

Annex 3

GCRF Small Projects: Application Form

GCRF Small Projects allow Cardiff University based Principal Investigators to bid, in collaboration with their ODA country partners, for small scale pilot research projects of up to 6 months of duration. Eligible expenditure to include directly incurred costs only (no overheads apply), including staff time (for staff currently employed at Cardiff only), research consumables, travel and subsistence. Support available up to £50K. In costing the application, please note that sup is for directly incurred costs only and overheads do not apply. Please email your application to GCRF@Cardiff.ac.uk.

Cardiff University Applicant Details

Lead Applicant	Dr Mona Simion
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ODA Partner Contact Applicant Details

Partner Applicant	Prof. Dr. Valentina Enachi
Position	Professor, Head of Department, Journalism
School / Department	Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences
Email	valentina_enachi@yahoo.com
Organisation Name	The European Studies University in Moldova

Research area: Please provide a brief description of the proposed area of collaboration and how it fits within the GCRF remit (300 words)

Mass Media in the Former Soviet Union:
The Trust Crisis

1. Research Context

Well-functioning political systems require, and are predicated upon, an informed citizenry. According to the 2017 Freedom House report¹, however, public trust in media in the countries of the former Soviet Union is at an all-time low.

This does not come as a surprise; media consumers in these countries still need to recover from the decades when mass media were mere vehicles of propaganda; they still need to

¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2017>

learn (who) to trust. And while the current trust crisis is undoubtedly politically problematic, it is also symptomatic of an interplay of various kinds of epistemic failings: for one, media consumers trust sources they shouldn't and distrust sources they should; such defective trusting on behalf of the media consumer in turn encourages untrustworthiness in media purveyors; media purveyors of fake and otherwise misleading news prey on consumers who lack the capacity to trust well, which further disempowers such media consumers.

This study brings together epistemologists of trust and media studies specialists with an aim to investigate this interplay between lack of trustworthiness of the media and lack of trust in the media in ODA countries of the former Soviet Union. It starts from the hypothesis that epistemically deficient media regulation² fosters untrustworthy epistemic behaviour in the media, which, in turn, generates untrusting behaviour in the media consumer.

2. Objectives

The study:

1. Argues that media regulation in target countries is epistemically deficient in several important ways.
2. Aims to shed light upon the impact that said epistemic deficiencies have for (a) the trustworthiness of mass media and (b) the trusting behaviour of the consumers.

The proposed collaboration consists in a pilot project focused on identifying the epistemic effects on trust of one particular epistemic deficiency in media regulation in one target country (see below).

Proposed Activities: Please provide a brief description of the proposed activities and expected outputs. This should include details of potential future projects as well as suitable funding bodies. (500 words max)

We ask for funding to finance two main research activities, for a period of 5 months (March 1st to July 31st2018):

1. Pilot Project: It focuses on one particular epistemic deficiency in media regulation in one target country (the Republic of Moldova). The epistemic deficiency at stake consists in the explicit incentive to employ procedural objectivity (citing both/all parties in a dispute) without consideration for the expense in substantive objectivity (generating false beliefs in the population by citing sources known to assert falsehoods without informing the media consumer accordingly) in the Moldovan Mass Media Deontological Code.

² Media in these countries are largely self-regulated, via ethical codes adopted by the corresponding professional organizations, such as Journalists Unions and Press Councils.

As part of the Pilot Project, we intend to:

1. Document epistemic failures in mass media regulation in the target countries;
2. Investigate the dynamics of trust in media and media trustworthiness as related to the employment of procedural objectivity at the expense of substantive objectivity in Moldovan media.

The Lead Applicant and the Partner Applicant are especially well positioned to conduct this research and implement its results: the Lead Applicant is an internationally prominent researcher in social epistemology and media ethics; the Partner Applicant is a leading researcher in media studies in the target country, experienced with running international projects researching quality journalism.³

3. Organise two workshops on the topic of procedural objectivity in mass media and its impact on trust, one in Chisinau and one in Cardiff, bringing together epistemologists of trust, specialists in media studies and active journalists to discuss the issue. Confirmed speakers include: Elena Bancila (TV news journalist, Reality TV, Chisinau), Dr Iñaki Garcia-Blanco (journalism, Cardiff), Dr. Patrick Greenough (epistemology, St Andrews), Prof. Dr. Valentina Enachi (media studies, Chisinau), Dr. Christoph Kelp (epistemology, Glasgow), Dr. S. Orestis Palermos (epistemology, Cardiff), Dr. Andrew Peet (epistemology, Oslo), Andrei Popov (media analyst, TV8 Chisinau), Daniela Rusu (epistemology, Cardiff and Glasgow), Valeriu Saharneau (journalist, president of the Moldovan Journalists' Union), Dr. Mona Simion (epistemology, Cardiff), Viorica Zaharia (president of the Moldovan Press Council). We intend to publish the conference proceedings in a volume on procedural objectivity in mass media. Target publisher English edition: Routledge. Target publisher Romanian edition: Editura ARC.

4. Drawing up a set of recommendations to the Moldovan Press Council regarding amendments to the extant professional code.

2. Proposal Preparation: This phase prepares the research proposal for a large application for GCRF AHRC/ESRC funding, which extends the scope of the pilot project:

- (1) It identifies and analyses further types of epistemic deficiencies in media regulation and how they affect the dynamics of trust in the media in the target countries;
- (2) It extends the scope of the project to further ODA countries from the former Soviet Union: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

As part of this phase of the project, either the Lead Applicant or the Partner Applicant will travel to the partner institution for drafting the proposal.

