Request for Applications (RFA):

Randomized Controlled Trials to Evaluate Strategies to Enhance the Effectiveness of Public Institutions in Developing Countries

Release Date: November 21, 2016

The Economic Development and Institutions (EDI) initiative is calling for proposals for pilot studies (up to £22,000) and full-scale randomized controlled trials (no funding limit, but most awards up to £600,000) to rigorously test interventions and reforms to improve the effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness of public institutions in developing countries. Relevant interventions include incentives, information, or public sector recruitment/selection strategies to improve institutional performance and/or economic development outcomes.

For this round of grants, the deadlines are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission stage</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Application Form found at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-proposal form</td>
<td>Tuesday, January 10, 2017</td>
<td>5:00 PM U.S. Pacific time</td>
<td><a href="http://tinyurl.com/EDIRCTs">http://tinyurl.com/EDIRCTs</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Proposal</td>
<td>Tuesday, February 21, 2017</td>
<td>5:00 PM U.S. Pacific time</td>
<td>See materials required, templates provided in appendices</td>
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This RFA outlines both the research areas of interest for this funding opportunity and the requirements for submitting an application.

To submit a proposal for consideration:

2. Please complete the application requirements included in this document and email to edi@berkeley.edu by no later than 5pm U.S. Pacific Time, Tuesday, February 21, 2017.

1 This is an open and public procurement to be advertised widely on the EDI and CEGA websites along with other forums. All applicants are, however, at a minimum expected to already have experience leading the design and execution of randomized controlled trials in developing countries.
EDI Program Background

The pressing need to improve the responsiveness and functionality of public institutions has motivated numerous governments and donors to actively support governance-promoting activities -- from citizen information campaigns, to bureaucrat incentives and enhanced personnel policies. Many of these investments are producing gains for citizens in need of effective state services and economic opportunities. However, far too few of these initiatives have been linked to rigorous evaluations that allow stakeholders to identify what specifically is effective and show how a model might be replicated or improved. Moreover, few of the evaluations that do exist have been designed to generate conclusions beyond the specific contexts within which they were implemented.

In 2015, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched Economic Development and Institutions (EDI), a comprehensive research program to address these evidence gaps. EDI is implemented in collaboration with a consortium of organizations, led by Oxford Policy Management and including the Paris School of Economics, University of Namur, and Aide a la Decision Economique. A core component of EDI is a series of research competitions, designed to build a portfolio of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that will test key institutional reforms designed to support sustainable economic development throughout the developing world. EDI specifically seeks to support cutting-edge RCTs that both inform their local institutional contexts and have high-potential for external validity. The Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) at UC-Berkeley is leading efforts related to EDI’s RCT portfolio.

Geographical Focus

Specific countries of interest for this procurement include those prioritized by DFID (28 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East) and other countries where study results will have implications in these contexts. EDI encourages applicants proposing work outside the referenced 28 countries to provide a justification of how their findings could be translated to inform institutional contexts within DFID’s geographic priorities.

Topical Focus

To identify the focus areas for this RFA, CEGA reviewed the current state of knowledge on institutions and state capacity interventions and identified a series of open research questions. CEGA Scientific Directors Ernesto Dal Bó and Fred Finan co-authored this review, entitled “At the Intersection: A Review of Institutions in Economic Development”, (referred to here as the “EDI Review Paper”). All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the relevant portions of

2 EDI encourages submission of pilot projects prior to build the groundwork for full-scale applications in future EDI RCT competitions. EDI anticipates releasing additional requests for applications over the course of the project for both pilot and full scale awards.

3 For more information on external validity and “linkages” see the section “Addressing External Validity” and Appendix 4.
this document prior to submitting proposals. A short summary of the EDI Review Paper’s open research questions are included in Appendix 3.

The conceptual framework outlined in the EDI Review Paper serves as the basis for this research competition. In particular, EDI will fund randomized evaluations of policy reforms or government programs that implement one or more of the following strategies to improve institutional performance and ultimately support economic development:

- Financial or non-financial incentives (e.g. to enhance performance or compliance, to encourage citizen engagement, etc.)
- Access, sharing or distribution of information (e.g. to increase transparency, monitor performance, etc.)
- Public official or employee selection (e.g. to improve recruitment, appointment, or election of bureaucrats, political leaders, and/or judicial officials)

Moreover, EDI seeks to cluster the studies it funds within the contexts of either political and/or legal institutions. Several examples of these institutions are included (but not limited to) below. While these illustrations primarily focus on established, state institutions, EDI will also welcome applications, which propose to explore the connection between formal institutions and informal arrangements, as well as the forces that drive changes in that connection.

**Political institutions:**
- Government ministries
- Legislative bodies
- Municipal governments
- Local councils
- Revenue collection authorities
- Organizations supporting the delivery of public services

**Legal institutions:**
- Court systems
- Police forces
- Enforcement agencies
- Paralegal services
- Mediation services
- State inspectors
- Regulatory agencies

Relevant institutional themes from the EDI Review Paper include: tax collection; business formalization; bureaucratic effectiveness; political representation; transparency and accountability; public service delivery; judicial systems and dispute resolution. EDI does not prioritize proposals from any specific area of this framework and welcomes applications focused on a diverse range of issues. If a researcher has any questions about whether a project is eligible, please contact edi@berkeley.edu.

