identify three primary dimensions where water security risks interact with poverty pathways: resource sustainability, inclusive services and sustainable growth. These are not mutually exclusive but interact in different contexts with varying consequences (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 *REACH conceptual understanding of Water Security Risk and Poverty Reduction*

REACH aims to generate improvements in water security for the poor by working at the interface of water security risk and poverty reduction research and practice, spanning across the themes of resource sustainability, inclusive services and sustainable growth. Gender forms a critical element of the programme, as it is a vital building block for enhancing and maintaining water security for all.

3. Programme design

Core research is conducted in Water Security Observatories' ('Observatories'). An Observatory is a research location where significant but uncertain trajectories of change – such as urban growth, migration, or climate risks – are predicted over the next decade or even longer time spans. In each Observatory we're carrying out an in-depth, long-term and interdisciplinary study on water security and poverty. The eight Water Security Observatories are outlined on the REACH website: https://reachwater.org.uk/research/where-we-work/, with more information available through the Resources webpage.

Core research is complemented by partnership funding which is intended to either a) extend the thematic and geographical scope of the programme, or, as in case of this study, b) enrich the existing studies by conducting qualitative in-depth research on particular social phenomena.

4. Exploring Inequalities Grant

The aim of the study will be to analyse how industrialization and water security are interlinked, specifically, how different related structural challenges affect individual agencies, especially those of vulnerable people living in riparian areas of Dhaka.

4.1. Geographic focus

Dhaka and its surrounding areas (i.e., Greater Dhaka) have experienced remarkable industrial growth and human development over the last decade, lifting many out of poverty, but putting its rivers under significant stress to supply water and absorb pollution. The industrial growth has occurred in certain clusters, all of which are located along major river systems around Dhaka. Massive seasonal variations in flow rates complicate the problems. Like other Asian mega-cities, finding solutions to maintain growth and development is directly underpinned by protecting the water ecosystems that supply water to industry, communities and agriculture.

The Government of Bangladesh is leading a number of initiatives to improve Dhaka's water security with partners from the public and private sector. One industry already engaging in this work is the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector. With plans to double annual revenue to USD 50 billion by 2021, the sector relies heavily on protecting the river systems, as do many of the families of the four million workers who live by and interact with these river systems. The industry contributes around three quarters of Bangladesh's foreign export earnings and has already helped lift millions of families out of poverty, with future growth likely to provide employment for another two million workers by 2021.

There has already been concern over groundwater decline around industrial clusters, some of which were transformed from an agricultural setup to a partly industrial one, resulting in drinking water stress. The current target of expansion of production may result in more abstraction compounding the existing

problem. The continued rapid urban growth and expansion of Dhaka neighbourhoods especially around Upper Turag in Konabari and Kashimpur and around Balu River (Purbachal, Beraid, Demra) also raises questions about long-term water security for new communities with increased exposure to and dependence on the river systems.

Main employees in the garment industry are women from rural Bangladesh (Afsar 2001, Kabeer, Mahmud, and Tasneem 2011) that opens the question of labour mobility to Dhaka and maintaining the family. Some studies show that employment has had mixed consequences for women's' empowerment: their bargaining position within households has increased alongside harassment and exploitation (Zohir 2001, Khosla 2009). In this contested context water security is particularly important tool to understand gendered changes alongside industrialisation.

4.2.   Rationale

Industrialisation, employment and water security of people living on the banks of the river represent complex hydrosocial cycle (understanding with this term "a socio-natural process by which water and society make and remake each other over space and time" (Linton and Budds 2014, 175)). On one hand, people have a chance to benefit from the growth of industrialisation through increasing welfare, social mobility and empowerment for women in highly patriarchal society. Moreover, they may improve their water security by being able to use water through the employment and possessing more means of purchase of water. On the other hand, industrialisation poses a set of challenges for water security and socio-economics in general: labour precariousness, labour migration, difficulty in combining safe water collection and use with employment and being away from the main home, harassments of women and increased pollution of the river. Therefore there is a need to understand these interdependent complexities and how they affect vulnerable people.

Leaving no one behind
The agenda of Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 aims to "leave no one behind", namely, to end extreme poverty in all its forms, and to reduce inequalities among individuals and groups (Stuart and Samman 2017). Specifically, target 10.2 emphasizes that all should be included in development "irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status"[1].

