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GrOW's second call for research proposals:

The effect of specific patterns of economic growth on women's economic empowerment

Issue date: December 15, 2014

Deadline for submission of proposals: 17:00 (GMT)/12:00 (EST) on February 23, 2015

In partnership with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the International Development Research Centre is pleased to announce a call for research proposals concerning the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program on the effect of specific patterns of growth on women's economic empowerment.

1. Information on IDRC and program area

IDRC is a Crown corporation created in 1970 by the Parliament of Canada. IDRC builds the capacity of people and institutions in developing countries to undertake the research that they identify as most urgent. It works with researchers as they confront contemporary challenges within their own countries and contribute to global advances in their fields.



IDRC supports research in four broad areas, making knowledge a tool for improving lives across the developing world through the following program areas:

- Agriculture and the Environment
- Global Health Policy
- Social and Economic Policy
- Science and Innovation

IDRC builds on decades of work on gender issues, international relations and global governance, and the role of information and communication technologies in development, and integrates these dimensions into all research themes.

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty. It aims to end the need for aid by creating jobs, unlocking the potential of girls and women, and helping to save lives in emergencies. DfID is responsible for honouring the UK's international commitments and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For further information, please visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has been making grants since 1967 to solve social and environmental problems at home and around the world. The Foundation's goals include: helping to reduce global poverty, limiting the risk of climate change, improving reproductive health and rights worldwide, and advancing the field of philanthropy. For more information, please visit www.hewlett.org.

DFID, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and IDRC are jointly supporting the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program. The GrOW program aims to:

- address the key evidence and knowledge gaps on women's economic empowerment, gender equality, and economic growth through the generation of rigorous empirical evidence and new and cutting edge knowledge that can better inform policies and practices, with a focus on low-income countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa;
- stimulate innovative partnerships and ways of working to ensure that robust evidence leads to better policies and outcomes for women and for societies as a whole;
- support researchers from around the world to work collaboratively in addressing critical knowledge gaps;
- engage with key policy makers and agencies working on related themes, identify areas of mutual learning, and inform debates and programming priorities to help shape public policies.



2. Background, rationale and key objectives of the Call:

The research under GrOW aims to address knowledge gaps related to women’s economic empowerment – in labour markets, entrepreneurship, and the care economy. GrOW also seeks to improve our understanding how women’s economic empowerment interacts with economic growth.

GrOW identified three key themes for research:

Theme 1: What are the nature and magnitude of barriers to women’s economic empowerment and to closing gender gaps in earnings and productivity? How can these barriers be overcome?

Theme 2: How do specific patterns of economic growth and types of structural change affect women’s economic empowerment?

Theme 3: How does women’s economic empowerment affect economic growth?

This call for research specifically looks at Theme 2 – the effect of specific patterns of growth on women’s economic empowerment. **Research under Theme 1 is already underway, and research for Theme 3 is pursued through another call.**

All research funded by GrOW must fulfill the following objectives:

- ensure research excellence;
- improve research capacities in southern institutions;
- provide policy advice using high quality evidence.

3. Thematic focus and priority research considerations:

The impact of economic growth on women’s economic empowerment can be, but is not always, positive. Notably, some fast-growing developing countries show the least signs of progress in gender equality, in terms of labour force participation or wage disparities between men and women. Moreover, at similar levels of economic development, differences in (various indicators of) women’s economic empowerment are large.

Research proposed under this call will investigate the effects of patterns of growth on women’s economic empowerment. Also, research will address the question which public policies and interventions can ensure positive effects of growth on empowerment can be enhanced, and negative effects minimised.

The regional emphasis of the GrOW program is low-income countries, and all research must be relevant and provide lessons for low-income countries. However, research under this call is not restricted to low-income contexts, and ought to select country cases with different growth



experiences, for example countries that have made a rapid transition from LIC to MIC status, and/or countries with spurts of growth in fragile/conflict affected contexts.

Researchers are encouraged to respond to a broad set of the following questions. They can propose additional questions for research within this theme.