A strong emphasis will be placed on supporting projects with potential for policy engagement during the design and implementation of the research, not simply upon dissemination of final results. Projects are encouraged to partner with or plan to directly engage in-country government officials and/or non-governmental organizations that have direct involvement in the reform under analysis or potential to be influenced by a study’s findings. Governmental partnerships, in particular, will help ensure that these important stakeholders are “bought-in” and
engaged with the studies EDI funds. This emphasis on policy engagement is reflected in the evaluation criteria beginning on page 9 of this RFA.

**Addressing External Validity: RCT Linkages**

With this grant competition, EDI is exploring new ways to prospectively link together independent research studies, with the aim of enhancing the external validity of findings. As such, EDI expects applicants to outline a "linkage strategy" that ties their research to existing work, or extends the validity of their findings to new/broader contexts. This “linkage” requirement will be implemented in a flexible manner that acknowledges the need for researchers to produce novel and unique findings and does not diminish the quality of their work. EDI will not prescribe a specific mechanism for achieving external validity, though in select cases the EDI Scientific Committee may offer research teams suggestions of promising opportunities to pursue such “linkages” once award decisions have been made, to ensure fairness across applicants. As part of their proposals, researchers are asked to identify the best option for their specific study. Suggestions and additional guidance on ‘linkage’ are provided in Appendix 4. Applications for pilot awards are not required to include a strategy for forming linkages and will not be evaluated on this criteria. If a researcher has any questions about whether a project is eligible, please contact edi@berkeley.edu.

**Proposal Guidelines: Pilots and Full-Scale Studies**

EDI will consider pilot and full-scale research applications, as follows. Prior to submitting a proposal, all applicants should submit a Pre-Proposal Form. You should select whether your proposal should be considered a Pilot (“A,” below) or Full-Scale RCT (“B,” below) and prepare your application according to the relevant guidelines provided in this document in order for your application to be scored appropriately.

**Pre-Proposal Form**

All applicants will be required to submit a Pre-Proposal Form due Tuesday, January 10, 2017. This brief form will provide an indication of an application’s alignment with the goals of EDI and the research team’s past performance completing high-quality RCTs. Please find a link to the short form here (http://tinyurl.com/EDIRCTs), and a visual example of the live form in the Annex on page 17.

**A. Pilot Study: Proposal Guidelines**

EDI will accept pilot proposals that have a very clear research question and lay the groundwork for a full project. Pilot proposals are not expected to fully elaborate on their project design. In contrast to full proposals - which require a strong partnership commitment with implementing organizations, a fully developed method of randomization, clear outcome measures, power calculations, and a scale-up plan—a pilot proposal should be at earlier stages of development.
At least one of the following must be true:
- The viability of the intervention has not yet been demonstrated under “real world” conditions,
- The design and implementation of an evaluation requires further testing, pilot data, and/or partnership development.

Pilot proposals must clearly articulate:
- The conceptual and methodological distinction between the pilot study and any future follow-on studies; and
- What exactly the pilot will enable researchers to learn.

Pilot studies can:
- be qualitative or quantitative in nature,
- serve as a diagnostic to reveal barriers to reforms or institutional effectiveness
- test the efficacy of an intervention or an evaluation design
- acquire pilot data, and/or
- identify a scale-up partner.

**Funding per pilot award:** limited to £22,000 or less. Often pilots can achieve their intended outcomes with £8,500 or less, so be sure that the proposed budget matches the proposed scope of work as reviewers score based on “value for money.”

**Timeline:** Applicants may request funds to support costs beginning on July 1, 2017. There is no specific end date required for pilots, although these studies usually take place over the course of one year or less. Ultimately, the length of a pilot depends on the project design and related outcomes of interest. However, if pilots aim to submit future proposals for full-scale RCTs, which is encouraged by EDI, we recommend the scope of work conclude by early Spring 2018.

**Linkages:** Given pilots focus on proof of concept, applications for pilot awards are not required to articulate a strategy for forming “linkages” to encourage external validity. However, pilot applications will still be required to describe how their proposed pilot aligns with the EDI Review Paper. Pilot proposals will be reviewed more favorably if they identify opportunities and willingness to engage in “linkage” activities should the study be expanded to a full-scale RCT.

As part of the application process, applicants should submit a narrative, not to exceed five pages. Pilot application narratives must address all of the following⁴:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Problem Statement and Research Questions</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● What institutions-related development challenge does the proposed research attempt to address? And, how is it relevant to economic development? Clearly state the problem that motivates the research, including evidence of the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Succinctly list, and briefly describe the research questions you seek to address.</td>
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</table>

⁴ The narrative does not need to be structured in the order given, but all components should be included.
### Unique Contribution to Literature
- Pilot proposals must include a brief literature review, and specifically explain the project’s potential to provide a unique scientific contribution if fully-developed.
- What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will it advance the field? Be sure to clearly articulate the distinction between the pilot research contribution and any follow-on research you anticipate that could constitute a full-scale study.
- When possible and relevant, relate to questions and issues addressed in the [EDI Review Paper](#) and the broader framework of the Economic Development & Institutions initiative.