These inequalities have structural and historical roots and are difficult to identify and to tackle for multiple reasons, such as persisting social attitudes, formal and informal principles of institutional functionality, discriminatory power structures, barriers to benefit from capitals including social networks and others. Due to the complexity of various inequalities and the lack of segregated data development, agencies have stated that vulnerabilities and progress in this regards should be prioritised, explored and monitored separately from other projects (United Nations 2017, Overseas Development Institute 2016, Stuart and Samman 2017, Mannion 2017).

This study aims to fulfil this need by applying two principles. Firstly, the study will try to identify vulnerable groups regarding water security, exploring inequalities of the most common social groups (see above). Secondly, it will focus specifically on gendered and disability inequalities. Young rural women are the largest disadvantaged group, but some smaller groups could be even more vulnerable, such as widows (United Nations 2017, UN Women: Fund for Gender Equality 2017). Disabled people, in turn, face

---

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 4

particular discrimination both in the Global North and South in all domains. Thus, this project should encompass the specific difficulties disabled people face in terms of water security.

4.3. Theoretical approach

Water security is more than just the biophysical and economic arrangements of supply, as it is embedded in wider socio-economic, political and cultural contexts (see e.g. Haines et al. 2017). Water security is a part of culture, life-course, household dynamics, macro and micro level politics. As a result, power structures within socio-nature space produce and reflect inequalities (Nightingale 2011, Sultana 2009, Harris 2006). This study should include the multiplicity of inequalities (Butler 1997, Mohanty 1991, Staunces 2003), namely, gender, class, age, ethnicity and other forms of social difference.

However, with the acknowledgement of structural dispositions, individual agency should not be undermined. Even under the conditions of hardship, individuals negotiate and rework their life expectations with choices and possibilities (Robson, Bell, and Klocker 2007, Ahearn 2001, Bushin et al. 2007, Resurreccion 2006, Korzenevica 2015).

This study should focus on intra-household perspective and go beyond analysis of the household as a uniform unit of analysis. The study should employ a holistic perspective of the household as a physical and social institution that reproduces itself through 'daily practices of mutual support, including income-pooling and labour-sharing' (Douglass 2006).

4.4. Research questions

Your proposal may draw upon the research questions listed below, but **you may suggest a variation that reflects your expertise and is framed within our aim listed above. Particularly we welcome proposals that link water security-industry and a) Precarity of labour workers in garment industry, tannery and others, b) Health issues that reverberate into socio-economic vulnerability, c) Development of informal settlements and mobility.**

You may consider following overarching research questions:

How is access to safe water negotiated spatially and how does this process highlight individual agencies and socio-economic inequalities (particularly, of gender and disabilities)?

How does the industrialization relate to water (in)security of vulnerable groups living on the banks of the river Turag?

Additional sub-questions:

1) How is water related collective action/management/governance organized (institutions, functions, actors, formal and informal rules) in riparian areas?
2) Who are the most vulnerable groups to water security and different forms of industrialisation?
3) How is access to safe water negotiated in different spaces and under different structural pressures?
4) How is water (in)security shaping livelihood trajectories and daily lives of different household members?

4.5. Methodology

An extended period of fieldwork (minimum 3 months, not concurrent), potentially ethnographic, is expected. As water security will vary seasonally, the study would be expected to capture differences in seasons. The study may employ a qualitative, mixed method or case-study approach. Central methods are expected to include qualitative semi-structured interviews and observations. Supplementary methods could include different participatory techniques, individual life course timelines, visual methodology and policy analysis.

The research should be based on a combination of a larger sample and a smaller sample for in-depth and continuous follow-up methods.

It is essential that data organisation and preliminary analysis occur simultaneously with data collection, to ensure timely and accurate adaptation of methodology to contextual needs. In preparing the application, the applicant should give due consideration to the composition of the team and other mechanisms that would reflect considerations how to tackle multiple barriers in conducting the fieldwork such as gender and socio-economic disparity.

