



STEG STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SMALL RESEARCH GRANT (SRG)

APPLICANT GUIDE

2021 – 2025

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About STEG

The [Structural Transformation and Economic Growth](#) (STEG) programme pursues a research agenda that aims to provide a better understanding of structural change, productivity, and growth in low- and middle-income countries.

The objective of STEG is to fund cutting-edge research that could be published in leading academic journals while simultaneously being relevant to the policy dialogue in low- and middle-income countries.

Any comparison of low-income countries and developed economies immediately points to striking differences in their structural features. Relative to the advanced economies, the least developed are disproportionately rural and agrarian, more reliant on self-employment and small-scale subsistence production, and less integrated into local, national, and international markets. Economic growth is critical for sustained poverty reduction in low-income economies, but it will surely involve dramatic shifts in the structure of economic activity. A research programme which can inform policies for structural transformation must address a variety of issues and incorporate a variety of approaches.

STEG therefore pursues a range of approaches that promise to produce credible research useful for policymaking and to support research related to different aspects of structural transformation.

Research may focus on broad systemic patterns and processes of structural transformation and growth for low- and middle-income countries, in a comparative sense across time or space, or more narrowly defined topics related to one or more of the following six research themes:

- Data, measurement, and conceptual framing
- Firms, frictions and spillovers, and industrial policy
- Labour, home production, and structural transformation at the level of households
- Agricultural productivity and sectoral gaps
- Trade and spatial frictions
- Political economy and public investment

STEG is also focused around three cross-cutting issues that are simultaneously relevant to many areas of structural transformation, including the six research themes:

- Gender
- Climate change and the environment
- Inequality and inclusion

Research proposals speaking to these issues will receive particular consideration.

The six research themes and three cross-cutting issues are organising principles for funding calls, grant application evaluations, and workshop topics but these are not exclusive lists of themes and topics. Other areas of interest may not fit cleanly into any of the themes but are centrally relevant to STEG and are also encouraged. Examples include multi-sector analyses of growth, the effects of demographic change, the role of skills and human capital, the growing relevance of the digital economy, public finance and its relation to long-term growth, and the importance of infrastructure investments and management. Conversely, it is important to note that the themes are interrelated with some important topics spanning multiple themes. For example, informality is important to both firms (theme 1), labour (theme 2), and public finance (theme 5).

More information on our research themes and cross-cutting issues can be found in our Research Strategy, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

Small Research Grants

Summary

Small Research Grants (SRGs) of **between £10,000 and £25,000** are our primary research funding vehicle. Although we offer Larger Research Grants (LRGs), most researchers (including less established researchers) will make use of the SRGs to support their work.

SRGs can fund research assistance, data collection and/or purchase, and potentially research stipends/teaching buyouts (if sufficiently justified). Grants also support travel to field sites, even when secondary data is utilised. We view this kind of travel (with the possibilities for field visits and conversations with policy makers) as particularly important for researchers who lack prior experience in the countries that they intend to study. Please note that cost effectiveness and value for money are important evaluation criteria and submitted budgets must adhere to the SRG Budget Guidelines, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

Eligibility

SRGs are designed to be **contracted directly with individual researchers**. The individual researcher is responsible for receiving, spending and reporting on funds. However, where this raises significant complications, we can consider alternative mechanisms. These contracts are non-negotiable, and no overhead fees can be taken. Please look at our individual contract template, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#), before applying.

Doctoral Students

We welcome submissions from PhD students/candidates, either in our regular SRG calls or in subsequent calls specifically targeted to PhD students. For all PhD students acting as principal investigators (applying in either stream), we require a letter of support from your PhD supervisor. Please ensure that we receive this letter from your supervisor no later than two weeks after the deadline. A PDF of the letter can be sent to the STEG Team at steg@cepr.org.

For the advisor: Please discuss the feasibility of the research proposal, the intellectual support which the student will receive from advisors and others, an assessment of the student's ability to carry out the research, and of the student's longer-term potential as a researcher.