### Study Design
- Clearly explain how the intervention you will pilot is designed to address the Problem Statement and Research Questions in the proposed context.
- Describe the intervention and the proposed strategy for implementation for this pilot.
- Clearly identify alternative approaches, and justify why this approach should be piloted in the particular context.

### Research Outcome
- Describe specifically what we can expect to learn from this pilot study. Will it pilot an intervention? Will it provide qualitative data to inform intervention design?
- In what specific ways will the pilot prepare researchers for a full research project?

### Target population
- What population does the intervention attempt to impact?

### Partners
- Describe your partner(s) for implementation and (potential, future) scale-up.

### Timeline
- Clearly outline your expected timeline on a month to month basis, demonstrating the sequencing of activities. (GANNT charts or other table-based timeline descriptions are acceptable).

### B. Full-Scale Study: Proposal Guidelines

These grants are for studies at a more mature stage of development. Applicants must demonstrate:

a) a clear research question;
b) a robust research design;
c) a feasible implementation plan;
d) a strong partnership commitment from implementing organizations;
e) potential for significant scale-up of research findings;
f) well-defined research instruments;
g) sample size estimates;
h) a description of the most appropriate strategy to overcome external validity challenges (linkage strategy)

**Funding per full-scale study award:** There is no funding cap for these grants, but EDI anticipates that most awards for full-scale studies will not exceed £600,000. Applications for higher amounts are permissible and welcomed (as appropriate), but applicants should be sure to justify the costs. Successful proposals will demonstrate strong value for money; selection
committee members will evaluate each proposal based on this guiding principle (for details, review the Evaluation Criteria beginning on page 9 of this RFA). Applicants should be sure to justify how costs are specifically allocated to achieve the project’s potential, particularly as the scale increases.

**Timeline:** Applicants may request funding to support costs between July 1, 2017 – May 31, 2020 (Approximately 3 years).

**Linkages:** All full-scale applications must articulate a plan to support the external validity of their research. Please reference Appendix 4 for more details. For the purposes of proposal development, researchers should describe their “linkage strategy” in an appendix to their application, which should not to exceed one-page. This appendix will not be counted as part of the page limitations for the overall application.

To submit an application for a full-scale research proposal, applicants should submit a narrative, not to exceed seven pages, which must include all of the items in the following table:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-Scale Proposal Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● What development challenge does the proposed research attempt to address? Clearly state the problem that motivates the research, including evidence of the problem and the hypothesized relationship to sub-optimal functioning or efficiency of local institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Identify how addressing this problem could encourage economic growth and/or public welfare. Clearly describe the magnitude and character of the welfare problem to be researched in the study context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Succinctly list, and briefly describe the research questions you seek to address. Include the hypotheses that underpin your proposed intervention/solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention: Program or Institutional Reform</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Describe the intervention and the proposed strategy for implementation. Clearly explain how the intervention you will evaluate is designed to address the problem statement in the proposed context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Discuss how this approach compares to other approaches tackling this problem in this or other contexts to indicate why this approach is appropriate for rigorous evaluation in this context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Do you expect these impacts to vary across geographic region, population, or context? Where else is this approach used, or where else do you see the approach showing promise, if shown to be effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique Contribution to Literature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Proposals must include a brief literature review, and explain the project’s unique scientific contribution to the global evidence base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will it advance the field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Where possible, relate to questions/issues addressed in the EDI Review Paper</td>
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</table>

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5 The narrative does not need to be structured in the order given, but all components should be included.
| **Target population** | ● What population does the intervention attempt to impact?  
● How large is the population that could benefit if the intervention were scaled up?  
● How, if at all, will the intervention—or broader implications of the research—improve the lives of marginalized persons (low-income, women and socially excluded groups)?: |
| **Evaluation Design** | ● What are the units of randomization and analysis (e.g. individual, household, village, sub-district, etc.)?  
● What is the method of randomization (e.g. lottery, phase-in, encouragement, etc.)?  
● Is this part of a larger or ongoing evaluation?  
● What are the intermediate and final outcome indicators? How will these be measured?  
● When will you take measurements, and how frequently?  
● What are the foreseeable threats to the internal validity of this study? (e.g. compliance, attrition, spillovers, etc.)?: |
| **Power Calculations** | ● Please describe your power calculations (effect size, take up/compliance, variance, clusters, observations per cluster, rho). We strongly encourage applicants to be very detailed in the presentation of power calculations.  
● What is the minimum detectable effect size? Why do you believe this is an appropriate size?  
● What data and assumptions did you use for these estimates?: |
| **Partners** | ● Describe your partner(s) for implementation and scale-up. Applicants should identify both implementing partners (those involved in the evaluation itself) and scaling partners (those involved in scale-up of successful interventions). These may be the same organization, or two different sets of organizations.  
● Investigators are strongly encouraged to seek cost-sharing from partners to demonstrate demand for the research findings.: |
| **Policy Relevance and Potential Scalability** | ● Will the study help policymakers better understand and address institutions-related development challenges?  
● Is there indication that partners or involved stakeholders would be interested for evidence to inform their decision making?  
● How will other implementers become aware of the results of this evaluation? Outline a detailed dissemination plan to engage policymakers from the outset and that goes beyond the usual presentations and meetings targeted at an academic audience.: |
| **Timeline** | ● Clearly outline your expected timeline on a quarterly basis, demonstrating the sequencing of activities (GANNT charts or other table-based timeline descriptions are acceptable): |