- Historical experiences of countries with sustained growth episodes and the impact this has had on gender based constraints on economic activities in these periods. This could potentially explore:
 - effects of patterns of growth on demand for women’s labour;
 - the determinants of gender progress in different growth cycles – including initial conditions such as labour market rules;
 - public policies during these growth periods that have impacted women’s economic empowerment.
- Effect of the structure of growth on women’s economic empowerment, for example:
 - empirical study of the impact of globalisation and market liberalisation on the barriers to entry for women – wage gaps, occupational segregation by gender, labour force participation, women entrepreneurship;
 - impacts of technological change for women’s economic empowerment (big data, mobile technology, ICT) – how does the adoption of technology affect gender specific economic opportunities;
 - which industrial pathways or productive structures are conducive or obstructive to women’s economic empowerment;
 - the gendered impact of labour market contractions or phases of jobless growth.
- How does political and/ or social change, which accompanies significant economic change, affect women’s economic empowerment, for example:
 - are opportunities for social change, legislation or public action easier or more sustainable in high growth environments;
 - what are the gendered effects of macro-economic policies, including monetary policies, tax regimes, and inflation targeting;
 - how does economic growth affect social norms or incentives for public action with regard to women’s economic participation.

The research should **not** focus on the following:

- research on a single country or economic context;
- microeconomic studies on the barriers to women’s economic empowerment;
- research which has no application or relevance for cross country/regional experiences;
- primary research that cannot be funded or completed within the available resource envelope.



4. Funding scope and duration:

It is envisaged that through this call a single consortium will undertake 6-8 projects within a total budget of up to CAD 2 million. In addition GrOW may consider funding 1-2 individual research projects of under CAD 300,000 if the proposed research is in a priority area.

The Project duration will not exceed 24 months, including all research activities and final reporting.

IDRC's obligations herein are subject to sufficient funds being made available to IDRC by the Parliament of Canada or under a donor partnership agreement with a particular external funder.

5. Submission process:

- Concept notes must be submitted no later than 17:00 (GMT)/12:00 (EST) on February 23, 2015.
- Applications can be submitted in either English or French.
- Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Applications received by the deadline and deemed by IDRC to be compliant with the requirements set out in this Call for Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the process outlined herein.

Applications must be submitted through the IDRC online application process accessible via the following link: <https://grow-cedef.myreviewroom.com/>

6. Eligibility criteria:

In accordance with the IDRC Act, all parts of the developing regions of the world can in principle qualify for IDRC's support. IDRC funds research in locations that best suit the corporate and program objectives approved by the Board of Governors.

The primary considerations in selecting projects will be the scientific merit of the research proposal and its potential for development impact, including capacity building. Given the GrOW emphasis on relevance for policy in low-income countries, and to strengthen research capacities, preference will be given to applications that:

- propose a suite of projects covering a broad spectrum of the broader research questions described above;



- analyse policies that can enhance positive impacts of growth patterns on women's economic empowerment;
- are led by southern institutions, or encourage partnership with southern institutions.

The selection of projects may also be influenced by operational considerations, e.g., Canadian law; knowledge of research settings; ability to monitor research activities; conditions that may make it difficult costly, dangerous or onerous for IDRC to carry out its objectives; or exercise proper stewardship of its resources.

Applications should be completed using the online GrOW Application Form for Concept Notes (see sections below for more details).

Only applications that meet the following eligibility criteria will be considered for funding:

- All research must be relevant and provide lessons for low-income countries as the regional emphasis of the GrOW program is low-income countries. However, research under this call is not restricted to low-income contexts, and ought to select countries with different growth experiences. A list of low income countries can be found at: [http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups#Low income](http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups#Low_income)
- Proposed projects are to be undertaken by – or in the case of a research consortium, led by – a research-oriented institution with legal corporate registration. IDRC enters into agreement with legal entities only.
- Research consortia comprised of multiple institutional partners may apply, however one partner must be designated as the lead institution. The lead institutions should submit the application to IDRC on behalf of the consortium¹.
- More than one application may be submitted per institution if projects are led by different principal investigators.
- UN, donor and multi-lateral organizations are NOT eligible to apply.
- Applications from individual persons will NOT be accepted.
- Applications led by principal investigators who are already lead on any other GrOW funding project will NOT be accepted.
- Research organisations based and/or intending to conduct research in the following countries are NOT eligible for research grants: Cape Verde, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, and Somalia.

IDRC reserves the right to cancel the process at any time without prior notice and/or at its discretion to grant all or none of the awards under this process.

¹ The lead institution will sign the grant agreement with IDRC and as such be responsible for receiving and administering the funds, and ensuring that all grant conditions are met. Research-oriented institutions can include academic, governmental, private sector and non-profit organizations



7. Selection process:

This Call is the first step of 2 stages in the selection process for the funding of a proposal notes on the other stages are provided for information only. In the first stage, concept notes will be reviewed and short-listed according to the criteria outlined below by the GrOW selection committee, comprised of internal and external reviewers.

