



CEDIL Call for Proposals

Selection Criteria

March 2019



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1. Overview

CEDIL will select projects for its programmes of work that will conduct world-class research and innovate in the fields of impact evaluation and evidence synthesis. All projects must meet the Frascati definition of applied research or experimental design.¹ Projects which deploy methods already widely used for impact evaluation or evidence synthesis in their sector or thematic area, even in under researched contexts, will not be funded.

The selection of projects will be informed by external, independent peer reviews which will be conducted by researchers, evaluation practitioners and policy experts with expertise in the specific areas of the proposals. Innovation and research excellence, fit to the scope of the programmes of work, and potential impact on policy and/or practice, particularly when relevant to DFID, are key criteria. There is no strict ranking or weighting for the various criteria. Ultimately, the selection criteria represent the strategic objectives of CEDIL and final decisions on individual projects will be informed by the need to ensure these are achieved across the portfolio of funded projects. Applicants will maximise their likelihood of obtaining funding by ensuring their proposals are as strong as possible in all areas.

Applicants should also note a high priority is placed on good project management capabilities, most importantly where these relate to managing risks related to safeguarding, ethics, security, fraud and bribery. These must be appropriately set out and resourced in order for projects to be funded.

2. Eligibility

Prior to being peer reviewed, all proposals will be checked to ensure they are eligible for funding. You must ensure your proposal meets the following criteria before submission:

1. **Institutional eligibility, capacity and support:** Proposals must come from a legally constituted organisation with the capacity and remit to carry out research. If the status of the organisation is not clear, we may make further enquiries. Proposals must include a letter of support from the head of department or equivalent stating that they will support the project.
2. **Eligible country:** Projects must be substantially focused in at least one of the countries listed in the call specification. Work involving other countries is allowed where it is comparative to work also being conducted in a priority country. Applicants unsure of whether their work would be considered sufficiently relevant to a priority country should contact the CEDIL directorate at cedil.commissioning@opml.co.uk prior to submission.
3. **Completeness of proposal:** All sections of the proposal form must be completed sufficiently to allow rigorous peer review. The specified word counts must not be exceeded, and fonts on uploaded documents must be no smaller than 11-point Arial. All required attachments must be included.

¹ See the Frascati Manual, published by the OECD, for details of this definition.
<http://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/frascati-manual.htm>

4. **Within budget:** The total budget must be within the range of the scheme applied to, and all costs must be eligible.
5. **Fit to programmes of work:** Proposals which are obviously outside the scope of the call specification will be rejected without being peer reviewed.

3. Expression of Interest review criteria

Expressions of Interest for large projects will be assessed and shortlisted by the CEDIL Directorate (drawing on additional external expertise as required) according to the following criteria:

1. **Potential for innovation:** Is the approach outlined likely to lead to significant innovation in evaluation methods? Does it adapt methods to novel contexts, represent a new combination of methods from different disciplines, or present entirely new methods for impact evaluation?
2. **Experience of team:** Does the team proposed have the relevant expertise and skills to deliver the innovative ideas proposed to a high level of quality?
3. **Fit to CEDIL programmes of work:** Does the project or approach proposed make a clear contribution to the objectives and the structure of CEDIL's programmes of work?
4. **Quality of southern participation:** Are members of the team from southern institutions involved in the leadership of the project and do they have a prominent role in the design of the evaluation methods?
5. **Potential policy and practice relevance:** Does the project address a clear policy priority for development and does the team have an understanding of stakeholder needs and the relationships with stakeholders needed to ensure policy relevance? Does the project have the potential for a significant impact on evaluation practice?
6. **DFID specific relevance:** How well does the project address priority thematic areas or focus countries for DFID? Does the application include a convincing case that its outputs could be a) of interest to DFID and b) designed to enable use by DFID?
7. **Evidence of collaboration with implementing agencies:** With exception to teams applying to participate in matchmaking process with DFID programmes, does the project have appropriate relationships with agencies implementing the programme to be evaluated, meaning that they will be able to obtain the necessary access to the programme and collaborate effectively with the implementing agencies?

4. Peer review and panel criteria for review of full proposals

At the full proposal stage, external peer reviewers and panellists will be asked to consider the following criteria:

1. **Scientific merit and innovation (study design):** Is the proposed project likely to make a significant contribution to evaluation knowledge and/or evaluation practice? Are the methods

the team propose to use innovative, yet feasible and well-considered? Does the proposal correctly assess the riskiness of its approach and articulate means to mitigate these risks? Are they grounded in appropriate literature? Does the project demonstrate sufficient innovation and is it addressing new areas for evaluation? Does it integrate perspectives from multiple research disciplines?

2. **Experience of team:** Does the team have the appropriate technical and disciplinary expertise to deliver the activities of the project to a high standard? Are the roles, responsibilities and expected contribution of staff members clearly set out?
3. **Quality of Southern Participation:** Do southern researchers have an intellectual leadership role? Where collaborations between northern and southern organisations are proposed, are these structured to enable genuine and effective partnership?
4. **Fit to CEDIL programmes of work:** Do the project's design, objectives and outputs fit well into the objectives and structure of CEDIL's programmes of work? How strongly will the activities and outputs advance the Centre's overall strategic objectives and make a substantive contribution to the wider work of CEDIL?
5. **Policy relevance:** Is the project likely to generate outputs that will be useful to policy makers, other development actors and evaluation practitioners? How significant is the potential impact of this on development outcomes?
6. **DFID specific relevance:** How well does the project address priority thematic areas and focus countries for DFID? Does the application include a convincing case that its outputs could be a) of interest to DFID and b) designed to enable use by DFID?
7. **Research uptake plans:** Does the proposal set out clear realistic plans for engaging with research users and maximising the usefulness of the project? Are there existing relationships with relevant stakeholders or plans to develop these and involve them in the delivery of the project? Are the intended outputs of the projects well designed to enable the effective use of findings in decision making? Are there plans to ensure methodological advancements can be adopted by (other) evaluation practitioners, through the production of guidelines or organisation of training events, for example?
8. **Management plans including safeguarding, fraud etc.:** Does the proposal include appropriate plans to ensure the project is managed effectively? Are risks clearly identified with appropriate mitigation plans? To what extent does the project generate any risks related to ethics, safeguarding, security, fraud etc.? Does the project team and their institution possess the capabilities, plans and policies to manage these effectively? Does the project have the access and authorisations it needs to undertake the proposed work, or the capability to get them? Are plans for ethical review and data management and security appropriate and robust?
9. **Value for money:** Is the budget appropriate for delivering the project and is expenditure planned efficiently, seeking to make savings where possible? Does the potential impact and value of the project's outputs justify the level of expenditure? Is the time committed to the project the team members appropriate for delivering the level and type of work required?