GEM Incubation Fund
Request for Proposals: Process and Instructions – Summer 2023

The GEM Incubation Fund supports emerging research that strives to find solutions to the pressing development challenges of our time. Each year, the fund will support research proposals relevant to the changing key theme highlighted at Center for International Development’s (CID) annual Global Empowerment Meeting (GEM) that show clear potential to advance knowledge and generate innovations in practice with direct impact in developing economies.

Request For Proposals Timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 10, 2023</td>
<td>RFP Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 5, 2023</td>
<td>Proposal submission deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late October 2023</td>
<td>Funding decisions announced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summer 2023 Funding Round:
Climate change has pushed our world to a crucial inflection point. We must urgently consider new pathways to combat climate change, particularly from the perspectives of developing economies who are on the frontlines of a warming planet.

At GEM23: Growing in a Green World, participants grappled with challenges at the intersection of climate change and international development during CID’s inaugural GEM Incubation Rooms. These research-meets-practice sessions delved into the specific areas of ‘Stewardship & Sustainability in the Amazon,’ ‘Climate, Food Security, and Emerging Technologies,’ ‘Data in Crises: Developing Evidence-based Disaster Response,’ and ‘Informed Decision-Making on Solar Geoengineering’ to inform, ideate, and develop the roadmap for incubating solutions. The summer 2023 round of the GEM Incubation Fund calls on participants to utilize the convening power of GEM23, the pragmatic GEM23 incubation room discussions, and their own relevant expertise to incubate new climate change solutions together.

The summer 2023 GEM Incubation Fund will give special attention to research that stems from conversations in the Climate Incubation Rooms but welcomes research on any relevant topic. It will financially support new research which seeks to incubate solutions, recommend policy action, and develop tools for developing economies on the frontlines of the climate crisis who strive to catalyze growth and improve quality of life when climate disasters are ubiquitous.

Award Type:
These grants will cover incubation and/or seed funding related to preliminary research ideas, such as conducting background research, developing collaborations, visiting field sites, and collecting preliminary data. The maximum amount for a single award is $50,000, but the average grant size is expected to be
around $25,000. Smaller grants with demonstrated value for money will be more competitive. The suggested period of performance is six to twelve months.

**Eligibility:**
Faculty with PI rights at their university are eligible to apply to the GEM Incubation Fund. Preference will be given to applicants who attended GEM and to proposals that include academic and practitioner collaborations focused on climate solutions relevant to developing economies. This funding will support research projects ready to begin work immediately, with demonstrated buy-in from relevant researchers and practitioners.

**Applications:**
Researchers should submit their proposal package to gem@hks.harvard.edu and must include the following materials:

- A completed [CID GEM Incubation Fund Project Proposal Form](#) which includes the following sections:
  - Applicant information
  - Project summary
  - Policy problem & motivation
  - Project contributions
  - Research methodology & design
  - Project viability & risks
  - Project timeline
  - Financial information
- Letter of support from recipient institution
- Letters of support from any policy partners/local collaborators (optional)

For applicants applying from outside Harvard University, we intend to share an example of the terms and conditions on the webpage in the coming weeks for your institution to review. Please note that we will not be able to accommodate significant changes to those terms.

**Review Process:**
Proposals are reviewed and scored by the GEM Incubation Fund Review Board. All board members submitting a proposal in the current round of funding are required to recuse themselves from this review. Based on the scores and the comments of the referees, the review board votes on the status of the application. Applications will fall into four categories: (1) approved, (2) conditional approval (with minor revisions or clarifications), (3) revise and resubmit during this or a subsequent round, and (4) not approved.

**Evaluation Criteria:**
The below criteria should serve as guiding principles for research proposals.

*Academic Contribution:* Does the proposed study have the potential to make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field and existing body of research? Does it seek to answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions?
Policy Relevance: Does the study seek to address questions crucial to understanding pressing issues on climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries? What are the likely broader implications? Is there potential for the proposed work to be scaled up by policy partners and/or others?

Technical Design: How well does the research design proposed and/or to be developed appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal?

Project Viability: What is the viability of the proposed work and anticipated risks associated with carrying it out? Are there appropriate mitigating measures in place?

Grant conditions:
Grant recipients will be required to submit one public media output (such as a blog post and 3-4 draft social media tweets), due at the midpoint of the project period. Awardees will also submit a final technical and financial report due 60 days after the project’s completion. Grantees will also agree to participate in one CID activity or event as a condition of their award. This could be a Friday Speaker Series or presenting at a future internal-to-CID meeting.

Guidance on working with a Private Sector Collaborator:
Funding will be awarded with the presumption that money will be used only for academic/research costs (e.g., RA time, survey collection, participant incentives, etc.). If the budget includes funding to cover activities such as, but not limited to, focus groups, product design, marketing, or any other direct costs that would normally be funded by a business as part of its day-to-day operations, the application should explain why the implementer/firm cannot bear these costs in the budget narrative. In general, activities that would occur anyway even absent the research should not be funded, while those that should typically be covered by the firm but would not have been implemented without research should be justified.

PIs should ensure a written agreement which safeguards the PI’s intellectual freedom to publish. This includes specifying who owns the data and ensuring that any third party’s right of review is limited to preventing the disclosure of confidential information.

A Data Use Agreement should be in place when using administrative data provided by the company. Though it is not a requirement that the partner be named in the paper, the decision of whether to do so should be made in writing and ex ante so that it does not depend on the results.

Funding:
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