**Evaluation Criteria**

**Pre-Proposal Form**
Pre-proposal forms will be used primarily to support the organization of the proposal review process by providing EDI with an indication of the quantity and subject matter of forthcoming pilot and full-scale funding applications. However, to support the development of competitive proposals, pre-proposals may also be used to screen applicants to ensure basic, appropriate alignment with topical and geographic focus areas, and/or sufficient research experience of
applicant researchers. EDI reserves the right to advise pre-proposal research submissions not to proceed to submitting a full proposal if there are significant reservations at this stage. **Applicants should not wait for feedback, however, and proceed directly with preparing their full application materials by the final submission deadline.**

**Pilot and Full-Scale Applications**
In this round of grant making, referees will score each proposal by the seven criteria listed in the Evaluation Criteria table below using a ranking system from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) and will provide a 1-2 sentence justification for each score.

To be funded, the proposal must be practical and feasible. Low scores on technical and/or logistical viability criteria may prevent projects from being funded regardless of scores on other dimensions. External Validity, “linkage potential” (7) will only be considered for full-scale proposals; applications for pilot awards are not required to articulate a strategy for forming linkages and will not be evaluated on this criteria. However, strong applications will describe how their proposed pilot aligns with the EDI Review Paper and holds potential to address external validity challenges if expanded as a full-scale study.

**Evaluation Criteria Table**

| **1. Technical Merit** (scored 1-5 based on the prompts at right) | • Is the research design appropriate and well-articulated?  
• Will the study be able to answer proposed questions?  
• What are potential threats to the viability and validity of the study? Does the proposal sufficiently address those threats?  
• Are the indicators and sample size estimates appropriate, given the outcomes to be measured? (for full-scale studies) |
|---|---|
| **2. Logistical Viability** (scored 1-5 based on the prompts at right) | • Does the proposal address logistical or political obstacles that might threaten completion of the study (for example, government authorization or funding)?  
• Are you convinced that the implementing and/or scale-up partners are appropriate for the project? (for Pilots, that they have good potential to be appropriate)  
• Is there evidence of a strong relationship that is likely to endure through the entire study? (for full-scale studies)  
• Is there evidence of buy-in (e.g. cost-sharing) from the implementing or scale-up partners? (for full-scale studies) |
| **3. Appropriateness** (scored 1-5 based on the prompts at right) | Technical:  
• Is it clear that an institutional gap or barrier restricts the progress of the population targeted by intervention?  
• What is the evidence suggesting that the policy reform and/or intervention(s) could address an important institution-related development challenge? Is the policy reform appropriate for the setting and target population?  
• Are the stated problems and proposed solution consistent with EDI’s stated research priorities? All proposals will be evaluated by their ability to address the issues emphasized in the EDI Review Paper. |
| 4. **Innovation** | ● Does the study have promise to make a significant contribution toward development of the evidence base on the ability of institutional reforms to enhance key functions and drive inclusive economic growth?  
● Does it answer new and more difficult questions, or introduce novel methods, measures or interventions?  
● Does the proposed study account for potential behavioral changes, negative externalities and/or unanticipated effects that may offset hypothesized welfare gains from the treatment? |

| 5. **Policy Potential** | ● Will the study help policymakers better understand and address institution-related development challenge?  
● Is the strategy or intervention plausibly cost-effective?  
● Is there indication that partners or involved stakeholders would be interested for evidence to inform their decision making?  
● How does this intervention compare with other potential or existing solutions?  
● Is the program appropriate for scale-up, and are there both scale-up partners and a plan? |

| 6. **Value for Money** | ● Does the study conform to typical costs for RCTs?  
● Is the budget reasonable and consistent with the work plan described in the narrative application?  
● Have the applicants thoroughly considered options for cost-savings and efficiencies?  
● Have the applicants identified co-funding opportunities or commitments? Does the budget adequately address how EDI resources would be used in conjunction with secured or anticipated co-funding? |

| 7. **External validity**  
“linkage potential” | (only full-scale RCTs will be evaluated on this criterion, not pilots)  
● Does the proposal effectively to address challenges associated with external validity in a manner that does not diminish the quality of the research?  
● Is it plausible that the results of this evaluation will have wider implications and will the “lessons learned” have relevance beyond this test case? |
Budget Guidelines

It is your responsibility that the budget you submit is correct and follows your host institution’s policies for costs. As part of your proposal, a letter from the receiving institution of the award is required to show that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. If the organization allows you to submit your proposal without such a letter (due to time constraints or some other reason), please note this on the Proposal Cover Sheet (under the box for Receiving Organization). Please note that this applies to all projects, including those going through the regional offices of The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Innovations for Poverty Action. You should contact them in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review and that you give them enough time to meet the proposal deadline.

