**EXPLORING THE EMERGING IMPACTS OF OPEN DATA IN THE SOUTH**

**Open Call for Research Proposals**

[**www.opendataresearch.org**](http://www.opendataresearch.org)

**Issued 11th July 2012**

**Deadline for submission of proposals: 10 September, 23:59, EDT**

**Submissions by e-mail to** submission-odr@webfoundation.org

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Web Foundation are pleased to announce a call for proposals “Exploring the emerging impacts of open data in the South”.

**1. Information on IDRC and the Web Foundation:**

IDRC is a Crown corporation created in 1970 by the Parliament of Canada. IDRC builds the capacity of people and institutions in developing countries to undertake the research that they identify as most urgent. It works with researchers as they confront contemporary challenges within their own countries and contribute to global advances in their fields.

In particular, the [Information and Networks (I&N) program](http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Science_and_Innovation/Information_and_Networks/Pages/default.aspx) explores the positive and negative impacts of widespread access to mobile telephones and the Internet in developing countries. I&N works to promote positive social and economic change, particularly in the areas of creative industries, governance, learning, and science.

The [Web Foundation](http://www.webfoundation.org/projects/odrs/) is an international not-for-profit organization founded by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the Web, first announced in 2008 and operationally-launched on November 2009. The Web Foundation’s mission is to lead a global movement to reinforce the right of web access and freedoms for all and accelerate the ability of all individuals and communities to utilize the Web and unlock its full economic, social and political potential.

The Open Data Initiative at the Web Foundation is working toward a world where all producers of information of public interest make their data freely and openly available on the Web and conducting research about its potential and impact.

This call was developed jointly by IDRC and the Web Foundation and in consultation with a wider network of researchers and institutions interested in exploring the political, economic and social impacts of Open Government Data (OGD) policies in developing countries.

This project will actively seek collaboration with existing and emerging initiatives with similar goals and interests and will try to leverage synergies between them.

**2. Background, rationale and key objectives of the Call:**

In recent years, a diverse coalition of actors has pushed the creation and diffusion of open data programmes around the world. Governments, international organizations, businesses, academics, media, civil society organizations, and web developers have embraced and sponsored open data programs, creating large expectations for open data as a suitable remedy for challenges of good governance, economic growth, social inclusion, innovation, and participation.

Though in many cases this may be true, there is a need for a critical perspective on whether the outcomes indeed occur and under what circumstances. There is a widespread lack of empirical evidence underlying the implementation of open data initiatives. Evidence is needed to guide better practice and policy formulation, particularly as open data initiatives spread to developing countries.

The objective of this call is to build an evidence base on the contribution of open data initiatives to key areas of governance in developing countries: exploring where data is impacting on processes of decision making and implementation. It also seeks to develop knowledge and action that will enhance the potential of open data to foster greater transparency and accountability, better economic efficacy and efficiency and greater inclusion and empowerment of marginalized groups. Selected research proposals will form part of a research network that critically examines the emerging impacts of open data in the South.

**3. Thematic focus and priority research considerations:**

The project will fund a series of detailed case studies that examine the emerging impacts of specific **on-going** open data initiatives that address key development themes. Potential cases include:

* Open data in local and national budgeting processes
* Open data for legislation processes and elections
* Open data in judicial systems
* Open data for smarter cities
* Open data for the delivery of privately provided public services
* Open data for the regulation of markets (e.g. extractive industries)
* Open data for the welfare and empowerment of marginalized groups and communities (e.g. data for small farmers)
* Open data and international development

**Open data** is data which is made accessible (usually online), in a standardised machine-readable format, and under a license that allows it to be re-used. We are primarily interested in Open Data initiatives that meets all, or most, of the criteria of the Open Definition (www.opendefinition.org). An **Open Data initiative** is any organised activity focused on providing open data (supply side), or on securing access to open data (demand side). These may be national government led open data initiatives, but may also be thematic and local initiatives for open data.

