

STEG Larger Research Grants Applicant Guide

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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, policy-oriented 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 research themes and cross-cutting issues can be found in our Research Strategy.

Larger Research Grants

Summary

Larger Research Grants (LRGs) are awarded up to the value of **£100,000**. They are designed to fund research that cannot be covered by our Small Research Grants (SRGs). Applicants must justify the additional time and resources that they are requesting relative to the smaller SRGs, which are STEG's primary research funding vehicle.

LRGs can fund research assistance, data collection and/or purchase, and teaching buyouts, or relevant remuneration practices, for the principal investigator and co-investigators from partner institutions. 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 LRG Budget Guidelines, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

In principle, LRGs cover the same substantive areas, questions, and methodologies as SRGs. However, they are meant for projects, which have greater financial needs due to, for example, greater time requirements, data or research assistance costs. Commensurate with these greater budgets, they are expected to produce either multiple outputs or more fundamental contributions.

Eligibility

LRGs are designed to be **contracted directly with an institution**. The principal investigator for the project can select the institution; this does not need to be their 'home' institution.

Proposals may be submitted by 'eligible' institutions and organisations. An eligible institution:

- is a legally registered entity in its home country;
- is not bankrupt or being wound up, is not having its affairs administered by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, and is not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- has not been convicted by a judgement for fraud, corruption, involvement in criminal organisations, or any other criminal activity or breach of relevant law;
- has fulfilled its tax obligations, obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions, or obligations relating to the treatment of employees.

Joint proposals from consortia of institutions are accepted provided that they have an appropriate legal arrangement via an MOU or sub-contractual agreements between parties, with only one lead institution and one principal investigator. Partners are expected to sign a Consortium Agreement before the start of the project. CEPR is not a party to Consortium Agreements and does not establish the terms and conditions of such agreements.

In some (exceptional) circumstances, it may also be appropriate for CEPR to administer the project on behalf of the researcher, i.e. for CEPR to act as the host institution, for example, where a host institution is unable to satisfy the necessary eligibility or evaluation criteria, whilst the researchers' credentials and expertise are considered of sufficiently high quality to undertake the research.

While we try to remain as flexible as possible, the grant contracts were approved with the FCDO and therefore are non-negotiable. Please look at our contract template, available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#), before applying.

Doctoral Students

Doctoral students are not eligible to apply for LRGs as principal investigators, however, they may be part of the wider research team.

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.

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 STEG at steg@cepr.org.

