Aims and Focus of the highlight notice
This highlight notice seeks to encourage the submission of boundary crossing, arts and humanities led research networking proposals which address research issues of relevance to, or raised by, the International Decade for People of African Descent and with the potential to broadly contribute to the aims of the UN Decade.

In addition to meeting the normal requirements and remit for applications to the research networking scheme, in order to be considered under this highlight notice applications must also demonstrate the following characteristics:

i) a core arts and humanities research focus on issues of specific relevance to people of African descent and/or the International Decade for People of African Descent;

and

ii) engagement with, or the participation of, researchers and/or communities of African descent and/or with relevant community, cultural, heritage, creative or professional organisations or relevant providers of community services;

Details of the additional information which applicants should provide in order to be considered under the highlight notice is outlined in the “applying under this highlight notice” section below.

This highlight notice is open to applications until midnight on 30 June 2016.

Scope and Context for this Highlight Notice
The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237) citing the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

The theme for the International Decade is "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development" and the main objectives are as follows:

- promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African Descent, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies;
- adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks according to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Racial Discrimination and to ensure their full and effective implementation.

We are open to a wide range of proposals to the International Decade for People of African Descent. The following list is intended to give a sense of the breadth of what might be included in proposals but it is not a requirement for applications under the highlight to involve any or all of these:

- issues of relevance to, or developed in collaboration with, communities of African descent anywhere in the world, past, present or future and/or the contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies around the globe;
- cross-cultural, cross-national and comparative research or proposals exploring diversity, fusions or connectedness within and between cultures or intersections with other aspects of identity (e.g. gender, age, faith, sexuality, disability etc.) and/or which explore cross-cutting themes (such as race, discrimination, voice, diversity, protest, activism, human rights, etc.) provided that people of African descent are a major element / focus within such research;
- international collaborations (including international co-investigators where appropriate) or connections to other activities being arranged as a part of, or in connection with, the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and/or with other existing networks, exhibitions, anniversaries, events, etc.;
- partnerships with, or participation of, communities of African descent and/or with relevant community, cultural, heritage, creative or professional organisations or relevant providers of community services, and/or projects involving a public engagement or empowerment dimension;
- projects exploring arts and humanities perspectives on relevant public policy issues (e.g. around racism, equalities, rights, reparations, dealing with difficult or contested pasts, exclusion/ inclusion, cultural or heritage policies, participation, etc.);
- uncovering hidden, under-explored, marginalised or contested histories, cultures, narratives, art, or heritages relating to people of African descent and/or deepening understanding of the contributions made by key cultural leaders, innovators or groups;
- new insights on the contribution of people of African descent to cultural production, creative and performing arts (including specific fields such as music, literature, fashion, film, etc.), creative economies or community development;
- proposals which explore innovative new dimensions to, or challenge, existing narratives around issues such as slavery, immigration, civil rights etc.;
- cross-disciplinary networks which extend beyond the remit of the AHRC and/or which connect with cross-Council agendas such as Connected Communities, Urban Living or living with environmental change, provided that there is a strong core arts and humanities research component;
- innovative development of relevant agendas emerging from past AHRC funding (e.g. the Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme);
connections with existing AHRC themes or priority areas (e.g. Translating Cultures, Care for the Future, heritage, languages, design, creative economy, and related activities such as the First World War Engagement Centres, Care for the Future large grant on Antislavery Usable Past, etc.).

linkages to the parallel highlight notice under the research networking scheme on international development and the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Applying under this highlight notice

Applications under this highlight notice should include a paragraph at the start of their case for support explaining how their proposal meets the aims and focus of the highlight notice (including points i) and ii) under aims and focus above) and addresses other aspects of relevance to the International Decade for People of African Descent.

This highlight notice is open to applications until midnight on 30 June 2016. Proposals relevant to this highlight notice can be submitted at any time before midnight on 30 June 2016 and will be processed on receipt; early submission ahead of the end of the highlight is encouraged to avoid possible delays in processing if large numbers of applications are submitted close to the end of the highlight period.

Proposals relevant to the highlight notice can be submitted at any time while the highlight notice is in existence. All proposals will be assessed on their quality and individual merits according to standard networking scheme criteria. Proposals addressing the highlight notice will not be given priority in the assessment or ranking of applications. However supplementary funding may be made available to support additional highly rated applications addressing the highlight notice that may not have otherwise been funded under the existing networking scheme budget. As a result, applications addressing this highlight notice may have an increased chance of funding, but only if they meet the excellence criteria for the networking scheme as judged through peer review.

Proposals addressing areas relevant to the highlight notice may continue to be submitted after 30 June 2016 but will not be eligible to access supplementary funding for the highlight notice or have an increased chance of funding compared to other applications.

The AHRC is currently exploring opportunities for related activities both under existing initiatives such as the Connected Communities Programme and Translating Cultures Theme as well as the potential for collaborations with other organisations such as the BBC. As a result there may be opportunities for investigators funded under the highlight notice to contribute to other relevant emerging opportunities or events over future years.