It is expect that the projects funded under this call will explore elements such as:

1. the characteristics of open data currently available within the specific case and its relation with global initiatives that aims greater data openness in a specific domain,
2. the context and structure of the governance in the specific area of development, including a diagnostic of some of the main challenges and opportunities of the case under study;
3. an in-depth analysis of the emerging outcomes of open data initiatives within the specific case paying special attention to the factors that foster or hamper greater transparency and accountability, better economic efficacy and efficiency and greater inclusion and empowerment of marginalized groups.

The proposals may also respond to local policy and practice needs with respect to open data, working in collaboration with local stakeholders to support open data initiatives through the application of evaluation, research, awareness raising, technical assistance and policy engagement.

Case studies can employ multiple forms of data collection, and we anticipate cases will use a mix of documentary analysis, interviews, surveys, participant observation and action research to explore a specific supply or demand driven open data initiative. We welcome proposals that identify data collection and analysis methods that help us deal with the complexity of interactions involved in open data in developing countries.

A core research network will be established to bring together researchers involved in the case studies, research mentors, and additional invited researchers and networks. The network may develop a number of shared data collection tools and frameworks that each case will be encouraged to use.

A number of network level research activities will be carried out – looking at cross-cutting indicators on open data use, building shared frameworks for wider research on open data, and working on collaborative publications based on shared issues. The network is expected to produce a series of outcomes, drawing on comparisons of the case studies and additional research, and will actively contribute to policy debates.

You can find more detail on definitions and framing for the overall project on the project website at <http://www.opendataresearch.org>

**4. Funding scope and duration:**

As a result of this call, we expect to issue a series of grants ranging from USD$25,000 to USD$75,000. It is expected that smaller grants will focus on small, single-country or local initiative cases, and larger grants can include a wider range of activities such as multi-country comparisons of open data about a particular governance domain (e.g. budget, cities, extractive industries), technical assistance to on-going initiatives and/or significant engagement with relevant policy dialogues. The duration of each project will not exceed 12 months, including all research activities and final reporting.

Also, each approved proposal will have access to a mentorship system that will provide support with identifying appropriate research approaches to explore the case study and networking with global communities working on open data. The network coordination and mentorship system will promote the dialogue among projects working on related themes and foster the use of comparable methodologies and discuss potential opportunities for longer term collaboration. The different projects and mentors will meet together during in the project in full network, or local topic-specific meetings (this does not need to be included in the proposed budget). There will be regular online interaction of the network. The work of the project will be shared with a wider network of interested researchers who will be invited to participate in some of the online and face-to-face events.

**5. Submission process:**

* Applications must be submitted by no later than **10 September, 23:59, EDT.**
* Applications must be submitted in English.
* Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Applications received before the deadline and deemed by the Organizing Committee to be compliant with the requirements set out in this Call for Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the process outlined herein.

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to submission-odr@webfoundation.org.

**6. Eligibility criteria:**

Organizations based in all parts of the developing regions of the world can in principle qualify for support. Applicant organizations are considered to be those that have legal corporate registration in an eligible country. In accordance with the IDRC Act, all parts of the developing regions of the world can in principle qualify for IDRC’s support. Collaboration with researchers and institutions in developed countries are permitted as long as they have a established collaboration with a eligible institution and the subject of study is a developing region.

The primary considerations in selecting projects will be the scientific merit of the research proposal and its potential for development impact, including capacity building. However, the selection of projects may also be influenced by operational considerations, e.g., Canadian law; knowledge of research settings; ability to monitor research activities; conditions that may make it difficult costly, dangerous or onerous for IDRC to carry out its objectives; or exercise proper stewardship of its resources.

The Organizing Committee reserves the right to cancel the process at any time without prior notice and/or at its discretion to grant all or none of the awards under this process.

**7. Selection process:**

This call is the first step of 2 stages in the selection process for the funding of a proposal. In the first stage, concept notes will be reviewed and short-listed by a Organizing Committee, comprised of IDRC program staff and up to five external reviewers from different related disciplines and according to the criteria outlined below.

Selected teams will be asked to submit full research proposals for review and funding consideration. Full proposals will then be reviewed by an mixed internal-external committee, according to review and selection criteria, which will be provided to the short-listed teams.

