

2022 Call for Proposals – Application Procedures
The Knowledge for Change Umbrella Program Phase IV
Development Economics Vice Presidency

Overview

The 2022 Call for Proposals (CFP) for [the Knowledge for Change Umbrella Program \(KCP\)](#) Phase IV is now open. The KCP aims at promoting evidence-based policy development in support of poverty reduction and shared prosperity by delivering high-impact, policy-relevant research and knowledge products. Since the commencement of its operation in 2002, the KCP has supported more than 360 projects on research, data, and analytics, with total funding of US\$72 million. The following are the KCP's main goals:

- **Original Research:** produce rigorous and relevant fundamental research in support of evidence-based policy making in international development, anticipating future needs and knowledge gaps as well as responding to current policy challenges.
- **Operational Relevance:** support World Bank Group country operations in the design, implementation, evaluation, and modification of development interventions in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Open Knowledge:** maximize the impact of research and data by making knowledge accessible and actionable, particularly through partnerships and capacity-building activities.

The KCP launched its fourth phase in late 2020, with an objective to carry out activities related to research, data, and analytics around the following IDA's special themes:

- Jobs and economic transformation
- Fragility, conflict, and violence
- Climate change
- Gender and development
- Governance and institutions
- Cross-cutting issues: debt and financial fragility; human capital; disability; and technology

Funding Windows

- i) **Window 1: Advancing KCP's goals – open call**
 - This window will fund proposals that advance KCP's goals in general, with priorities given to proposals addressing the following four thematic areas: a) debt and financial fragility, b) human capital, c) governance and institutions, and d) technology.
 - The range of award amount will be between **\$50,000 to \$200,000 per project**.
 - The proposal template can be found [here](#).
 - Project duration must be ≤ 24 months, and extensions will only be granted on an exceptional basis.
- ii) **Window 2: Advancing KCP's goals through a spatial lens focused on economic geography of growth and development at the subnational level**
 - Proposals under Window 2 should fill research and data gaps in issues related to the geography of growth and development, particularly around income and welfare differences at the subnational level. Proposed activities should focus on exploring subnational development issues that may inject more spatial awareness into the observation of drivers of growth and disparities and the design of development interventions.

- Window 2 will fund both programmatic grant proposals and small grant proposals.
- **Please refer to the Appendix for more details on proposals to be funded under Window 2**

Programmatic grant proposals under Window 2:

- Programmatic grants will fund larger proposals addressing an integrated and highly related set of issues with a longer time frame.
- The range of award amount will be between **\$200,000 to \$1 million per project**.
- Note that there is a two-stage process for the application of programmatic grants. First, a short concept note (≤ three pages) will be required. Then, task team leaders (TTLs) whose concept notes pass the pre-screening will be invited to submit full proposals.
- The template for the concept note can be found [here](#), and the template for the full proposal can be found [here](#).
- Project duration must be ≤ 36 months, and extensions will not be granted.

Small grant proposals under Window 2:

- Small grants will fund well-defined research or data projects addressing a specific question.
- The range of award amount will be between **\$50,000 to \$200,000 per project**.
- The proposal template can be found [here](#).
- Project duration must be ≤ 24 months, and extensions will only be granted on an exceptional basis.

Eligibility:

- Main activities of the proposed projects should concern fundamental original knowledge generation and dissemination, support at least one of the KCP goals, and contribute to the achievement of at least one of the IDA thematic priorities outlined in the [KCP IV Concept Note](#). Projects may include components of data collection, empirical analysis, or theoretical modelling.
- Collaboration among staff across the WBG is strongly encouraged. The CFP invites proposals submitted by DEC staff, and joint proposals submitted by DEC staff in conjunction with colleagues working in other parts of the WBG. In the case of joint proposals, the ADM TTL must be a DEC staff.
- Grants from this CFP are for Bank Executed Activities (BETF). The funds may be used to finance the variable costs of research, such as data collection, research assistance, fieldwork-related travel expenses, and dissemination. Funds can also be used to fund World Bank regular staff time, consultant fees (when engaging external contributors), and local capacity building efforts. All purchases of goods and services (including when engaging external vendors) must follow applicable Bank procedures.

Selection Criteria

KCP emphasizes research and analytical rigor (the “Knowledge” part of KCP) as well as policy impact inside the World Bank and beyond (the “Change” part of KCP). In particular, four criteria are applied in the assessment process:

- **Quality.** Successful research proposals need to be assessed as being of high quality, meaning that the proposed activity will use a rigorous analytical approach to yield valid results and reliable evidence that represent the creation of new knowledge, including primary data, for development that advances the knowledge frontier.