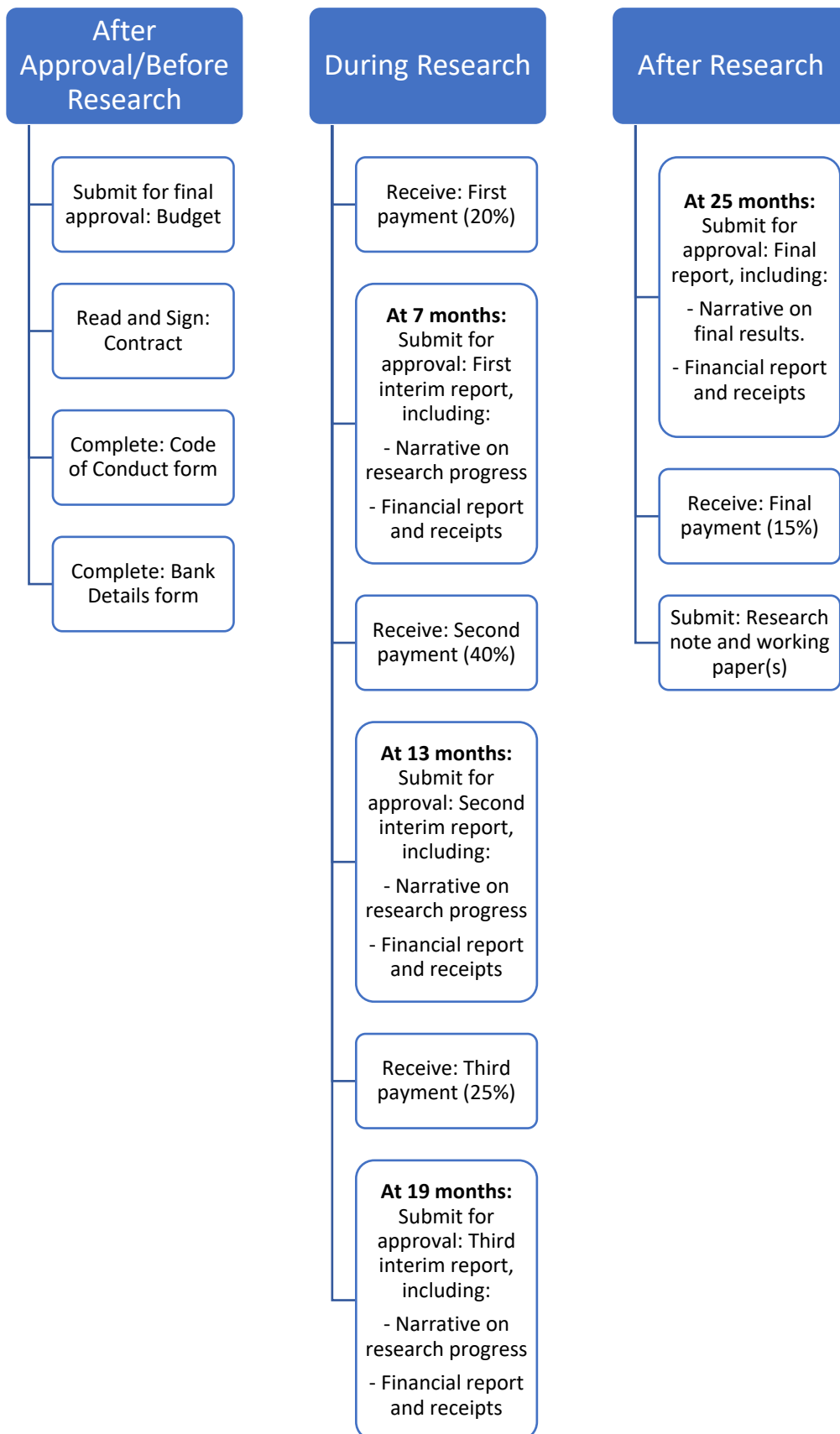
Call and Grant Timeline

We aim to issue funding decisions within five months of the deadline for receipt of proposals. 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. The call timeline is outlined below:

Month	Activity
Month 0	LRG call is issued
Month 2	Submission deadline for LRG call
Month 3	Stage one of evaluation
Month 4	Stage two of evaluation
Month 5	Stage three of evaluation
Month 6	Stage four of the evaluation
Month 7	Final decisions returned
Month 8	Contracts signed for successful projects and announcements made on the STEG website

An LRG is intended to be completed within 24 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

LRG proposals are considered via a four-stage procedure.

Stage 1: Proposals for submitted LRGs are first checked for completeness by the Project Implementation and Uptake Team, and the supporting documentation are verified. Proposals that are materially incomplete or cannot be verified 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 longlist, 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.

STEG LRG EVALUATION CRITERIA	Points
Quality of the proposed research	35
Significance and clarity of the research question	9
Connection to STEG's research themes and cross-cutting issues	9
Knowledge of relevant literature and clear statement of the research contribution	4
Clarity of the analytic approach and conceptual/theoretical framework	4
Methodology and its appropriateness to the research question	9
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	25
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
Justification for project duration and scale relative to a Small Research Grant <i>Note: SRGs are grants up to 12 months in duration and £25,000 in funding</i>	5
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

Stage 2: The CASC then passes on the longlisted proposals to external evaluators. In this stage, the evaluators review the three-page proposal summary, the CV of the principal investigator and the budget. After reviewing this material, evaluators are asked to provide a short review and rating of the proposals. Each proposal is sent to two evaluators unless the CASC decides that the proposal falls below a minimum quality threshold, in which case the proposal is sent to only one external evaluator. From these evaluations, a shortlist of proposals is decided.