Selected teams (up to 4) will be asked to submit full research proposals for review and funding consideration. Full proposals will then be reviewed by the GrOW selection committee, according to review and selection criteria, which will be provided to the short-listed teams.

Timeline of the selection process

- i.** Launch of competitive call – December 15, 2014
- ii.** Deadline for submission of concept notes using online application – February 23, 2015
- iii.** Review of concept notes and short listing by GrOW selection committee – March 2015
- iv.** Applicants will be informed of the status of their application by April 05, 2015.
- v.** Shortlisted applicants (3-4) invited to develop their concept notes into full proposals. They will be sent the reviewers' comments to take into account in the preparation of their full proposals.
- vi.** Institutional and risk assessment of short listed applicants by IDRC – May to June 2015
- vii.** Deadline for submission of full proposals using online application – July 07, 2015
- xii.** Review of full proposals by GrOW Selection Committee – July 2015
- viii.** Final Decision communicated to applicants – August 20, 2015.
- ix.** IDRC will carry out internal project approval and granting processes according to its policies and procedures August to September 2015.



8. Format and requirements:

For concept notes: Applications should be concise and be consistent with the instructions on the GrOW online application system. The following is a sample format guide for the application.

Concept notes should include the following

- Title
- Research problem
- Methodological considerations and data sources
- Expected research and policy outcomes
- Partnerships
- Tentative budget
- Annexes
 - Short two-page CV of the principal investigator and proposed team members
 - Signed official letters of endorsement: one from each applicant organization

For full proposals (stage 2): Applications should be concise and be consistent with the instructions on the GrOW online application system.

Additional information, for illustrative purposes: full proposals would include the following:

- Project title
- Background, problem statement and justification
- Objectives of the research
- Methods
- Expected results and explanation of how the research results will be used for practice and policy change
- Policy uptake strategy
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Identification of anticipated risks and mitigation strategies
- Tentative schedule and budget in local currency²
- Ethical considerations that may arise in the implementation of the research and approval procedures that will be followed before an ethics review body in the recipient institution
- Capacity building aspects
- Institutions and personnel: proposed principal investigator (PI), research institutions and study team - information on expertise and previous work in this area. An

² For details refer to http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Funding/Guides_and_Forms/Documents/Financial-Workbook-External-User-Guide.pdf



indication of commitment from the leading and collaborating institutions interested in participating, and a description on how the different partners, key stakeholders and institutions collaborate

- The CVs (in an annex) of the principal investigator and proposed team members
- Letters of other institutions willing to collaborate or supporting the study should be attached

9. Evaluation criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated (by a Committee) based on the following criteria:

A. Quality of Research Proposal	Weight (%)
1. Clear description of the research questions and objectives	10
2. Methodological rigour and appropriateness of the proposed conceptual/analytical framework and methodology	10
3. Demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the issue, demonstration of how the research will add to the existing knowledge and theoretical debates, citing past work done on the theme and in the region	10
B. Relevance	
4. Extent to which the research is relevant across country contexts or in the region	10
5. Plans for research uptake, capacity to generate policy-relevant outputs	10
C. Quality of Research Team	
6. Track record of peer-reviewed publications in relevant area	10
7. Team skills for the research, including the capacity to integrate a range of relevant disciplines	10
8. Commitment to developing national or regional research capacity, involvement of Southern-based researchers	10
D. Quality Project Management: To include adequacy of planning, quality control and monitoring	20

10. Country clearance requirements:



IDRC has conducted general agreements for scientific and technical cooperation with a number of governments. These agreements establish the framework for IDRC cooperation with that country by defining the rights and obligations of both IDRC and the government. As such, the applicant institution may be required to obtain country approval in accordance with these agreements prior to receiving funding from IDRC.

11. IDRC standard grant conditions:

Any selected proponents shall be required to sign IDRC's standard grant agreement, as amended by IDRC from time to time.

12. Communication of results:

Short listed applicants are expected to be announced by April 05, 2015.

13. Permission for use and disclosure of information:

By way of submitting an application under this Call for competitive grants, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process, both within IDRC and externally. The applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the applicant, the name of the lead researcher and the name of the proposed project, in any announcement of selected proposals.

All personal information collected by IDRC about grant, scholarship and fellowship applicants is used to review applications, to administer and monitor awards, and to promote and support international development research in Canada and in the regions where IDRC operates. Consistent with these purposes, applicants should expect that information collected by IDRC may come to be used and disclosed in IDRC supported activities.