4.6. Collaboration with the research team in Oxford, dissemination and communication of the results

This study must be conducted in tight collaboration with the respondent researcher from Oxford University. Partner researchers are encouraged to communicate weekly (via skype or email) with the Oxford lead, and to provide monthly progress reports.

Researchers will be supported to fully engage in the dissemination and communication of results with the purpose to advance the academic career of the researcher and to ensure inclusion of primary experiences in the development of conclusions. The following groups have been identified as target audience for communication purposes: 1) the broader academic community by producing at least one single or co-authored academic paper to be submitted to highly ranked journals; 2) to the rest of REACH team by writing or co-writing at least 1 blog entry, 2 working documents and presentations when needed; and 3) to policy makers by co-writing min 1 policy brief.

5. Application process

The following documents will be required as part of your proposal:

- A statement describing how the experience of the applicant/ground level researcher and the institutional setting fit the requirements of the call, as well as how this research will help the institution/researcher to advance their expertise and contribute to capacity building.
- A proposal to address the research questions (See below).
- One publication (academic paper, working document, report, brief etc.) that demonstrates the applicant's research capability and fit for this study.
- CVs of all the applicants (2 pages maximum per CV) and publication record. If your application is successful, we will require a CV and a supporting statement from the ground level researcher (if different from the applicant).
- A detailed budget and justification of resources, specifying the number of days committed by each researcher and lead.

- Letter of support from host institution endorsing the proposed project, approving the budget and confirming the resources that will be provided to the researcher ie. space, IT facilities and equipment. If the Letter of support is not available at the time of submission, it can be sent later, but must be submitted before any award can be made. If your application is successful you will be encouraged to develop an ethics protocol jointly with the University of Oxford.
- In addition, a signed declaration form from the host institution should be submitted. A copy of the declaration form is appended to this guidance note and is also available for download from the REACH website.

5.1. Proposal to address the research questions

The description of the operationalisation of the study should contain the following:

- Methodological approach that would include specification of sampling, methods as well as an elaboration on challenges that may occur (1-2 pages).
- A detailed timeline for the study that would include planning, fieldwork phases, data analysis, transcription, writing etc. (1 page).
- Description of work allocation, namely, who will be involved in the study process and what will be their respective role(s)? If the applicant is not going to do the main research himself/herself, then also provide a description of how the ground level researcher will be recruited and/or who you have in mind (1 page).

5.2. Budget

The budget template appended to this guidance note should be completed. The justification of resources should state the full cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed, including identifying why the proposal represents value for money. In other words, you must demonstrate why you are requesting the funds you seek, and how they will be used to deliver the cutting edge research and impact that you are proposing.

The budget should also specify how much time would be allocated to different members to specific study tasks.

Researchers need to take following points for budgetary considerations:

- Organising a workshop in the initial stage of the study to contextualise the research questions. The budget should include local expenses, venue hire, food for participants etc.
- Researchers will be required to attend a training week (5 days) in Oxford in March 2018 (dates to be agreed) and the budget should include related travel expenses for a ground level researcher and applicant/supervisor. The REACH project will cover accommodation costs, lunch during the training and 1-2 dinners.
- Partners will be also required to provide organised data (field notes, transcription and translation of interviews) in a timely manner alongside data collection, and therefore we advise that the budget expenses related to transcription/translation are included.
- Partners must consider publishing results in open access journals and to include budgetary considerations for that.
- The budget should be inclusive of any institutional overheads that might be applied by the hosting institution and so it is essential that applicants get their budget approved and signed off by the

relevant institution. For the initial review process we can accept the unsigned version but the signed copy must be submitted before any award is made.

6. Proposal guidelines and rules

6.1. Who may apply for funding?

Applications from researchers or research team that can fulfil the aims of the programme, including civil society organisations, research institutions, regional organisations, think tanks, governmental organisations and the private sector.

6.2. Due Diligence

Successful applicants will need to provide evidence that they have the resources, systems and processes in place to enable them to manage the funds that they are requesting. They will be required to complete a due diligence checklist to demonstrate that they:

- have internal controls that provide reasonable assurance that the use of resources is consistent with all relevant laws, regulations, and award terms; and
- are able to safeguard resources against waste, loss, and misuse; and will obtain, maintain, and fairly disclose reliable data in reports.