Stage 3: Shortlisted proposals are each assigned to two evaluators for a more detailed review of the full proposal. In this stage, each evaluator reviews only one proposal and provides a full report on the entirety of the proposal. These longer reviews comprise:

- Grades for each of the evaluation criteria
- A short comment substantiating each grade

Stage 4: The CASC then appoints a Grants Selection Panel (GSP), including the second round of external evaluators, to discuss the shortlisted proposals together. Each panel member is responsible for leading the discussion of two or three proposals during the panel meeting and drafting an evaluation report that is returned to applicants as feedback at the end of the process.

After the GSP meeting, the STEG Research Director and CASC prepare and submit a finalised list of proposals to the Programme Management Group (PMG). The PMG considers the list and confirms the proposals to be funded.

Redressed Procedures

Researchers whose proposals are rejected in either stage 1 or stage 2 may appeal the decision to the STEG PMG.

How To Apply For An LRG

Preparing Your Application

You need to prepare the following material for your application for an LRG 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 (referencing, in particular, similar projects led by the investigators and any relevant publications)
- Proposal summary of no more than three pages, single-spaced, in PDF format. The proposal summary template can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#). This is a brief description of the project, and should include a discussion of each of the following elements:
 - Introduction
 - Methodology
 - Policy impact plan
 - Relevance to STEG
 - Expected outputs
- Proposal of 15 to 20 pages, single-spaced, in PDF format. The proposal template can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#). This is the main and complete description of the project, and should include a discussion of each of the following elements:
 - Scientific quality
 - Abstract
 - Motivation
 - Methodology
 - Relevance to STEG research agenda, research themes, and cross-cutting issues
 - Detailed workplan
 - Expected outputs
 - Contributions to expanding the field
 - Policy impact plan
 - Potential users
 - Potential uses
 - Outreach strategy
 - Policy outputs
 - Relevance to low-income countries
 - Monitoring impact
 - Implementation
 - Management structure
 - Dissemination
 - Budget narrative
 - Participants
 - Other funding
 - Ethics
 - Privacy
 - Intellectual property rights

- Open and enhanced access to research outputs
- 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.
- Coordinating institution verification documentation. Templates can be found at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).
 - Declaration of eligibility form – the representative of the organisation must sign a declaration that the organisation is not in any of the situations listed in the document.
 - Financial identification form (including copies of the most recent bank statement and a copy of the certified annual accounts) – this form should be filled and signed by the coordinator.
 - Legal representative form – this form should be filled and signed by the person legally authorised to represent your organisation. It must be printed on your organisation's letter head and include an official organisation stamp.
 - Legal status form – a copy of an official document (such as a company register) showing the name of the legal entity, the address of the head office and the registration number given to it by the national authorities. N.B. unlike the other three forms, there is no template provided by STEG for this document.
- Keywords

Our [LRG 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).

Eligibility, financial and legal documents submitted as part of a proposal may be passed to external advisors by the STEG Programme Team for verification. Candidates will be deemed to give their consent for such transmission and external verification through the submission of their proposal.