Country and Policy Relevance

Please note that an important criterion for funding of proposals is the relevance to policy in low-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Proposals focused on middle- and/or high-income countries need to make a clear case for the relevance of the research to policy in specific low-income countries. Proposals are also evaluated on the extent to which the research findings (including those from comparative work or from studies in other geographies) might be relevant to policy in specific sub-Saharan countries.

All funded projects, regardless of location, will have to discuss within their final report and research note (see below) the potential lessons for policymakers in low-income and sub-Saharan countries.

COVID-19 Impacts

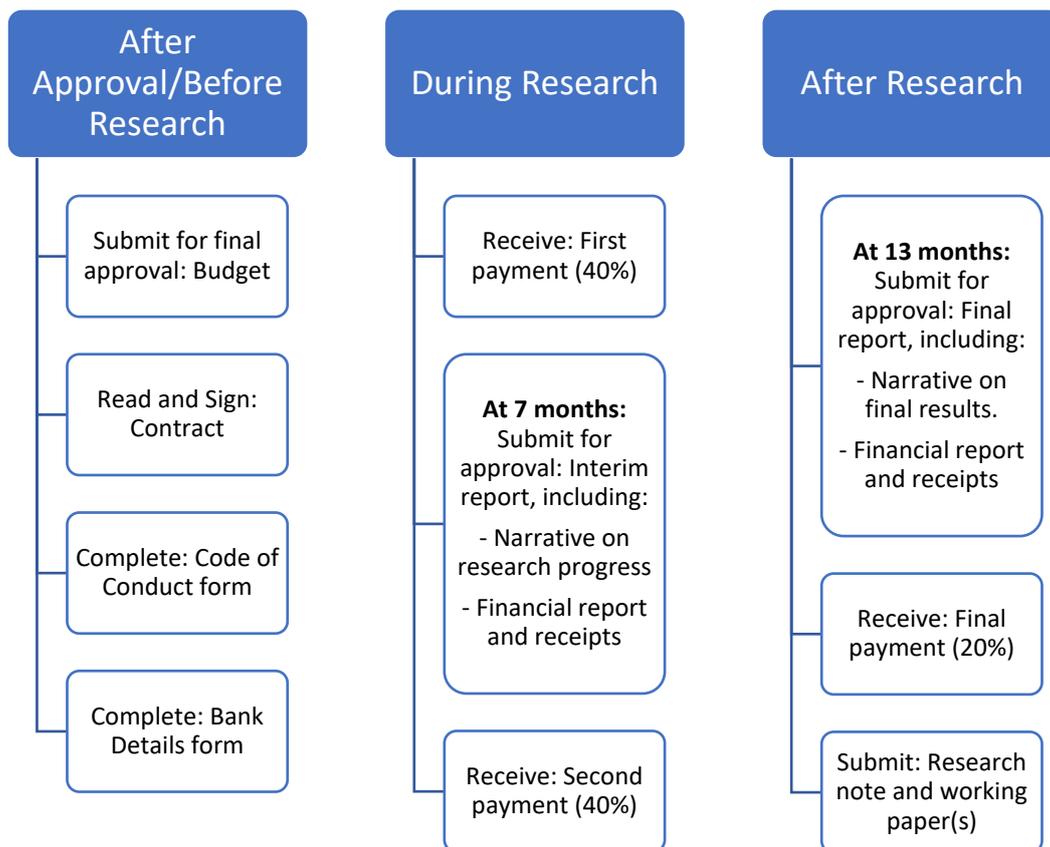
Researchers whose proposals rely on face-to-face surveys or interactions should clearly discuss the implications for the project of potential delays, and the alternatives to face-to-face fieldwork, in the event that the fieldwork is delayed by COVID-19. This can be included in the methodology section of the proposal template. Any fieldwork will need to be cleared by the researcher’s university and, where possible, in-country IRBs. Decisions on fieldwork should follow the advice of governments. Finally, any proposal that includes face-to-face interaction should also briefly make clear how the researchers intend to ensure the safety of researchers and any participants involved in the study. If you have questions on this, please contact the STEG Team at steg@cepr.org.