The University of Oxford reserves the right to audit the projects of all successful grant recipients throughout the life of the project.

6.3. Duration

Projects are expected to begin as soon as possible after award. All projects must be completed by April 2019. However, since publishing academic papers is a very lengthy process, partners are expected to be involved in paper revisions beyond this date.

6.4. Funding

- Funding available for this project is subject to a maximum of £50,000 for the entire period. Funding requests cannot exceed this amount.
- All budgets should include consideration of institutional overheads as stated above, however, they should not comprise more than 20% of staff costs). Per diems will not be permitted under the REACH funding agreement but modest travel costs will be covered such as accommodation, food and others as per REACH guidelines.

6.5. Intellectual property

Results, materials, outputs and intellectual property rights resulting from the study funded through this project grant will be owned by the Grant Recipient, subject to rights being reserved for Oxford and DfID, as the funder of the REACH programme, to use such results, materials and outputs.

6.6. Progress monitoring, reporting requirements and approval of deliverables

Grant Recipients will need to fulfil specified reporting requirements. Grant Recipients must report progress on the project at defined milestones within the programme. A template for the structure of activity and financial reports will be provided by REACH. Project reports must be produced in English.

A first stage payment will be issued upon signing of the contract and submission of due diligence materials. All other payments will be contingent on the successful completion of deliverables and the submission of reports or financial statements to the satisfaction of the Partnership Funding Manager. Further information about the timing of the payments and these milestones will be provided to the successful applicants.

6.7. Review process

The proposals will be reviewed when they are received by a panel of REACH academics, including members of the REACH Science Board. Applicants will be notified by email with the decision on their application. Selected applicants will be invited to online interview. Interviews will be held as soon as suitable candidates are found. Once the award has been made, the call will be closed.

6.8. Terms and conditions of the call

- By submitting a proposal, applicants indicate agreement with the guidelines and rules associated with the open call, in particular its terms and conditions.
- REACH's decision on a proposal is final. REACH is under no obligation to provide further information or feedback on the reasons for its selection choices or for the rejection of a proposal.
- REACH will treat submissions in confidence. Information contained within unsuccessful proposal submissions will not be shared, communicated or otherwise utilised.
- REACH is under no obligation to provide any funding for this call. All funding is contingent on satisfying the REACH Science Board that the proposal demonstrates excellent value for money and potential for impact.
- Before funding is awarded, the host institution will be asked to assist with a short due diligence process in order for the University of Oxford to ensure that the selected applicant has appropriate systems and processes to manage grant funds appropriately.

All applications must be completed in English and must be in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or equivalent), with margins of at least 2 cm. References should also be at least 11-point font.

6.9.   Selection criteria and evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Judgment based upon	Scoring
Criterion 1. Institutional/ researcher's capacity	Demonstrated research experience and appropriate team composition to effectively deliver the research and to minimise barriers within the context of the research and the location. Demonstrated research credentials and publication record. Experience of supervising or leading a fieldwork.	50%
Criterion 2. Quality	Quality of methodology and potential to produce outstanding science. Appropriate project design and objectives to deliver the aims of the call. Appropriate and sensitive approach to investigating socio-economic inequalities.	30%
Criterion 3. Project management and cost effectiveness	Project coordination, management strategy and previous management experience of host institution. Appropriateness of resource justification. Value for the money.	20%

6.10.   Scoring

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals solely against the criteria listed. Scores will not be publically available. For all criteria, the evaluation scale features a range that begins at zero and ends at twenty.

0   The application demonstrates insufficient capacity to operate effectively without close supervision

1-4   Poor: The application demonstrates limited capacity to conduct the study

5-8   Fair: The application demonstrates some of the required capacities, but there are clearly identifiable major gaps in knowledge/experience required for the role

9-12   Good: The application demonstrates the core capacities for the fieldwork, although improvements in knowledge would be necessary

13-16   Very Good: The application demonstrates the core knowledge required of the post, although certain improvements in knowledge are still possible

17-20   Excellent: The application demonstrates the full range of capacities to conduct the study and to produce outstanding results

7. References

Afsar, R. 2001. "Sociological implications of female labor migration in Bangladesh." In *Globalization and gender: Changing patterns of women's employment in Bangladesh*, edited by R. Sobhan, N. Khundkeran and N. Khundker, 91-165. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue and University Press Limited.