- **Relevance and policy impact.** Successful proposals need to demonstrate policy relevance and value added, relative to existing academic literature as well as other work being done in the World Bank, and alignment with priority themes. This includes research on current policy priorities as well as forward-looking research on emerging policy issues that arise in a rapidly changing economic environment.
- **Communication.** To ensure continued impact, proposals should include plans for communication and internal and external knowledge dissemination activities, including plans for proper documentation, archiving, and sharing of relevant data and code produced during the project for replicability purposes.
- **Country participation and partnerships.** Where relevant, proposals should document plans for country participation, involvement of local researchers or institutions from developing countries, and steps to ensure that the program strengthens local capacity.

Proposal Submission and Selection Process

- **Deadlines:**
 - Window 1: Full proposals are due on **June 3, 2022**.
 - Window 2: Concept notes are due on **April 29, 2022** for those seeking programmatic grants. Teams who are advancing to the full proposal stage will be notified during the week of **May 9, 2022**. Note that concept notes are NOT required for projects seeking small grants under Window 2. All full proposals are due on **June 3, 2022**.
 - All concept notes and full proposals should be sent to the KCP Program Management Unit (PMU) KCP_PMU@worldbank.org
- **Proposal templates:**
 - Window 1: [the full proposal](#)
 - Window 2: [the concept note](#) and [the full proposal](#)
- **Proposal clearance prior to submission:** Prior to the concept note and proposal submission, TTLs must obtain clearance from i) reporting Unit Manager, and ii) respective DEC Head of Department. The clearance email from the relevant DEC Department Director should be included in the proposal package.
- **External Reviews:** All full proposals will go through a round of review by independent subject matter experts from outside DEC, who will rate and provide comments on the i) quality and ii) relevance and policy impact of the proposals.
- **Decision Meeting of the Internal Management Committee (IMC):** The IMC will hold a decision meeting in late July to review, discuss and select the proposals that will be awarded KCP grants, based on the ratings, comments, and recommendations from the reviewers, operational relevance, as well as the World Bank and DEC's strategic priorities. Decisions will be made on an "up-or-down" basis, i.e., the entire proposal will or will not be approved – the IMC will not adjust the amount of the grant.
- **Notification of Awardees:** The KCP PMU will notify all TTLs regarding the selection result in late July/early August of 2022. TTLs should plan for projects to start in the fall of 2022.

Resources

- [KCP IV Concept Note](#)
- [KCP Website](#)
- [List of approved projects from previous CFPs](#)

Contact

For additional questions, please contact KCP Program Manager Kerina Wang kerinawang@worldbank.org, and KCP PMU KCP_PMU@worldbank.org

Appendix: Research Directions under Window 2

- Proposals under Window 2 should support KCP's goals and thematic priorities, with a special lens focused on economic geography of growth and development at the subnational level.
- The proposed activities may address the following three linked questions to some extent:
 - Are subnational income and welfare differences larger within developing countries than in developed countries?
 - How are these differences changing (or likely to change) over time in developing countries?
 - Should policy makers intervene? If so, when, and how? How does this depend on the quality of local and national governance and institutions?
- These questions may be approached from a variety of dimensions and units of analysis:
 - The recommended spatial angle to examine welfare and growth differences is [the degree of urbanization](#). This new harmonized definition was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020 and defines three categories: 1) cities, 2) towns and semi-dense areas, and 3) rural areas. Its application to every country in the world can be found [here](#).
 - In addition, research can zero in on the vulnerable populations and institutions in less developed cities and towns. These may include marginalized populations (e.g., the rural households that are left behind when family members migrate to cities; women and children; elderly, etc.), small and medium sized firms located outside major metropolitan areas, or city governments in less developed areas, especially second tier cities or towns. The aggregate effects at the subnational level of different economic drivers on poor populations and entities that haven't benefited from broader welfare gains accrued at the national level can also be studied.
 - Lastly, this funding stream aims at injecting more spatial awareness into the observation of drivers of growth and disparities, and the design of development interventions. Therefore, emphasis will also be placed on projects that incorporate a specific space-based focus or studies that investigate income or welfare differences between cities (or specifically the capital cities), towns and rural areas.
- Illustrative research areas may include but are not limited to:
 - Jobs and economic transformation: structural transformation, growth, and income disparities; strengthening inclusive development with data innovation; going beyond national-level policies in economic development; aggregate growth impacts of cash transfers to the poor across space; regional adjustments in the cost of credit
 - Migration: internal migration and spillovers in developing countries; cost of migration and unequal access to education matter for spatial income inequality
 - Infrastructure, connectivity, and sustainable development: connecting the lagging areas, especially second tier/non-capital cities and rural areas; digital infrastructure for the disconnected, especially those in remote or rural areas; climate change and local growth; data innovation and analysis of economic geography outside high-growth cities; creating open solutions through new data sources, methods, and tools; place-based policies, market access and local development
- The KCP management committee encourages applicants to engage with the Global Data Facility (GDF) in preparing their submission to find and include opportunities to collaborate with ongoing GDF-funded work on developing subnational data standards, methods, and tools (main contacts at the GDF on this matter are Keith Patrick Garrett and Craig Hammer).