Guidelines for completing a proposal budget:

- As the funding will be granted from the UK Department for International Development, all budget figures should be presented in British Pounds (GBP).
- Exchange rate risk is borne by the receiving institution, and invoice payments will be based on the exchange rate at the time of processing each payment.
- If there is co-funding for the project, you must complete both the “Total Project Budget” and the “EDI Budget” in the budget template. More details are provided in the Excel template. Moreover, all applicants are required in their Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix 1 of this RFA) to clearly indicate secured or pending co-funding opportunities.
- All applications must include budget notes in the column provided in the budget template, specifying the costs within the budget. For example, Travel Costs should include a breakdown of how many trips are planned, the estimated cost per trip, etc. Field costs that are detailed clearly in the budget (e.g., # of respondents times $/respondent = total $) do not require additional justification in the budget notes section.

Project Implementation Costs

- For full research projects, implementation costs are expected to be borne by the project partners. However, under some circumstances where implementation costs are significantly increased due to the research design, for example a randomized encouragement design, EDI may consider funding implementation. Proposals requesting funds for implementation are required to explain why the implementer cannot bear the costs.

Direct and Indirect Costs

**Overhead:** overhead charges (i.e. indirect costs) for proposal budgets under this RFA have a ceiling of 15 percent of total direct costs.

**Assets:** Note that any assets funded under this opportunity will be subject to DFID policies on maintenance of an asset register, and compliance with annual inspection and
disposal policies. DFID defines assets as: “any equipment and supplies purchased from programme funds that meet both of the following criteria: (1) they have a useful life of more than one year; and (2) the purchase price or development cost of the asset is in excess of £500 or equivalent in local currency. The value might be for a group of assets rather than each individual asset when it comes to what are known as “attractive” assets such as mobile phones, laptops, satellite phones etc. “ Note that any computer/equipment purchases in proposal budgets should include a breakdown of what is being purchased, e.g. how many laptops, and the project staff that will be assigned to the equipment.

Unallowable costs include:
- Costs labelled as “incidental”, “miscellaneous”, or “contingency” and rent, unless a separate project office is to be covered specifically for this effort;
- Any business, first class or non-economy class travel is not permitted.

Pre-Proposal Evaluation Process
Pre-Proposal Forms are required for all prospective RCTs. After submissions, teams will only be contacted if we foresee issues with your proposal’s eligibility or competitiveness. All applicants should proceed directly with submission of their application materials, unless advised otherwise. For any questions regarding this process, please contact CEGA at edi@berkeley.edu.

Proposal Evaluation Process
The proposal review process has been designed to ensure that all funded studies are methodologically sound and capable of identifying the causal impact of an intervention that can be isolated from other confounding factors. EDI uses a blinded review process to assess the quality and appropriateness of all proposals. This review is carried out by a panel of researchers in the CEGA and EDI networks who do not have a conflict of interest. These reviewers will judge applications based solely on the quality of the documents submitted, Officials from DFID hold veto power over the recommendations of the selection committee.

Following the review, EDI holds a decisions meeting to discuss projects, review comments, and make final funding determinations. Committee members with a conflict of interest must recuse themselves from this process. All proposals will be categorized as either: (1) unconditionally approved; (2) conditionally approved with minor revisions or clarifications required; (3) request for revise and resubmit; or (4) not approved.
Timeline for Submission and Notification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 21 November 2016</td>
<td>Request for Proposals Released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 10 January 2017</td>
<td>Pre-Proposal Forms due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 21 February 2017</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proposal Submission Deadline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 10 April 2017</td>
<td>Review Process Concludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 17 April 2017</td>
<td>EDI Decisions Committee Meeting, award selections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of 24 April 2017</td>
<td>Decision letters sent to applicants</td>
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Requests for Additional Information

Within 10 working days after an applicant receives notice that EDI will not fund its application, the unsuccessful applicants may send a written request for additional information. Additional information will be provided at the discretion of the Chair of the Scientific Committee for EDI’s RCT portfolio, with all communications being routed through the Secretariat for EDI’s Research Area 3. Specifically, information will only be provided with respect to the strengths and weaknesses of the application in terms of the published review criteria. Information comparing the application to others received during this funding round will not be provided.

Grievances

EDI aims to use fair, open, and transparent practices for the proposal development and evaluation process. If you have complaints about this competition, please contact edi@berkeley.edu. We will seek to address all complaints in a detailed and timely fashion. If you are unsatisfied with the response you receive, please indicate so to your EDI liaison and the program will consult with the appropriate parties within the consortium and coordinate a review of any grievance in accordance with the policies of CEGA and OPM. EDI will then respond to your complaint within 60 calendars days.

Award Requirements and Process

If your proposal is accepted for award, the funding will be provided under an award from Oxford Policy Management to your host institution. All sub-awards and payments thereunder will be made in British pounds (GBP) sterling. Foreign exchange risk (e.g. due to inflation or depreciation) must be borne by the recipient receiving the award.

It is strongly recommended that before the announcement of EDI awards, applicants secure approval from the host institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for any human subjects protocol required to implement your project. OPM requires proof of IRB approval prior to processing any EDI award that involves Human Subjects.
We aim to complete the contracting process within 60 days after funding determinations. We can backdate the award to cover expenses from the Award Date or the date of IRB approval, whichever is later. If a project includes non-Human Subjects work prior to the IRB approval, please let us know following award and we may in some cases be able to cover those costs (post-award, but pre-IRB) under the award.

