



# Request for Proposals

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The African Centre for Development Impact (ACDI) invites teams of evaluators/researchers and policymakers from Africa to submit proposals for funding to implement innovative evaluations in critical sectors that are of strategic priority to governments within the continent.

Deadline: Friday, 12 June, 2026 | 11:59 pm GMT

# OVERVIEW

The African Centre for Development Impact (ACDI) is an independent Pan-African research and impact institution dedicated to advancing the use of credible evidence to shape effective and inclusive policies for Africa's sustainable development. Emerging from the success and lessons of the Development Impact West Africa (DIWA) initiative, ACDI represents the next phase in a growing movement to deepen evidence-informed policymaking across the continent.

What began in 2019 as a sub-regional effort to strengthen evidence use in West Africa has evolved into a continental platform promoting data-driven governance and accountability. ACDI envisions an Africa where decisions are grounded in credible research, where governments and institutions act on what works, and where public policy leads to measurable, lasting impact. Through strategic partnerships, capacity building, and technical support, ACDI builds on the legacy of DIWA to empower African countries to design and implement policies that drive transformation and improve lives.

In June 2026, ACDI will award grants for the evaluation of programmes and projects that contribute to the reduction of poverty and promote social and economic development in Africa. Research grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000 will be awarded to successful teams. Research teams applying to the request for proposals (RFP) must include a policymaker and a mentor.

To be considered, proposals must demonstrate buy-in from policymakers or ministry partners. Research teams may request funding for a new project or supplemental funding for an ongoing project, e.g. for data collection or to add a new treatment arm.

Proposals submitted will be blinded and peer-reviewed by a panel of experienced researchers and representatives from government and other reputable institutions. For a proposal to be successful, it must demonstrate potential for achieving three primary goals:

- i. creating new knowledge that will improve the design of development policy programmes in Africa;
- ii. enhancing African researchers' skills and capacity to lead future evaluations and
- iii. potential for scaling up.

Note that the mentors and researchers are expected to be full partners in the evaluation process from proposal writing to the design of survey instruments, data collection, data analysis, and writing of the report. Priority will be given to projects that are likely to result in at least one co-authored publication (see [Appendix 1](#)).

# COMPETITION DETAILS

ACDI supports impact studies that address topics of critical importance to economic development in Africa, e.g. agriculture, health, education, gender, youth empowerment, financial inclusion, etc. We encourage teams to use both existing datasets and newly collected field data, as well as novel measurement approaches such as geospatial data, machine learning, and text analysis, when designing their evaluation plan. It is strongly encouraged that projects incorporate a focus on gender to the extent possible. Applicants are also encouraged to prioritise interventions that policymakers have expressed intentions of using the findings for decision making.

**Funding:** ACDI anticipates awarding between \$10,000 to \$15,000 (GHS 100,000 to GHS 150,000 for PIs based in Ghanaian institutions). Exploratory work may request smaller amounts of funding, up to \$5,000 (or GHS 50,000) for PIs based in Ghanaian Institutions. Studies that demonstrate higher success will be considered for a potential scale up.

**Topics:** Funding will support impact evaluations that address a topic of critical importance to economic development in African countries, e.g. agriculture, health, youth empowerment, financial inclusion, etc. It is strongly encouraged that projects incorporate a focus on gender to the extent possible. Applications must be for work in Africa.

**Eligibility:** We invite researchers from academic/research institutions in African countries to apply to the grant competition. To be eligible, the lead African researcher (PI) in the team must have attended the ACDI Impact Evaluation training in March 2026. Researchers who completed previous DIWA/ACDI IE training (2020 or 2023) but were not awarded grants or were only co-PIs in previous funded research qualify to apply as lead or co-PIs.

Submissions for grants must be made by at least one ACDI affiliated Principal Investigator with buy-in from a mentor and a Government Ministry partner. Other co-investigators may be brought on, but funding can only be disbursed to one institution per grant. ACDI will send out a list of mentors for the teams to consider in their proposal development. Mentorship, however, will not be restricted to this list.

**Period of Performance:** The official period of performance will be from July 2026 to June 2027.

**Co-Authorship:** Please see the accompanying “ACDI Co-Authorship Statement,” in [Appendix 1](#) which lays out expectations for collaboration among research teams.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval:** If necessary for the project, applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals for IRB review before submitting them to ACDI, to facilitate expedient processing of the award. Proof of IRB approval might not be needed to process the awards.

**To Apply,** please use the [submission portal](#) to upload your technical and financial proposal on or before 12 June 2026.

## BUDGET

Please download and complete the [ACDI Budget Template](#) provided with this call.