Call and Grant Timeline

We aim to issue funding decisions within three months of call deadlines. Successful proposals are then announced on the STEG website, together with a description of the work supported, no later than one month after contract signature.

An SRG is intended to be completed within 12 months. Please note that contracts should be signed within one month of the return of the final decision, which is also the expected project start date.

The grant timeline is outlined below:



Evaluation and Selection

Proposals for submitted SRGs are first checked for completeness by the Programme Implementation & Uptake Team. Proposals that are materially incomplete are rejected as ineligible at this stage. The STEG Research Officer performs a first assessment of proposal quality to check that proposals are "within scope" and pass a minimum quality bar. They then pass all proposals and their comments to the Chair of the Academic Steering Committee and Head of Commissioning (CASC) who creates a shortlist, based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed research
- Relevance to policy
- Feasibility and credibility of the proposal
- Value for money
- Contributions to expanding the field

A more detailed breakdown of these criteria and their respective weightings can be found below.

The CASC will then pass on the shortlisted proposals to external evaluators. Each proposal will be sent to two evaluators. The CASC will then appoint a Grants Selection Panel (GSP), including the external evaluators, which will discuss the shortlisted proposals together. The CASC will serve as chair of the GSP. Final recommendations will be made based on the recommendations of the GSP as well as the judgement of the STEG Research Director and CASC.

STEG SRG EVALUATION CRITERIA		Points
Quality of the proposed research		40
Significance and clarity of the research question		10
Connection to STEG's research themes		5
Connection to STEG's cross-cutting issues		5
Knowledge of relevant literature and clear statement of the research contribution		5
Clarity of the analytic approach and conceptual/theoretical framework		5
Methodology and its appropriateness to the research question		10
Relevance to policy		25
Identification of a specific policy problem or opportunity		10
Demonstrated knowledge of the geographic, historical, and political context relevant to the research setting		5
Clear discussion of potential users of the research and possibilities for research impact		5
Potential for policy uptake		5
Feasibility and credibility of the proposal		20
Access to relevant data and/or research tools		6
Demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and qualifications of researcher(s) <i>Note: If doctoral student, this criterion should also include the knowledge, expertise, and qualifications of the named supervisor(s)</i>		8
Plausibility of timelines		6
Value for money		10
Value for money, including resource allocation across different components of the budget		10
Contributions to expanding the field		5
Contributions to expanding the field in terms of size, scope, or diversity		5
TOTAL		100

PhD Research Grants

While PhD students are eligible to apply to any SRG funding round, we periodically issue special calls exclusively for PhD students in order to encourage broader participation in the programme. PhD Research Grants are available **up to £15,000**.

Applicants must be currently enrolled in a PhD programme to be eligible for these calls. Applicants will require a letter of support from their PhD supervisor sent no later than two weeks after the call deadline to the STEG grants team at steg@cepr.org.

PhD Research Grants can fund research assistance, data collection and/or purchase, and stipends. Stipends should only be requested if they allow the researcher(s) to reduce teaching/administrative duties and therefore free up time for research. Stipends are capped at £12,000 for PhD students in programmes located in high-income countries and the PPP equivalent for PhD students in programmes located in low- and middle-income countries. Grants will also support travel to field sites, even when secondary data is utilised. We view this kind of travel (with the possibilities for field visits and conversations with policy makers) as particularly important for researchers who lack prior experience in the countries that they intend to study. Please note that cost effectiveness and value for money are important evaluation criteria and submitted budgets will have to adhere to the STEG Budget Guidelines, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

We aim to issue funding decisions within three months of call deadlines. A PhD Research Grant is intended to be completed within 12 months. Please note that contracts should be signed within one month of the return of the final decision, which is also the expected project start date.

PhD Research Grants are essentially equivalent to SRGs with a more limited budget. Further details on the nature of PhD Research Grants can be found above in the section entitled “Small Research Grants”.