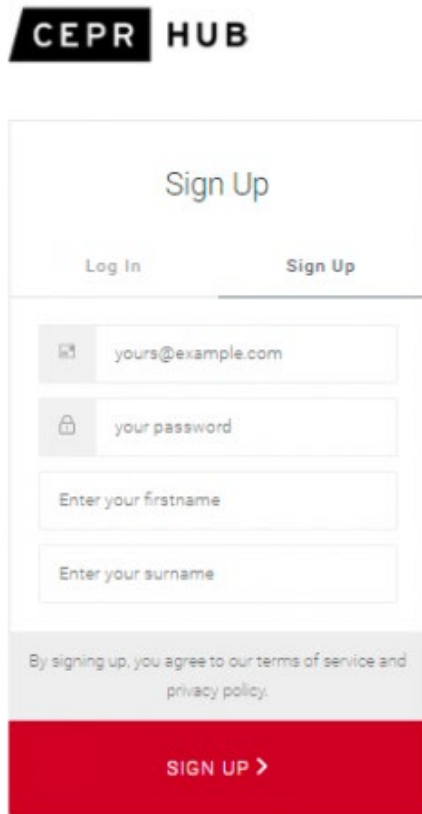
All costs incurred by the applicant in the course of the submission process/application procedure must be borne by the applicant. STEG does not provide financial assistance to applicants.

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.



The screenshot shows the 'Sign Up' page for CEPR HUB. At the top, there is a 'Log In' link and a 'Sign Up' link. Below these 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 the input fields is a grey box with the text 'By signing up, you agree to our terms of service and privacy policy.' At the bottom is a 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 LRG

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

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 LRGs is monitored through a system of interim and final reports. Three interim reports are required at six-month intervals during 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 reports 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- to five-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

LRGs also submit an impact report one year following the closing of the project. The impact report provides a measurement of and report on the dissemination and impact of the policy-relevant research carried out during, and in the year after, the project. The impact report should include:

- A non-technical summary of the project
- Engagement with policymakers
- Outputs and dissemination activities
- Project impact to date
- Future plans for policy impact

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

STEG LRG FAQs

Researchers

Does applying for a Small Research Grant preclude someone from also applying for a Larger Research Grant?

Applying for a SRG does not preclude one from applying for an LRG.

Who can apply for a Larger Research Grant?

While researchers apply for LRGs, the grants are issued through a contract between CEPR and a coordinating institution.

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 can select the coordinating institution, though this does not need to be their 'home' institution, and is responsible for the project implementation, should the application be successful.

Are there specific affiliation requirements?

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

Applications

How can I apply for a Larger Research Grant?

Applications for an LRG 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 are usually placed once every year and so it is best to submit proposals in the weeks/months leading up to the deadline. 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 LRG 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 LRGs.

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.

What information should be included in the Policy Impact Plan section?

Please specify the following information relating to the policy impact of your proposal:

1. Potential users
2. Potential uses
3. Outreach strategy
4. Policy outputs
5. Relevance to low-income countries
6. Monitoring impact

More information on each of these sections is provided on the LRG Proposal Template.

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 five 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 Larger Research Grant?

LRGs typically run for 24 months. Formal requests for extension can be submitted with sufficient justification.

What are the preferred outputs for the Larger 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 LRG Budget Guidelines are available at the bottom of this document or [this webpage](#).

Can I include a payment for myself in the budget?

Yes, but proposals will be judged on a 'value for money' criteria, therefore any payment should be adequately justified. As per the LRG Budget Guidelines, research personnel are eligible costs under STEG to the extent that the research staff are directly involved in providing services to the project. Budgets that include significant costs for research staff need to be able to justify these costs and demonstrate the research value. The total allocated to PIs, co-PIs and other senior experts must not

exceed £20,000 per project year. 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:

[Large Research Grants Homepage](#)

[CEPR Hub Application](#)

[LRG Proposal Summary Template](#)

[LRG Proposal Template](#)

Research Strategy (forthcoming)

[LRG Budget Template](#)

[LRG Budget Guidelines](#)

[LRG Declaration of Eligibility Form](#)

[LRG Financial Identification Form](#)

[LRG Legal Representative Form](#)

[LRG Contract Template](#)

[Interim Report Template](#)

[Final Report Template](#)

[Impact Report Template](#)

[CEPR Researchers Code of Conduct](#)

[CEPR Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[CEPR Fraud, Bribery & Anti-corruption Policy](#)

[CEPR Privacy Policy](#)