**Estimated outline of the selection process:**

**July 2012 -** The Call is launched

**Until 10 September 2012 -** Applications (concept notes) are received. Incomplete or late applications are eliminated

**Mid September -**  Preliminary evaluation of the applications for completeness of mandatory requirements and according to the following criteria:

* Application is complete and from an eligible organisation (see §6)
* Application clearly identifies the **development issues** and the **open data** **domain or open data initiative** that will be covered in the case study.

Applicants who are excluded at this point will be notified by 5th October 2012.

**Early October -**  Initial review: Applications are reviewed by an Organising Committee made of IDRC program staff, the project team and invited invited experts who will assess proposals based on the following criteria:

* Clarity and relevance of the application:
* The potential of the case to inform local, national and international policy.
* Research team capacity and knowledge of the team.
* The potential for cross-case comparison based on other applications received.

**Mid October -**  Short-listed applicants are invited to develop their concept notes into full proposals for approval. Full research proposals will be evaluated by Organising Committee, with input from the invited experts according to the criteria above.

**November** - Negotiation with projects over proposal details may be entered into to agree on a final proposal from each short-listed applicant. The aggregate value applied for by short-listed applicants shall not exceed the total budget available, although short-listing will not create an guarantee of funding.

**Early December -** Final Decision: The Organising Committee make final the decision based on the full proposals and their alignment with the objectives of the network.

**January - March 2013:** Selected projects begin

**8. Format and requirements:**

The concept notes submitted by the applications should be concise and presented in single-spaced, Arial point 12-font text, with a maximum length of up to 8 pages (not including abstract and annexes).

**They can include the following items:**

* Title
* Abstract
* Background and Justification (please include a brief description of the open data initiative, governance issues to be studied and expected outcomes and impacts)
* Research objectives (including an statement about how the case study addresses the priorities of the call)
* Methodological considerations and identification of anticipated risks
* Expected results and dissemination activities (include information on how the case is likely to inform the specific context)
* Collaborations or additional activities planned as part of the research (e.g. awareness raising, capacity building, technical assistance etc.)
* Preliminary schedule
* Tentative budget
* Annexes
* Short one-page CV of the principal investigator and proposed team members
* Signed official letter(s) of endorsement from the applicant organization(s)
* Tentative budgets should include projected expenses per budget category (as per IDRC eligible expenses) as follows:

* **Personnel:** Includes all remuneration, allowances, and benefits paid to staff and advisors hired for a specific project. Project advisors are people hired for long periods (more than 1 year) and paid on a regular basis. The payment of replacement salaries (to release academics from teaching commitments) or of core salaries (i.e., of existing staff) must be justified in the context of research capacity building. As a general rule, IDRC does not pay salary supplements, i.e., honorarium for full-time employees in addition to their regular salaries or higher salaries than the institution would normally pay.
* **Consultants:** Consultants provide expert professional advice and usually work on a fee-for-service basis. Compared with project advisors (see Salaries), consultants are contracted for shorter periods to work on specific assignments. Payments to consultants include all expenses related to the services of a consultant for a specific

activity within the project. Please indicate the daily rate used to calculate the consultant’s fee, the estimated travel costs (if applicable), and any other related consultant costs.