How To Apply For An SRG

Preparing Your Application

You need to prepare the following material for your application for an SRG in advance of accessing the online application portal. Please note that you must use the templates provided at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#) for the proposal and budget.

- Project title
- Project abstract
- Contact details and CVs for all investigators
- Proposal of three to five pages (references and appendix not included), single-spaced, in PDF format. The proposal template can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#). This is the main description of the project, and should include a discussion of each of the following elements:
 - Introduction
 - Methodology
 - Policy relevance and country focus
 - Relevance to STEG
 - Detailed work plan
 - Expected outputs
 - Contributions to expanding the field
 - Budget narrative
 - Ethics
 - Privacy
- Budget. The budget template and guidelines can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#). This provides a detailed breakdown of how the funds will be used under the grant.
- Keywords

Our [SRG Frequently Asked Questions](#) can help provide answers to many of the questions you may have when preparing these materials and submitting your application. Once prepared, we recommend reading our '[How To Apply Online](#)' [guide](#) to take you through the [online application portal](#).

Before submitting your application, you must read CEPR's [Code of Conduct for Researchers](#), [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). All grantees are required to adhere to these policies.

Proposals (including all supporting documents) must be submitted in English. Where any required supporting document cannot be obtained in English, a translation verified and approved by an official authority must be submitted.

All financial information contained in the proposed budget must be expressed in pounds sterling (GBP). Awards are specified, and grant payments are made in pounds sterling (GBP).

All costs incurred by the applicant in the course of the submission process/application procedure must be borne by the applicant. STEG does not provide financial assistance to applicants.

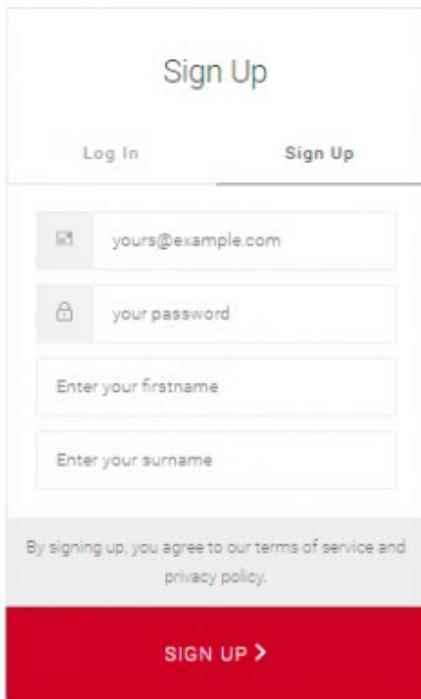
All necessary documents for your proposal can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

How To Apply Online

Create an Account

All proposals must be submitted online through our online application portal, [CEPR Hub](#). In order to access the application form, you must first create an account.

CEPR HUB



The screenshot shows the 'Sign Up' page of the CEPR Hub. At the top, there is a 'Sign Up' title and two tabs: 'Log In' and 'Sign Up'. Below the tabs are four input fields: an email field containing 'yours@example.com', a password field containing 'your password', a field for 'Enter your firstname', and a field for 'Enter your surname'. Below these fields is a small text box stating 'By signing up, you agree to our terms of service and privacy policy.' At the bottom of the form is a prominent red button with the text 'SIGN UP >'.

Once you have signed up, you must verify your account through an email sent to your email address.



Thank you for signing up. Please verify your email address by clicking the following link:

[Confirm my account](#)

If you are having any issues with your account, please don't hesitate to contact us by replying to this mail.

Thanks!
[CEPR.ORG - Hub](#) / [STEG](#) / [PEDL](#) / [VoxEU](#) / [VoxDEV](#)

Once you have confirmed your account, you must complete the registration form.

REGISTRATION

Individual

Name Prefix Please select your preferred title.

First Name
Please fill in full name (e.g. Edward, instead of Ed)

Last Name Please indicate your full first and last name.

Job Title Please indicate your primary job title.