**Trial Registration**

Before starting field work, researchers must register their RCT with the AEA RCT Registry (http://www.socialscienceregistry.org). Registration includes 18 required fields (such as your name and a small subset of your IRB requirements), and the entire process should take less than 20 minutes if all documentation is in order. There is also the opportunity to include more information, including power calculations and an optional pre-analysis plan. EDI will reach out to grantees during the process of establishing the sub award and ask for confirmation of registration. For questions and support with the registry, please contact the EDI Secretariat at (edi@berkeley.edu).

**Bi-annual Progress Reports and Final Technical and Financial Reports**

Grantees should provide concise bi-annual progress narrative and financial reports, using short templates provided by the EDI Secretariat. EDI requires a final technical report and a final financial report within 60 days of completion of the award period. Note that for DFID auditing purposes, financial reports will be required to report on all spending, including that of all subgrantees. These details will be explicitly outlined in reporting templates.

**Draft Working Paper**

Researchers selected to receive funding for full-scale studies are required to submit at least one working paper with preliminary observations from their EDI-funded projects within 12 months of completing field work. In support of this process, EDI has assembled a scientific committee to provide research team’s with initial feedback and peer review comments. Working papers submitted to EDI will be used to enhance cross-fertilization and mutual learning across the program’s consortium.

**Communication Outputs and Program activities**

The EDI team has a communications team dedicated to disseminating research outputs. Research teams that receive funding from EDI are required to collaborate with this team from time-to-time and provide source content and approval for EDI-generated communications outputs including; policy briefs, video interviews, blog articles, and/or presentations. Attendance at applicable EDI-related workshops, seminars and conferences is strongly encouraged and any travel costs incurred in relation to the attendance of these events will be covered by the EDI program.

**Data Publication**

Researchers are reminded that the terms of their award will detail the intellectual property of all outputs, giving DFID an irrevocable worldwide license to use all material produced through research, while allowing researchers to retain all intellectual property rights over that material.
All outputs from EDI research will be global public goods. All primary data collection funded by EDI will be anonymized and made publicly available on a selected data repository in accordance with DFID’s Research Open and Enhanced Access Policy. All research teams will be responsible for cleaning data and preparing public use data. Data shall be publicly archived either 12 months after the end date of a research team’s EDI sub award; 24 months after completion of final data collection; or upon the publication of an academic paper in a peer review journal.

Research teams may appeal for an extension of the data release period of 24 months. Appeals are granted by the EDI Directorate on the following grounds: (1) documented delays in the editorial publication process or (2) personal circumstances related to parental, sick or compassionate leave of the key authors. All data will be anonymized prior to public archiving to avoid the identification of individuals. Fieldwork instruments, manuals and data capture forms shall be publicly archived by 24 months after completion of data collection or upon publication of an academic paper. Details of the analysis process shall be publicly archived by 24 months after completion of data collection or upon publication of an academic paper.

All costs for making data accessible should be borne by the EDI RCT Teams and should be budgeted for within funding applications to EDI.

**Standards of Ethical Conduct**

All recipients of EDI awards must make a shared commitment to the ethical conduct of all activities carried out as part of the program. This includes adherence to all the laws and regulations of the countries where EDI research is to take place. EDI encourages all selected research teams to take time to thoroughly review the legal requirements of their host countries prior to implementation of research activities. Moreover, participants in the EDI program are expected to maintain the highest levels of integrity and intellectual honesty, with specific regard for research involving human subjects. As noted above, EDI researchers must secure approval from their host institution’s Institutional Review Board for any human subjects protocol required to implement your project. Similarly, as a generator and user of data, EDI is committed to compliance with all applicable laws related to confidentiality, privacy, and ownership of this information. Recipients of EDI funds are expected to familiarize themselves with the applicable and relevant laws, policies, directives, and agreements related to the access, use, protection, and disclosure of data generated or used as part of the program. Finally, EDI prohibits its researchers from engaging in any effort to change the findings of their studies, fabricate data, misrepresent results, use the ideas or writings of others without proper citation or consent, or otherwise engage in acts of research misconduct. Please contact edi@berkeley.edu should you have any questions.
Application Instructions: Checklist

Carefully review the Proposal Application Guidelines in this document. Each proposal should follow the instructions for either a Pilot Study or a Full-Scale Study.

Applicants must submit completed versions of all of the following documents by the submission deadline. No information and/or documents from applicants will be accepted or considered after the closing date unless otherwise requested by the EDI Secretariat.

Pre-Proposal Form: Submit the form at [http://tinyurl.com/EDIRCTs] by Tuesday, January 10, 2017.