* **Evaluation:** Includes the systematic assessment of a project, program, policy, or strategic issue to assess either progress toward achieving objectives or the quality and effects of IDRC-funded activities. Evaluation may occur during an activity or after its completion. Evaluation costs can include: consultant fees, travel expenses, and the dissemination of the evaluation findings. In projects where evaluation is the primary objective, costs may also include: research expenses, training, and salaries and benefits for personnel directly involved in the evaluation. Please indicate the daily rate used to calculate the consultant’s fee, the estimated travel costs (if applicable), and any other related consultant costs.
* **Equipment:** Includes equipment that has a useful life of more than 1 year and costs more than CAD $5,000 per item. Costs may include the basic purchase price, related Canadian sales taxes (net of government rebates), freight costs, and other costs associated with purchasing the equipment. IDRC does not pay foreign taxes, import duties, or equipment insurance after delivery. The recipient institution is responsible for all subsequent insurance coverage, and IDRC does not assume responsibility for any losses after delivery.
* **International Travel:** Includes all costs related to international travel incurred by project staff. Allowable costs include ground transportation, accommodation, meals, airfare, departure taxes, and other related expenses. Daily costs cannot exceed IDRC per diem rates. For more information, please refer to the following link:
[**http://web.idrc.ca/ev\_en.php?ID=57092\_201&ID2=DO\_TOPIC**](http://web.idrc.ca/ev_en.php?ID=57092_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)
* **Training:** Includes a trainee’s registration and tuition fees; living and other allowances; research and training expenses; and travel costs during the trainee’s participation in degree or diploma programs, short courses, student field work, postdoctoral training, or other scholarly activities. The training budget should be reported in four sub-categories based on the type of training being supported: PhD - study leading to a PhD degree; Masters - study leading to a Masters’ degree; Short Course - study leading to a diploma or certificate; or Other - all other scholarly activities (e.g., field work or postdoctoral study). Training for project staff that relates to the implementation of research activities should be shown under Research Expenses. Please indicate the estimated travel costs (if applicable); and any other related training costs.
* **Research expenses (include funds provided to any third-party organizations):** Includes services and materials required to carry out the research. Costs include remuneration of persons who gather data and information or provide casual labour; maintenance and operation of project vehicles; consumable goods and non-capital equipment; computer services; training for project staff for implementation of

research activities; in-country travel; reference materials; rent paid for land or premises used in a research activity; and translation of project-related documents.

* **Indirect project costs:** Includes administrative costs not directly related to the research. Costs may include clerical, accounting, or secretarial help; general office expenses; office rental and utility charges; non-capital office furnishings; communications costs; and photocopying. IDRC expects the recipient to absorb the indirect or administrative costs of a project as part of its local contribution. In exceptional cases, IDRC will consider a contribution towards indirect costs. The maximum contribution is 13% of all recipient-administered costs, including capital equipment.
* **Financial contribution by other donors:** Please provide the details of financial contributions that will be made to the project by other international funding agencies (or foundations).
* **Estimates of local contribution to project:** Local contributions represent cash amounts expended by the recipient from its own resources, from private grants, or from grants received from local, provincial or national authorities for the purpose of the project.

Other supporting funds and in-kind contributions such as salaries of regular staff, equipment, infrastructure and overhead costs.

**9. Evaluation criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated (by a Committee) based on the following criteria:

* **Clarity and relevance** of the application: including attention paid to the nature of the open data initiative to be studied, and the particular systems of governance it intends to, intended to, or has, interacted with.
* **The potential** to generate learning and outputs with relevance to current local, national and international policy debates and/or global technical and standard setting processes. Also, **potential capacity building benefits** that participation in the project will bring to the applicant organisation and partners.
* Research team capacity and **knowledge** **of aspects of open data** and open data initiatives as well as **capacity to conduct multi-method case study research**.
* The **potential for cross-case comparison**, given the other applications received and potential partnerships at the global level.

For ease of review, the following is a recommended breakdown of the weighting of the criteria:

* **Clarity and relevance - 25%**
* **Evidence of potential of outputs - 25%**
* **Capacity of the research team- 25%**
* **Potential for cross-case comparison - 25%**

**10. Communication of results:**

Short listed applicants are expected to be announced by the end of October 2012.

**11. Permission for use and disclosure of information:**

By way of submitting an application under this Call for competitive grants, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process, both within IDRC and externally. The applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the applicant, the name of the lead researcher and the name of the proposed project, in any announcement of selected proposals.

All personal information collected by IDRC about grant, scholarship and fellowship applicants is used to review applications, to administer and monitor awards, and to promote and support international development research in Canada and in the regions where IDRC operates. Consistent with these purposes, applicants should expect that information collected by IDRC may come to be used and disclosed in IDRC supported activities.

The deliverables produced by the approved proposals over time will be made available under open and standard licenses.