³ See <http://usem.md/en/professor/55> and <http://www.usem.md/en/p/cross-media-si-jurnalismul-de-calitate>.

ODA compliance: Provide details of how any future collaboration would address the needs of the ODA country/countries in question: All projects must clearly demonstrate that they meet the needs of the recipient country – see Appendix 1. Please provide details of how the proposal meets ODA (Official Development Assistance) compliance. (300 words)

Pilot Project

Trust in Mass Media in Moldova:

Epistemic Effects of Abuse of Procedural Objectivity in News Reporting

This research addresses one major challenge faced by mass media in the target country: the trust crisis. The most recent Freedom House report ('Nations in Transit,' 2017)⁴ shows that trust in mass media in Moldova is following an abrupt downward curve. The report warns that one contributing factor is media regulation in Moldova, which is largely outdated, not reflecting recent developments in the field.

It is hard to overestimate the social, economic and political negative impact of a dysfunctional relation of trust between media and media consumers: they span from uninformed political and economic decisions in the population to social unrest.

This pilot project has three main objectives:

1. Highlighting epistemic deficiencies in Moldovan media regulation ('The Deontological Code of the Moldovan Journalist,' (2011)).

2. Investigating the epistemic effects of one previously identified epistemic deficiency: support for the employment of procedural objectivity, at the expense of substantive objectivity.⁵ Procedural objectivity involves citing both parties in a dispute, *without* presenting the reporter's own take on the soundness of the statements of either party. There is comfort in this formula for the practitioners; the reporter never risks being wrong. Worries with regard to procedural objectivity generating false beliefs in the media consumer, frustrating political accountability and supporting propaganda are widely spread in both media studies and epistemology; it is argued that reporters' comfort comes at the expense of public understanding of what is true and what is not and of who is responsible for what.⁶

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2017>

⁵ Paragraph #2.2 of The Deontological Code of the Moldovan Journalist, for instance, reads: 'The journalist should present the opinions of all parties relevant to the topic,' without further refinements.

⁶ See, e.g. Lawrence, R.G. and Schafer, M. L. (2012). Debunking Sarah Palin: Mainstream news coverage of 'death panels'. *Journalism* 13(6): 766-782; Pingree, RJ (2011). Effects of unresolved factual disputes in the news on epistemic political efficacy. *Journal of Communication* 61: 22-47; Rieder R. (2007) Counting the spoons: Eternal vigilance is the price of covering national security and political campaigns. *American Journalism Review* 29(2): 4; Simion, M (2016) 2017. Epistemic Norms and He Said/She Said Reporting. *Episteme*, 14 (4): 413-422; Sparrow B (1999). *Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

3. Impacting media regulation in Moldova via:

- (1) a series of workshops bringing together researchers, practitioners and decision makers in the field;
- (2) drawing up recommendations to the Moldovan Press Council regarding amendments to the professional code. Moldovan mass media are self-regulated: 'The Deontological Code of the Moldovan Journalist' was adopted by the Moldovan Press Council⁷ on behalf of 61 media outlets;

⁷ See <https://accountablejournalism.org/press-councils/press-council-moldova>

Staff Costs: £	£9,450
Consumables: £	£2,500
Travel £	£7,000
Subsistence: £	£6,160
Other: £	£3,520

Please provide a justification of the resources requested. (300 words)

Staff Costs: £9,450

420 hours x £22.50 = £9,450

Part Time Research Assistant, Ms. Daniela Rusu

Ms. Rusu is a PhD researcher in philosophy at the University of Glasgow; the Lead Applicant acts as external supervisor of her dissertation, which is focused on epistemic injustice in speech acts. Ms. Rusu is exceptionally well qualified to act as a part time research assistant on this project: she was born and raised in Moldova, she is a native speaker of Romanian and Russian (the two official languages of the country), and a proficient speaker of English and French. She is also an experienced researcher in the epistemology of speech acts and an experienced conference organiser.

Consumables: £2500

1 laptop: £1,300

1 e-tablet: 700

For use by the Research Assistant based at the University of Glasgow

books: £500

Travel: £7,000

Travel costs conference delegates (2 conferences x 6 external speakers each) 12 X £500 = £6,000

Travel costs Lead Applicant, 1 visit to Chisinau: £500

Travel Costs Partner Applicant, 1 visit to Cardiff: £500

Accommodation and Subsistence: £6,160

Subsistence conference delegates (6 external speakers X 2 conferences X 3 days each)

6 x 2 x 3 x £110 = £3,960

Subsistence Partner Applicant in Cardiff (prolonged visit for Research Proposal stage): 20 days X £110 = £2,200

Other: £3520

Workshop Refreshments (40 delegates x 3 days x 2 workshops): 40 x 3 x 2 x £3 = £720

Workshop Dinners (15 speakers per workshop x 2 dinners per workshop x 2 workshops):

15 x 2 x 2 x £25 = £1500

Printing Costs: £300
Project Website: £500
Interpreting Costs: £500

I confirm that the information given in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. (to be signed by the Principal Applicant)

Signature
Mona Simion



Date
13.02.2018

I confirm that the Lead School is supportive of the application and that the costs are correct and have been prepared by the School's Research Office. (to be signed by the Head of School)

Signature



Date