Summary of Materials for final submission of Pilot or Full-Scale applications:

- **Cover Sheet** (see Appendix 1): This document must be completed in its entirety;
- **Proposal Abstract**: In 3-5 sentences, describe your research question and the context of your evaluation. The abstract should include:
  - Brief statement of the institutional problem you seek to address and the related key research question
  - the intervention you will use in the experiment
- **Proposal Narrative**: This document
  - must not exceed seven pages in length (not to exceed five pages in the case of pilot applications)
  - must address all of the items discussed in the relevant Proposal Application Guidelines table, above
  - should be written in Calibri font, Size 11 and may be single spaced;
  - should be saved as a single Word file including both the cover letter and proposal narrative, with the title: [PI Last Name, First Name] [Topic Name].doc(x).
  - For Full-Scale applications, an appendix (not to exceed one-page) describing the project’s “linkage strategy” must be included with your application
- **Proposal Budget** (see Appendix 2): This document must be completed in its entirety using the enclosed table and saved as a single Excel file with the title: [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget].xls(x). Download the excel template on the RFA release page [link].
- **Letter(s) of Support**: Please obtain a letter of support from all implementing partners and the host institution’s proposal approval documents and save each as a single PDF file with the title: [PI Last Name, First Name] [Name of Organization Letter of Support].pdf;
- **Submit an email** with all of the above attachments to the EDI Secretariat at edi@berkeley.edu. In the subject line, please write: EDI Round 1 Proposal: [PI Last Name, First Name]

Deadline for proposal submission:
5pm U.S. Pacific time, Tuesday, February 21, 2017
Annex: Preview of Pre-Proposal Live Form
Fill out the live form at http://tinyurl.com/EDIRCTs
Research Proposal Basics

In what country (or countries) will your study take place? *

Which application type do you plan to submit? *
○ Pilot
○ Full-scale RCT

Which institutional reform or intervention do you plan to evaluate? *
(Only 1-3 sentences)

Please state your research question(s) *
(Only 1-3 sentences)

Please list the partner organizations affiliated with the research
Government bodies, implementing organizations, etc.
### Appendix 1: EDI Proposal Cover Sheet -- Round 1

This is an application for a (check one box):  
☐ Pilot Study  
☐ Full-Scale Study

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<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</th>
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Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other DFID funded programs?  
☐ Yes If yes, when and what program?  
☐ No

Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other CEGA research initiative?  
☐ Yes If yes, when? Initiative:  
☐ No

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Appendix 2: EDI Proposal Budget
see Excel template, downloadable at
https://edi.opml.co.uk/research/randomised-control-trials/request-for-application/

Appendix 3: Summary of EDI’s Open Research Questions
See the full EDI Review Paper at this link.

Political institutions:
Open questions on Electoral Rules:
- Which electoral rules most affect corruption?
- What is the optimal term length?
- Should there be term limits (in the extreme, should there be re-election at all)?
- Are rules that broaden representation inimical to accountability and competence?
- Endogenous institutions: how do institutions originate, and does their origin affect performance?

Open questions on Information and Transparency:
- Does transparency, by heightening accountability, improve public good provision?
- What makes information credible and usable to citizens?
- When does transparency lead to better political selection versus a reinforcement of harmful political strategies?

Open questions on Political Norms:
- What are the drivers and consequences of government legitimacy?
- How do political norms interact with formal institutions?
- What institutions can limit clientelism, patronage, and dynastic politics?
- What are the effects on political participation and accountability of specific cultural traits, such as trust, respect for others, and individualism versus collectivism?

Open questions on State Capacity - Personnel:
- What are the effects of non-financial incentives?
- When does performance pay lead to multi-tasking distortions?
- Do extrinsic incentives crowd out intrinsic motivation?
- When do top-down audit-based approaches work better than community monitoring?
- Can citizen feedback platforms promote political accountability and improve service delivery?
Open questions on **State Capacity - Financial Resources:**

- What areas of taxation are most affected by corruption?
- How much of the revenue gap in developing countries can be closed by incentivizing tax collectors?
- When do windfalls strengthen accountability and public sector productivity?
- Is third-party reporting more or less effective under weak legal institutions?

**Legal institutions:**

Open questions on **Rights** - emphasis on property, titling

- Are there instances where titling/formalization relaxes credit constraints?
- If complementary reforms are needed, what are key complementary reforms?
- Much literature on small firm informality, registration and tax regulations - but what are the regulatory barriers for firm growth from land titling and zoning?
- What are the social costs of formalizing informal firms?
- Is the informal economy a complement or a hindrance for its formal counterpart?

Open questions on **Awareness and Access**

- How do improved legal outcomes translate into improved welfare?
- Does broader legal access affect productive activities?
- Does a more extensive “rule of law” create aggregate (i.e., General Equilibrium) effects?
- Methodological challenge: separating effects on preferences versus expectations

Open questions on **Courts**

- How do career concerns affect judge incentives?
- Beyond judges, what is the role of staff and organizational support in producing timely outcomes, and how can they improve?
- What’s the impact of judicial quality on economic activity?
- Would the extant results survive RCT study?

Open questions on **Quality of Enforcement**

- How much do improvements in enforcement generate just displacement in wrongdoing?
- Interactive effect of incentives to monitors and the monitored?
- Understanding the political economy of implementation across reforms pursuing a similar objective
- Taking into account incentive compatibility of public middle management, their discretion and information
Appendix 4: Addressing External Validity -- RCT “Linkages”

Efforts to enhance the external validity of a study’s findings are an increasingly common feature of randomized evaluations. Conducting research that produces far-ranging conclusions allows policymakers to make generalizations about the value of results in different contexts and provides insights into the basic mechanisms by which interventions may lead to change. Multiple models exist for supporting this type of external validity (see Banerjee et al 2015; Gertler et al 2015; Evidence in Governance and Politics “Metaketa Initiative”).