Note that programme budgets must detail the amount of research funding to be provided to each institution. Mentors are not expected to request salary or benefits through this programme. We expect budgets to fund research costs predominantly but, in some cases, funds may subsidise the implementation of an intervention. It is the applicants' responsibility to create a budget that complies with their university or institution's policies. Overhead (indirect) charges for this grant programme must not exceed 9% of direct costs.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

After an initial screening for eligibility, members of the ACDI Selection Committee will complete a rigorous peer review, scoring each proposal based on the criteria specified in the appendices. Reviewers will provide detailed scores and comments. The scores will be aggregated and recommendations will be made for final funding decisions.

All proposals will be categorised as either:

1. partially or fully funded;
2. revise and resubmit;
3. not approved.

The deadline for submission is: Friday, 12 June, 2026 | 11:59 pm GMT.

## Appendix 1: Co-Authorship Statement

This Co-Authorship Statement describes ACDI's general expectations for mentors and African researchers and policymakers receiving a grant from ACDI. These expectations reinforce a trend towards greater transparency, helping you to fulfil your responsibilities as grantees, researchers, and authors. ACDI asks all pairs of affiliates and African researchers to read this Statement carefully before accepting any funding.

We do not provide strict, prescriptive requirements on authorship, as it tends to vary according to project. We believe that all listed investigators have agreed on any proposed research, including their respective responsibilities and the terms of their collaboration. The Lead PI is responsible for ensuring there is consensus on all these terms.

We encourage our African grant recipients to have open conversations about co-authorship with their counterparts as early as possible before the design phase of the evaluation. Grant recipients are welcome to negotiate their terms of agreement and share them with us.

However, ACDI does hold specific expectations of pairs of African researchers and affiliates receiving funding:

1. Grantees are expected to treat their data, research partners, and subjects with the highest level of integrity and ethics.
2. Given our mission to promote joint research development, if research publications result from an ACDI grant, at least one paper should be co-authored by the African PI and relevant research partners, reflecting their contributions to the study.
3. All papers describing the results from ACDI-funded evaluations should credit the PI and Co PIs identified in the grant proposal, as well as any additional contributors to the research (e.g. graduate student mentors, local partners, etc.).
4. The corresponding author for each publication is responsible for making sure all authors agree on the content of the manuscript before publication, as well as on the order of authorship. Any changes to the author list, including deletions, additions, or alterations to the order of authorship, need to be approved by all authors listed in the proposal and the publication.
5. The author list should include all appropriate researchers, providing credit for their contributions to the study. Anyone accepting co-authorship must realise this implies a responsibility to contribute.
6. PIs should inform ACDI if the Centre-funded evaluation results in publication.

ACDI assumes all grantees have accepted the responsibility for contributions to the manuscript, including but not limited to:

- a. developing the concept and design for the evaluation to be conducted,
- b. ensuring the data is gathered following time-effective, systematic and replicable methods, and
- c. coordinating and working as a team to overcome all obstacles and challenges encountered in the field.

Generally, each co-author should understand the content of the publication well enough to take responsibility for it and discuss it. If co-authors have any questions with regards to manuscript content, these questions should be resolved through consultations with other coauthors.

ACDI encourages transparency by publishing author contributions statements if needed but is in no position to investigate or adjudicate authorship. Should there be a disagreement among authors, ACDI encourages an open discussion and will help to facilitate the conversation if necessary.

Exceptional circumstances, such as death, inability to locate author, or other, will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Appendix 2: General Proposal Instructions

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria for evaluation are in the table below.

For each criterion, reviewers will assign a score from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) and will justify the overall score

<b>Potential Knowledge Transfer</b>	Is there evidence of a strong relationship between the African researchers and the mentors? Is the relationship likely to endure through the entire study? Are the roles of the co-PIs clearly articulated? Is there substantial evidence of capacity development for other local researchers, policymakers, and implementers, beyond that of the co-PIs? How will the co-PI's capacity for understanding the local context, research dissemination, or translation improve, because of the collaboration?
<b>Significance and Innovation</b>	Does the study answer new questions, or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions? Does the problem statement provide evidence of an important barrier, gap, or inefficiency that is not currently addressed through other interventions? What is the evidence suggesting that the proposed intervention(s) will improve target outcomes and will be appropriate for the setting and target population? Is the information that will be generated relevant to the implementing partner or another development policymaker?
<b>Methodology and Viability</b>	Is the methodology rigorous? Is the statistical significance of the results methodologically sensitive? Are the indicators and sample size estimates appropriate, given the outcomes to be measured? Is the research design clear and well-articulated? Is there attention paid to measuring heterogeneous impacts on different populations (gender, youth, migrants, etc.)? Will outcomes be measurable within the proposed study period? What are potential challenges to the viability and validity of the study? Is there evidence of a strong relationship with the implementing partner?
<b>Policy Translation</b>	Is the study relevant to the implementing institution or other institutions within Africa? Can it be applied to existing programmes or initiatives across Africa? Is the strategy or intervention cost-effective (i.e. what is the potential unit of impact per dollar of intervention, and will this be measured accurately)? Is there a strategy for communicating the results of the study to stakeholders? Is the role that each of the co-PIs will play in research dissemination clear?

