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International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canada

Call for Research Proposals 2015:
Cities and Climate Change

- This document is a Call for Research Proposals for funding support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
- The purpose of this call is to support strong and effective research delivering policy-oriented scientific results on adaptation to climate change in cities.
- Funding in this call targets universities, research centres, and other organizations with a research mandate in the following countries: Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Deadline: September 18, 2015 at 12:00pm EDT (Ottawa)

Click here to submit an application

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About IDRC

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports research that generates lasting local solutions, bringing choice and change to those who need it most in the developing world. We achieve this by investing in knowledge and innovation, supporting the leaders of the future, and by being a partner of choice for the public and private sectors.

Research supported through IDRC's climate change programming helps developing country decision-makers understand the consequences of climate change for rural and urban populations relating to water resources, agriculture, and economic activity. IDRC's Climate Change program (CC) and the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) aim to improve the ability of communities, governments, and the private sector to adapt to the uncertainty, rapidly evolving risks, and environmental threats related to our changing climate.

Why cities?

Cities are home to more than half of the world's population and the majority of built assets and economic activity. Globally the urban population is expected to double by 2050 and most of this growth will be in the developing world. Urban dwellers will make up half of the populations of Asia and Africa by 2020 and 2035 respectively.

Cities are sources of innovation and economic strength, but they also concentrate poverty in areas where vulnerable people face exaggerated consequences from climate change. Rapid urbanization in low and middle-income countries has increased the number of highly vulnerable urban residents living in informal settlements, currently estimated at over 900 million people worldwide. These settlements are often located on land exposed to hazards with poor-quality provision of water, sanitation, drainage, infrastructure, healthcare, and emergency services – problems exacerbated during flooding, critical water shortage, and other natural disasters. In many rapidly developing cities, unplanned growth and poor environmental management are compounded by limited resources. In this context, climatic extremes are pushing new urban areas into the frontline of climate impact with an urgent need for clear adaptation pathways.

Cities under climate pressure are often located in watersheds with competing demands on water resources, including hydro-power, agriculture, industrial, and domestic supply. Smart water management must address highly concentrated demand of rapidly developing urban centres, taking into account the loss of ecosystem services caused by destruction of wetlands, as well as increased risks of construction in flood prone areas along with associated economic impacts. The impacts of extreme climate events threaten economic activities at scales ranging from local employment to global markets. In the face of increasing water demands and climate pressures, coastal cities and the surrounding agricultural regions will be further exposed to the cumulative threats of periodic inundation, water shortages, and saline intrusion.

Aim of the call

The Cities and Climate Change initiative will support high quality, demand driven, policy relevant action research that engages local authorities, communities, and the private sector. Research will help to meet adaptation deficits at one or more of the following geographic scales, where demographic pressure and environmental stresses are particularly acute: small to medium-sized city or cities (i.e. population of 2 million or less), defined subdivision(s) of a large city or cities, distinct informal settlement(s) of a large city or cities, defined peri-urban district(s), or defined peri-urban municipality or municipalities.

Proposed solutions should address climate risk and uncertainty, and inspire innovation in adaptation strategies and technologies. We do not aim to support new vulnerability studies; proposals should build on the large body of existing work. We are seeking proposals that complement and add value to existing IDRC climate change programming.

Particular attention will be paid to adaptive water management for flooding, innovative or participatory climate-ready planning and regulation, infrastructure, finance, and urban services. We are seeking practical solutions that enable businesses and social enterprises to take advantage of opportunities for new markets and services, strengthening economic growth and emphasizing inclusive and sustainable city level governance. Finally, the initiative will help scale-up innovation by analyzing and addressing the barriers to uptake of adaptation strategies and technologies.

We intend to fund 6 research projects and will make grants of up to **CA$1,000,000** each. Applications should identify one organization as the lead. Co-funding and formal partnerships with additional organizations are encouraged. Each partner organization will need to provide a letter of commitment. Projects should not exceed **36 months** in duration.