Ahearn, Laura M. 2001. "Language and Agency." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (1):109.

Bushin, Naomi, Nicola Ansell, K. Hanne Adriansen, Jaana Lähteenmaa, and Ruth Panelli. 2007. "Reflecting on contexts and identities for young rural lives." In *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth: Young Rural Lives*, edited by Ruth Panelli, Samantha Punch and Collin Robson, 69-81. New York and London: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1997. *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Douglass, Mike. 2006. "Global householding in pacific Asia." *International Development Planning Review* 28 (4):421-446.

Grey, David, and Claudia W Sadoff. 2007. "Sink or swim? Water security for growth and development." *Water policy* 9 (6):545-571.

Haines, Sophie, Chris Aletia Imana, Maggie Opondo, Gilbert Ouma, and Steve Rayner. 2017. Weather and climate knowledge for water security: Institutional roles and relationships in Turkana. In *REACH Working Paper 5*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Harris, Leila M. 2006. "Irrigation, gender, and social geographies of the changing waterscapes of southeastern Anatolia." *Environment and Planning D* 24 (2):187.

IRC. 2016. "IRC One WASH Plus." accessed 27 October http://www.ircwash.org/projects/onewash-plus.

Kabeer, Naila, Simeen Mahmud, and Sakiba Tasneem. 2011. "Does paid work provide a pathway to women's empowerment? Empirical findings from Bangladesh."

Khosla, Nidhi. 2009. "The ready-made garments industry in Bangladesh: A means to reducing gender-based social exclusion of women?" *Journal of International Women's Studies* 11 (1):289.

Korzenevica, Marina. 2015. "Negotiating Life Chances: The Lives of Young People and Socio-Political Change in Rural Eastern Nepal." PhD, Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, Faculty of Science, , University of Copenhagen.

Linton, Jamie, and Jessica Budds. 2014. "The hydrosocial cycle: Defining and mobilizing a relational-dialectical approach to water." *Geoforum* 57 (Supplement C):170-180. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.10.008.

Mannion, Daniels. 2017. Defining marginalised; DFID's Leave no one behind agenda. UK Aid.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991. "Introduction Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism." In *THIRD WORLD WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF FEMINISM*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nightingale, Andrea J. 2011. "Bounding difference: Intersectionality and the material production of gender, caste, class and environment in Nepal." *Geoforum* 42 (2):153-162.

Overseas Development Institute. 2016. An integrated approach to leaving no one behind. Overview and methodology. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Resurreccion, Bernadette P. 2006. "Gender, Identity and Agency in Philippine Upland Development." *Development and Change* 37 (2):375-400. doi: 10.1111/j.0012-155X.2006.00482.x.

Robson, Elsbeth, Stephen Bell, and Natascha Klocker. 2007. "Conceptualizing agency in the lives and actions of rural young people." In *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth: Young Rural Lives*, edited by Ruth Panelli, Samantha Punch and Elsbeth Robson, 135-149. New York and London: Routledge.

Staunces, Dorthe. 2003. "Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification." *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 11 (2):101.

Stuart, Elizabeth, and Emma Samman. 2017. Defining 'leave no one behind'. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Sultana, Farhana. 2009. "Fluid lives: subjectivities, gender and water in rural Bangladesh." *Gender, Place & Culture* 16 (4):427-444. doi: 10.1080/09663690903003942.

The World Economic Forum. 2017. The Global Gender Gap Report. Switzerland: The World Economic Forum.

UN Women. 2013. Advancing gender equality: promising practices. Case Studies from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. United Nations.

UN Women: Fund for Gender Equality. 2017. 'Leaving no one behind' in action. In *FGE Thematic Factsheet*: UN Women.

United Nations. 2017. Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development. In *Report on the World Social Situation 2016: Executive Summary*: United Nations.

United Nations Development Programme. 2015. Gender Inequality Index (GII). In *Human Development Reports*, edited by United Nations Development Programme.

Zohir, Salma Chaudhuri. 2001. "Social impact of the growth of garment industry in Bangladesh." *The Bangladesh Development Studies*:41-80.