### TO APPLY, COMPILE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

1. Cover Sheet (see [below](#))
2. Research Proposal: This proposal narrative must not exceed five (5) pages in length and must address all eight items discussed below in the Proposal Guidelines. The proposal should be written in Times New Roman, size 11, and may be single-spaced. We strongly advise you to refer to the ACDI Proposal and Budget Template when writing your statement, which is included in the proposal package.
3. Budget: This document must be completed in its entirety using the accompanying excel sheet "[ACDI Budget Template 2026](#)." We strongly recommend that you refer to the budget in the ACDI Proposal and Budget Template when completing the excel sheet.
4. Save the coversheet and research proposal as a single PDF. The filename should read "[Proposal\\_African Lead PI name](#)." Save the budget as "[Budget\\_African Lead PI name](#)."
5. Submit files in the portal here: [https://bit.ly/acdi\\_grant](https://bit.ly/acdi_grant)

## COVER SHEET

<b>AFRICAN RESEARCHER</b>		<b>MENTOR'S INSTITUTION</b>	
Name:		Name:	
Institution:		Institution:	
Title:		Title:	
<b>GOVERNMENT PARTNER</b>			
<b>CO-INVESTIGATORS (IF APPLICABLE) (Name and Institutions)</b>			
<b>PROPOSAL TITLE</b>			
<b>INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT</b>		<b>OTHER CONTACT</b>	
Name:		Name:	
Email:		Email:	
Mobile:		Mobile:	
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>			
\$			
<b>GRANT PERIOD</b>			
<b>START DATE (yyyy-mm-dd):</b>		<b>END DATE (yyyy-mm-dd):</b>	
<b>INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE AWARD</b>		<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	
<b>MENTOR'S INSTITUTION</b>		<b>AMOUNT TO MENTOR'S INSTITUTION</b>	
<b>OTHER FUNDING (For add-on request):</b>			

## Appendix 3: Research Proposal Guidelines

To apply for research funding, investigators must submit a research proposal narrative, not to exceed five (5) pages, and must address each of the following eight sections (please do not leave any section blank).

Please also consult the evaluation criteria given in the RFP

<b>1. Problem Statement</b> Clearly state the problem that motivates the proposed research, including quantitative evidence of the challenge to be addressed. How have you validated the importance of this constraint for development?
<b>2. Scientific Contribution</b> What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will it advance the field of research? Proposals must include a brief literature review and explain the project's unique scientific contribution.
<b>3. Description of Treatment(s)</b> Describe the intervention that you will design and/or test, your theory of change, and the specific development programme(s) or organisation(s) that will benefit from the proposed research. Identify questions or gaps in current development practice that you seek to address through the study. Include available quantitative and qualitative data in support of your hypotheses, models, and/or theories of change.
<b>4. Target Population</b> Characterize and describe the population that the intervention seeks to impact. How does the target population compare to the recipients of a full-scale intervention? Do other populations face the same conditions as your target group, and could they potentially benefit from the innovation(s) evaluated here? How large is the population that could benefit if the intervention were scaled up?
<b>5. Evaluation Design</b> If you are proposing to conduct a full evaluation—either as a standalone study or through an add-on to an existing study—describe the evaluation design. What is your identification strategy? How will you identify the counterfactual? What are the units of analysis (e.g. individual, household, village, etc.)? What are the intermediate and outcome indicators? How will these be measured? When will you conduct measurements, and how frequently? 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 on power calculations. What is the minimum detectable effect size, and why do you believe this is an appropriate choice? Describe the data and assumptions used for these estimates. What are the foreseeable threats to the internal validity of this study? (e.g. compliance, attrition, spillovers, etc.)
<b>6. Policy Translation</b> Why is your study likely to result in take-up by African policymakers? Consider the cost effectiveness of the intervention. Which other implementing organisations are likely to incorporate this intervention into their operations if proven successful? How will other implementers become aware of the results of this evaluation? Will the study help policymakers design better programmes and policies? Will it shed light on strategies to overcome market failures and behavioural or social barriers to development?
<b>7. Partners</b> ACDI expects that all phases of the proposed research (from study design and field implementation to data analysis and publication) will be carried out through an equal partnership of the African and ACDI principal investigators as well as the African policymaker, and strong collaboration with any implementing partner(s). Please describe, in detail, the distinct roles of the African researcher(s), African policymaker(s), and any partner implementing organisation(s). Each PI and policymaker should write a paragraph about what s/he expects to gain and accomplish from the collaboration and what kind of knowledge they intend to share. Note that publications resulting from funded research must include co-authors from Africa. For junior African researchers, capacity building must be part of the practice of the evaluation itself.
<b>8. Other Funding Sources</b> If the proposed study is supported with other funds, describe how you will use funds from ACDI, and explain how these new funds will complement or improve research activities that are already funded.

## Appendix 4: Budget

See and fill out the accompanying excel sheet “ACDI\_Budget Template”.