

Proposal Development Grants

Guidance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Applied Research Centre applicants

1. Purpose

Financial support of up to £30,000 will be offered to all shortlisted applicants to support partnership and proposal development during the Full Proposal stage. The Proposal Development Grant (PDG) is intended to help applicants meet the costs associated with strengthening their consortium and preparing a strong, well-costed full proposal that reflects leadership from low-and middle-income country (LMIC) organisations and equitable research partnerships. It cannot be used to fund research or data collection.

The grant can be used to support in-person and virtual convening costs, travel and subsistence for all consortium members, staff time for LMIC organisations, and other direct costs of proposal development.

2. How much funding is available?

Applicants may receive up to £30,000, which must be spent before the deadline for submitting full proposals. Applicants are asked to provide an estimated budget as part of their Expression of Interest (EOI) submission. The final amount issued will be based on actual, evidenced expenditure, not exceeding the original budget amount.

3. Eligibility and access

Grants are available to all shortlisted applicants unless they choose to opt out. This is not a competitive or scored element of the EOI selection process:

- As part of their EOI submission, applicants are asked to briefly explain how they intend to use the PDG and provide a projected budget.
- The RCC will review this for appropriateness of cost and use; it will not be weighted or scored as part of the EOI assessment. Where a proposed cost or activity is judged ineligible or not to represent value for money, the RCC may ask for a revised budget.
- Applicants must complete a light-touch due diligence and contracting process with the RCC before receiving funds.

4. Disbursement

Disbursement mechanisms are currently being finalised and will be shared with shortlisted applicants.

All expenses must be appropriately documented, receipted and reported. Unspent or ineligible balance at close-out will either be deducted from the final payment or returned.

The PDG will be issued to the consortium's Administering Organisation. The Administering Organisation is responsible for onward disbursement of funds to partner organisations, where applicable, and for retaining evidence of that disbursement.

5. What costs are eligible?

- Travel, accommodation and subsistence for all consortium members (LMIC and high-income country (HIC)): please refer to [FCDO guidance on country-specific expense rates](#).
- Meeting room hire.
- Virtual meeting and collaboration platform costs.
- Stakeholder engagement and community consultation activities.
- Translation and interpretation costs, where needed to support partnership discussions.
- Staff costs for LMIC consortium members, subject to the RCC rate card.
- Other direct costs of proposal development with a clear rationale.

6. What costs cannot be covered?

- Organisational indirect costs/overheads.
- Staff costs for HIC consortium members.
- Staff daily rates in excess of the RCC rate card.
- Equipment purchases.
- First- or business-class travel.
- Alcohol, tobacco or entertainment costs.
- Any research activities, data collection or programme implementation costs.
- Payments to organisations not listed as consortium members in the EOI, including external paid consultants.
- Gifts, honoraria, per diems, or any other expense not related to specified proposal development activity.

7. Additional needs

Where a consortium member requires additional support to participate fully in partnership and proposal development activities funded under this grant, for example, caring costs associated with travel or accessibility support, applicants are encouraged to include these in the budget for RCC review alongside a written rationale.

8. Reporting expectations

Applicants will be asked to provide a short milestone plan alongside their projected budget at EOI stage, setting out how they intend to use the PDG (for example, key partnership meetings or engagement activities and their approximate timing). This is not scored, and is intended to help the RCC understand consortium plans and needs.

At the end of the proposal period, a financial utilisation statement detailing all relevant expenditure will be required to access the final payment. Applicants must retain supporting evidence for all transactions, including receipts, invoices, proof of payment (where

applicable), and travel documentation such as tickets and boarding passes. The RCC may request a selected sample of these documents during the review process.

Applicants will also be asked to share a short feedback report, to help the RCC understand the role of the PDG in partnership and proposal development.

9. Contractual terms

The contractual terms for proposal development grants are currently being finalised by the RCC and will be shared with shortlisted teams during the due diligence process.

10. Future use

The RCC recognises the value of the partnership strengthening and inclusive proposal development and hopes that consortia not selected for the SRHR Applied Research Centre will benefit from the activities funded at this stage. Applicants are welcome to leverage these in future funding opportunities.

11. Queries

Questions about eligibility, costs, or the application process for the PDG should be directed to rcc@3ieimpact.org using the subject line, “SRHR – Request for clarification.”

See below for guidance on how to complete the PDG budget template.

Guidance for completing the budget template

Administering Organisation

- **For LMIC organisations only**, provide a breakdown of staff costs for the duration of the proposal development period, with reference to the RCC rate card. Staff rates should reflect actual/ contractual rates.
- Eligible staff include researchers and project managers at LMIC organisations directly involved in proposal development, and organisational support staff involved in coordination or administration related to the bid. Please provide a brief justification for each staff member and their contribution to proposal development.
- The grant cannot be used for organisations not named as consortium members in the EOI, including external consultants – for example, consultants to help with proposal writing who will not themselves participate in the Research Centre. If an organisation's staffing model engages core staff via consultancy arrangements, they may be included.
- Specify local and international travel costs for Administering Organisation personnel. Where the Administering Organisation directly pays for partners' travel, include these partner costs, individually by organisation, in the Administering Organisation budget. Provide a brief explanation of the nature of the travel, origin and destination information.
- Specify other direct costs required for proposal development, for example meeting room hire or translation assistance.
- The Administering Organisation is responsible for any required subaward agreements and onward payments to consortium members.

Partner organisations

- Complete a partner budget tab for each consortium member to whom a subaward will be issued. Include eligible staff costs (for LMIC organisations only), travel and other direct costs that are not paid by the Administering Organisation.
- Copy the totals from each partner budget tab into the appropriate cells in Section IV of the lead budget tab to calculate the total requested. Ensure that budgets do not exceed £30,000.

Notes:

- Budgets should be completed in Pounds Sterling (GBP). Please provide exchange rate assumptions between local currency/GBP, using the [OANDA currency converter](#).
- Expenditure may vary between approved budget categories or between partner organisations without prior approval, provided the overall award value is not exceeded, and the expenditure remains within the PDG's approved purpose. Material changes to the nature or purpose of expenditure should be agreed with the RCC in advance.
- Lines may be added to the template where necessary.