Phone Number

Email

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

Street Address Line 3

City

Postal Code

Country

Please fill in your preferred contact details noting that an email address is essential.

Affiliation

Organization Name
Please fill in full organisational name, instead of abbreviation (e.g. Centre for Economic Policy Research instead of CEMPR)

Please write the full title of your organization. Do not use acronyms.

Individual

Reason for Registration Please indicate your reason for registering to Hub as "STEG Application".

ORCID
ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier (an ORCID ID) that you own and control, and that distinguishes you from every other researcher. You can get one here.

RePEc Author ID
The RePEc ShortID is a unique and permanent identifier attributed to people. One can obtain this identifier by registering at the RePEc Author Service.

If you have an ORCID or a RePEc Author ID, please write them here.

Once completed, please submit the registration form. You can edit all details at a later stage through your account.

Further details can be added to your profile at a later stage through your account, such as a short biography and a profile image, which will both be visible on our website if your application is successful.

Applying to an SRG

Applications to SRG calls can be made through the [SRG Application Form](#). This can also be accessed by selecting "Application (SRG)" through your Hub dashboard.

HOME
ABOUT
PROFILE
STEG APPLICATIONS
LOG OUT

DASHBOARD

MY PROFILE

- General information
- Profile image
- Account security
- Contact preferences

STEG APPLICATIONS

- About
- My applications
- Application (SRG)
- Application (LRG)

You must then complete the following SRG Application Form.

SRG APPLICATION FORM

Your (Principal Investigator) Details

CLICK HERE IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING ON BEHALF OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR **CHANGE THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DETAILS**

First Name

Last Name

Email

Your account details will automatically populate these fields. Please select "CHANGE THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DETAILS" if you are submitting on behalf of the principal investigator.

Are you a PhD Student/Candidate?
 If you are a PhD student/candidate, we require a letter of support from your PhD supervisor to be sent to the STEG grants team at steg@cepr.org

Yes

No

Please indicate whether you are currently a PhD student/candidate

Principal Investigator CV

No file chosen

One file only
8 MB limit
Allowed types: pdf

Please upload a PDF of the principal investigator's CV.

Co-Investigator #1

First Name

Last Name

Email

Co-Investigator #1 CV

No file chosen

One file only
8 MB limit
Allowed types: pdf

Co-Investigator #2

First Name

Last Name

Email

Co-Investigator #2 CV

No file chosen

One file only
8 MB limit
Allowed types: pdf

Co-Investigator #3

First Name

Last Name

Email

Co-Investigator #3 CV

No file chosen

One file only
8 MB limit
Allowed types: pdf

Please fill in the details for each co-investigator on the project.

Application Details

Grant Type

Please select for which type of grant you are applying.

Proposal Call Name

Please select to which proposal call you are applying.

Project Title

Please write the title of your project.

Abstract

Please provide a short summary of your proposed project (no more than 200 words).

Proposal

No file chosen

One file only
8 MB limit
Allowed types: pdf

Please upload a PDF of your proposal ensuring that you use the template available on the STEG SRG funding page.

Please use the template provided on the STEG website.

The image shows a screenshot of the STEG application form with several fields highlighted by red boxes and connected to explanatory text boxes:

- Budget Value:** A text input field with a pound sign (£). Instruction: "Please indicate the total budget for the project."
- Budget:** A file upload field with a "Choose file" button and "No file chosen" text. Instruction: "Please upload an excel file of your budget ensuring that you use the template available on the STEG SRG funding page."
- Keywords:** A text input field. Instruction: "Please suggest some keywords that describe the subject of your project."
- Target Country(ies):** A text input field with a note: "Please write 'Multiple' if the research covers more than five countries." Instruction: "Please indicate which countries are the focus of the proposed research. If more than five, please write 'Multiple'."
- Research Themes:** A list of six checkboxes:
 - Data, measurement, and conceptual framing
 - Firms, frictions and spillovers, and industrial policy
 - Labour, home production, and structural transformation at the level of households
 - Agricultural productivity and sectoral gaps
 - Trade and spatial frictions
 - Political economy and public investment
 Instruction: "Please indicate to which research themes, if any, your proposal relates. Please note that we accept proposals related to structural transformation that do not fit cleanly into any of these six themes."
- Cross-Cutting Themes:** A list of three checkboxes:
 - Gender
 - Climate change and the environment
 - Inequality and inclusion
 Instruction: "Please indicate to which cross-cutting issues, if any, your proposal relates."
- Is this a Resubmission?:** A radio button field with "Yes" and "No" options. Instruction: "Please check 'Yes' if you are submitting a proposal after having been asked to resubmit."
- Submit:** A red "Submit" button. Instruction: "Once completed, please submit your application. Please note that you will not be able to edit your application once it is submitted."

All information submitted must be complete and all proposals and budgets must use the templates provided at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#). Proposals that fail to use the correct templates or that have missing or false information or documents containing misrepresentations of facts will be rejected.

Upon submission of your application, you should receive a confirmation email. Please note that if you have only very recently created an account, you may not receive the email confirming receipt of your application. If this is the case, please do not resubmit your application but contact the STEG Team at steg@cepr.org to confirm submission.

If you have any other issues with the application process, please contact the STEG Team at steg@cepr.org.

Resubmitting a Proposal

Resubmissions take place via invitation only. If you are invited to resubmit your proposal, revised proposals can be resubmitted in any future round. During resubmissions you must specify that the proposal is a resubmission by checking a tick box under "Resubmission" in the application form, and include details of the changes made to your proposal in the "Resubmission Details" text box.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants are expected to report their progress on a regular basis. The progress of SRGs is monitored through a system of interim and final reports. One interim report is required six months (halfway) into the project with a final report required within one month of the end date of the project. The reports are reviewed by the Programme Implementation & Uptake Team and STEG Research Officer, and approval will be necessary for the further disbursement of funds. The interim report should include:

- A non-technical summary of the project
- Activities undertaken
- Research findings
- Policy impact
- Outputs and dissemination activities
- Planned activities
- Financial report

The final report should include:

- A non-technical summary of the project
- Activities undertaken
- Methodology
- Research findings
- Policy impact
- Outputs and dissemination activities
- Financial report

Upon completion and approval of the final report, and once final analysis has been undertaken, projects are also required to produce a policy brief to join the STEG Research Note series. This is a three-page summary of the project designed to inform policymakers of the research that STEG undertakes. The research note should be prefixed by a short abstract. The main body of the note should discuss in greater depth the:

- Research question and motivation
- Policy context and background
- Methodology (including any data collection)
- Main findings
- Policy impact
- Next steps

Templates for the interim and final reports can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

SRG Frequently Asked Questions

Researchers

Who can apply for a Small Research Grant?

Only individuals can apply for a STEG SRG. The grants are issued through a contract between CEPR and the successful applicant directly. In exceptional circumstances, a contract with an institution can be issued, but the contract will be non-negotiable, and the institution cannot take any overheads. This also applies to doctoral students.

STEG invites applications from researchers located anywhere in the world.

Can I apply as a team?

Yes, you may apply as a team. Indeed, we encourage collaboration between academics and in-country specialists. However, only one researcher should submit the proposal as the representative of the team. That individual is the named individual on the contract and is responsible for the project implementation, should the application be successful.

Do I need a senior collaborator?

Only if she or he will make a necessary and substantive contribution to the work. (Don't include someone who will be nothing more than a silent partner.) We encourage and are eager to fund strong applications from less established researchers, including junior faculty, postdocs, and doctoral students. We also enthusiastically welcome submissions from less represented demographics and from those in low-income countries. We do not believe that the so-called top-tier departments have a monopoly on good research, and we consequently encourage applications from researchers across the entire profession.

Are there specific affiliation requirements?

There are no strict affiliation requirements for individuals applying for SRGs. Please note, however, that these grants are intended to fund academic research rather than supporting programmes.