Research themes

Proposals should clearly outline gender sensitive research with demonstrated practical application at clearly defined, appropriate scales. The proposed research should reduce risk and increase local preparedness for the impacts of climate change in urban areas and their catchments. This includes (but is not limited to) long-term changes in the water cycle, and short-term extreme weather leading to impacts such as flooding and water shortage. The proposed research must target one or more of the following themes:

1. **'Hard solutions',** for example: developing, protecting, and adapting climate-ready infrastructure; innovative WASH systems; the development and application of adaptation technologies.
2. **'Soft solutions',** for example: innovative governance systems and planning approaches, fees for intensive resource use; collaborative management of water resources and associated infrastructure, services, and industries.
3. **Research addressing climate and population thresholds** that: threaten the sustainability of communities and industries, influence behavioral change, and/or address barriers to adoption of adaptation strategies and technologies.

Eligibility and institutional arrangements

- The proposed research must take place in one or more of the following countries: Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- The proposed research must be led by a research-oriented organization from academia, government, the private sector, or civil society and be based in one of the eligible countries listed above.
- Organizations from the United Nations system, members of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), or multilateral agencies are not eligible as *lead organizations* for the proposed research, even when operating in a developing country, but can be included as partners provided their budget share does not exceed 20%.

For more information about eligibility please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions.

Note: IDRC has scientific and technical cooperation agreements with a number of governments of recipient countries, establishing cooperation frameworks and defining the rights and obligations of both IDRC and those governments. Any applicants selected to receive funding may be required to obtain country approval in accordance with these agreements prior to receiving funding from IDRC. In particular, all Lead and Partner Organizations based in India require clearance through the *Foreign Contribution Regulation Act* (FCRA). Proof of FCRA approval is required for any India-based organization receiving IDRC funds.

Submission and review process

Timeline

IDRC invites eligible organizations to submit an application to this Call for Research Proposals before the deadline: **12:00pm EDT (Ottawa) on September 18th, 2015.** Acknowledgements of receipt will be sent to all applicants whose application was received before the closing date and time. Successful and non-successful applicants will receive notification of results **by December 15, 2015.**

Review criteria

IDRC will evaluate and rank research proposals received according to the review criteria outlined below (scored out of 100 points):

1. Technical merit and innovative nature of interdisciplinary proposals with clearly defined research objectives and gender sensitive research methodology, including economic analysis of adaptation options (i.e. costs of climate change impacts and avoided damage through adaptation), outcomes, and sustainability of proposed options **(30)**
2. Clearly defined public and private sector partnerships, including co-funding arrangements. All major partners should be involved in the project development. Written commitments from all partner organizations involved (e.g. community group/NGO, public and private sector representatives) must be submitted with the application **(10)**
3. Clearly defined beneficiaries and scale of impact of practical solutions, with appropriate quantitative evaluation criteria **(10)**
4. Clear knowledge management, information sharing, and communication strategy, particularly for policy impact **(10)**
5. Demonstrated strong academic and/or professional background within the project, including inter-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder teams **(10)**
6. Clear plan for building and retaining the capacity of junior researchers, communities, local governments, and the private sector to adapt to climate change, as well as inspiring leadership across these sectors **(10)**
7. Demonstrated publication record and intent to publish research results in relevant and leading journals **(10)**
8. Clear timeline and coherent budget compliant with the research design **(10)**

Note: IDRC will not cover infrastructure costs outside of the context of research and experimentation (for example, a pilot project). An environmental impact assessment may be required.

How to apply

All applications must be submitted online at http://cc-urb-adaptation.fluidreview.com.

Additional information

Copies of the Frequenty Asked Questions, Privacy Agreement and Eligibility Form, Application Form, Budget Form, and Guidelines for acceptable project expenditures can be found in the call announcement on the IDRC website.

Enquiries

For all enquiries about this Call for Research Proposals, please contact:

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. IDRC reserves the right to fund research projects according to its corporate priorities. These are outlined on the IDRC website at www.idrc.ca.
2. As a Canadian Crown corporation, IDRC is subject to Canada's *Access to Information Act*. Consequently, any submissions in response to this Call for Research Proposals will be held by IDRC in a manner consistent with the *Access to Information Act*, including IDRC's obligations to disclose documents requested by members of the public.
3. Prior to submitting an application, applicants should review IDRC's Open Access Policy for IDRC-Funded Project Outputs.