As a research community, we view this EDI call for proposals as an opportunity to experiment with the prospective design of “linked” studies. We intend to maintain flexibility in the ways studies achieve this goal; however, we do ask all applicants to describe how their study is designed to maximize the generalizability and/or external validity of findings (referred to in this RFA as a “linkage strategy”).

While a study’s potential for external validity will be a central evaluation criteria for funding decisions, EDI also acknowledges that this can require costly coordination, long-term planning, and complex partnerships. We also value the freedom required for individual researchers to be creative, produce novel findings, and maintain high standards for quality. Therefore we are not mandating a specific measurement instrument, a common intervention, or other fixed mechanism for achieving external validity. Instead, researchers are asked to select and articulate the best option for their specific study. EDI has generated some examples of “linkage strategies” that we would view favorably. Applicants are welcome to propose strategies not included below.

- **Incorporating conceptual reproduction of any randomized studies identified in the EDI Review Paper (or other RCTs considered by the applicant to be important to the proposed project):** Applicants should propose to reproduce specific studies in next contexts (i.e. with a new study sample) by making use of the questions, methods, or interventions from earlier work.
- **Designing a multi-site study that evaluates an intervention across different national or sub-national contexts:** Applicants may propose a study that tests a common intervention across multiple geographic or cultural contexts. Varying the intervention’s implementation strategy across different contexts is acceptable and may in fact reveal more generalizable mechanisms of impact.
- **Partnerships and/or coordination with studies in other contexts:** Applicants may propose to collaborate with other researchers who already have funded projects and/or are applying to EDI for funding. Options for collaboration could include
  - Common outcomes and measures
    - Sharing a survey instrument
Using the same measures - for example, if studying personnel, same measures of personality (e.g., Big 5 personality, and econ parameters, e.g., Andreoni et al on δ, β, ρ).

Studying different interventions/alternatives that address a common outcome (e.g., tax collection, conflict resolution)

Common intervention strategies

Assessing similar strategies across multiple projects led by different investigators (e.g., if the PI is evaluating an information campaign to improve service delivery, she might collaborate with researchers who are already testing a similar intervention in a different country/context).

**Participating in EDI’s “Link Up” Activity:** EDI will host a harmonization workshop for funded researchers and their practitioner counterparts, creating an opportunity for teams to develop common survey instruments, measurement protocols, and standards across projects (as appropriate). Applicants can express their interest to participate in this session and describe areas of their project that could be harmonized with other research teams. More information on this convening will be released shortly and applicants should not immediately be concerned with considerations of timing.

**Linking within the EDI Program:** EDI works across a number of research activities of which the RCT component is only one. Therefore, there will be opportunities to collaborate with other research teams using different methodologies and approaches to investigate similar thematic areas for example qualitative case studies or theoretical studies. There is a strong emphasis on cross-fertilization and sharing lessons-learned within the program, which is enhanced through sharing working papers within 12 months of completing fieldwork.

**Details on Application Requirements:**

EDI requires researchers proposing full-scale studies to succinctly describe what “linkage” strategy is appropriate for their research. Linkage strategies should be added as an appendix to proposals and will not be counted against the page limitations referenced in the Proposal Guidelines section above. However, linkage strategy descriptions should be as concise as possible and **no more than one page in length**. Applications for pilot awards are not required to include a strategy for forming linkages. A proposal’s linkage strategy will be evaluated based on potential to achieve external validity in a manner that does not diminish the quality of the individual research proposal. More details are provided in the “Evaluation Criteria” section of the RFA. If a researcher has any questions about this requirements, please contact edi@berkeley.edu.
Appendix 5: EDI Conflict of Interest Policy

The EDI Program is committed to avoiding conflict of interest when selecting research teams for funding. A blinded review and scoring process will allow the selection committee to assess the quality and appropriateness of all proposals. The Selection Committee, sourced from the EDI Program Directorate at the Scientific Committee for EDI’s RCT portfolio, holds responsibility for the overall strategic direction of the RCT component, including the selection of proposals for funding. The following outlines the Conflict of Interest policy used by the Selection Committee.

Purpose

All those involved in the selection and decision making of funds in the EDI Program will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Program on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding the perception of conflicts of interest as well as actual conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest in and of itself is not wrong and may not be unethical. However, those involved in the Selection Committees must take appropriate action to ensure disclosure of any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest and, where appropriate, to work with the Directors of the Program to manage the conflict.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the Program’s decision-making process, to enable our stakeholders to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of those involved in the Program. It is designed to protect the reputation of the individuals and organizations involved in the Program, assist the Program in achieving value for money and prevent fraud.

A selection committee member would have a conflict of interest if;

1. He/She intends to submit a proposal—either personally or as part of a consortium— to this RFA
2. He/She is related to or in a personal relationship with someone who is tendering for a contract to conduct an RCT study.
3. He/She directly mentors an applicant (i.e. is their PhD advisor)
4. He/She has a close professional relationship or dealings with an applicant (e.g. regular co-authorship on related research partnership)
5. He/She has a financial interest or other stake in an applicant organization that would bias their selection of research teams for funding.

EDI members will be considered “conflicted out” of decisions related to any of the instances cited above, but will not necessarily need to recuse themselves from participation in the Selection Committee for an entire funding round.