Applications

How can I apply for a Small Research Grant?

Applications for an SRG should be submitted through the [CEPR Hub](#). Instructions on what to do before and while applying are available [here](#).

Is there a deadline for proposal submission?

Proposals can be submitted at any time. However, deadlines and subsequent reviews will usually take place once every quarter. This allows STEG to evaluate proposals in groups. The deadlines for upcoming calls will be available via the STEG website and newsletter.

Can I submit more than one proposal in a round?

No person can be the principal investigator (PI) on two different proposals within the same SRG proposal round. However, it is permitted for a person to be PI for one proposal while only being a co-investigator (Co-I) for another. If not listed as a PI, an individual can be included as a Co-I in as many as two proposals in a given round of SRGs.

It is possible to be the PI on two different but concurrent SRG proposal rounds.

Should STEG research proposals be based on a purely economic and quantitative approach, or is there scope for applications involving other disciplines to be considered?

The programme is open to mixed/multi-disciplinary approaches. However, the core of the approach should be related to the literature in economics and should be grounded primarily in economic issues.

Can I apply for funding to work on a theory paper?

It is possible, but you will need to very carefully justify why the project is relevant to policy in LMICs.

Is the start date of the project negotiable? Is it possible to ask for a delayed start date?

Yes, with sufficient justification. However, consideration will be given to the extent of the delay, which may have a bearing on the decision.

When will applicants be notified of the call's results?

The aim is to notify applicants within three months of the proposal deadline.

Can a rejected proposal be resubmitted?

Only those who have been explicitly invited to do so may resubmit a previously unsuccessful proposal. The purpose of the 'by invitation' policy is to allow for amendments and/or improvements to proposals that the Evaluation Committee considers have the potential to be funded.

There is no guarantee that a resubmitted proposal will be successful.

Proposals must be resubmitted through the CEPR Hub online application portal identifying themselves as resubmissions during the process and detailing the changes that have been made in the relevant text box.

What is the average contract length of a Small Research Grant?

SRGs typically run for 12 months. Formal requests for extension can be submitted with sufficient justification.

What are the preferred outputs for the Small Research Grants? Would it be in the form of a paper/report, policy briefing or academic journal article?

Projects are expected to produce high-quality academic papers as the primary output. However, a policy brief should also be produced, to highlight the policy-relevant results.

Budgets

What criteria should the project budget comply with?

The SRG Budget Guidelines are available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

Can I include a payment for myself in the budget?

Research stipends are eligible costs under STEG to the extent that PIs and Co-Is are directly involved in providing services to the project. Stipends should only be requested if they allow the researcher(s) to reduce teaching/administrative duties and therefore free up time for research. Individual eligibility depends upon seniority and location:

- Stipends for senior researchers located in upper-middle and high-income countries are not funded under the SRG programme.

- Stipends are capped at £12,000 for PhD students in programmes located in high-income countries and the PPP equivalent for PhD students in programmes located in low- and middle-income countries.
- Stipends for up to 9 months of time are allowed for researchers in lower-income countries.

All research stipend costs will be evaluated for their value for money and may require further justification or amendments before being approved by CEPR.

What can be included under equipment?

It is expected that researchers and institutions provide their own IT equipment such as tablets, mobile phones, laptops, and computers for the duration of the project. In exceptional circumstances these can be included in the budget, but strong justification will be required, and a maximum of £500 for items of equipment will be applied.

Annex

Templates, Useful Documents and Links:

[Small Research Grants Homepage](#)

[CEPR Hub Application Portal](#)

[STEG Research Strategy](#)

[SRG Proposal Template](#)

[SRG Budget Template](#)

[SRG Budget Guidelines](#)

[SRG Contract Template](#)

[SRG Interim Report Template](#)

[SRG Final Report Template](#)

[CEPR Code of Conduct for Researchers](#)

[CEPR Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[CEPR Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#)

[CEPR Privacy Policy](#)

[SRG Frequently Asked Questions](#)