



Reducing Conflict and Improving Performance in the Economy

A CEPR / FCDO Research Initiative

COMPACT RESEARCH GRANT BUDGET GUIDELINES

2025 – 2029



Contents

Introduction	2
General Rules	2
Category: Data Acquisition/Field Work.....	3
Category: Travel	4
Category: Research Stipend	5
Category: Research Assistance	5
Category: Other	6
Non-eligible costs.....	6
Value for Money.....	7
Conflict of Interest:	7

Introduction

This document summarises the ReCIPE Budget Guidelines for Compact Research Grants ('the Guidelines'). The current version of the Guidelines is applicable to all open Compact Research Grants.

Applicants for Compact Grants are required to submit a detailed budget together with their project proposal. The Compact Grant budget template is available on the [ReCIPE website](#).

The ReCIPE Selection Committee reviews the scientific proposals as a whole. The budget included in the proposal is reviewed by the Selection Committee as part of its value for money consideration. **However, the final budget is subject to negotiation with the ReCIPE Grants Coordination Team once the proposal is recommended for funding.** During this process, the grantee may be required to make changes to the budget to submit a more detailed overview of projected expenditures and to remove items that are not considered as eligible costs. The budgets will again be evaluated on the basis of value for money. Applicants are advised to be mindful when preparing their budget of how to demonstrate value for money. Some brief guidance on this issue is provided in Section 9.

The formal approval of the budget proposal by the ReCIPE Grants Coordination Team is a prerequisite for the preparation and signature of the Funding Agreement between ReCIPE and the Applicant.

General Rules

- Grant funds contribute towards the costs of the research for which the funds were awarded and must be in accordance with the ReCIPE Budget Guidelines for Compact Grants.
- Funds must be used effectively and economically and any expenses incurred must be essential for the research for which the funds are awarded.
- Please ensure you only fill in those categories that are relevant to your project.
- The examples in the budget justification template are for guidance only. Item descriptions and justifications should be specifically tailored to your project and the examples given should be deleted from the final budget version.
- All expenditure should be listed in GB Pound Sterling (£). For the submission of financial reports, you will be required to use the exchange rate of the day the cost was incurred, i.e. the date on your receipts. Alternatively, the exchange rate of the last day of the reporting period could be applied to the entire report. Grantees should be consistent in their choice of exchange rate method. If an item requires a currency conversion, please apply the appropriate rate based on data obtainable from <https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.
- **Only for CRGs and PhDs that are contracted with an institution, the budget may include a contribution towards administrative charges or institutional overheads, reimbursed at a maximum flat rate of 20% of the total grant award, and added to the total grant award.** This includes management and administration costs including admin and management personnel costs; costs of office space, including rent, depreciation of buildings, equipment, electricity, water, gas,

maintenance, insurance; communication costs such as postage, and network connection charges; and any costs for an audit of project expenditure that your institution may be required to carry out to comply with its own auditing regulations.

- All costs must be broken down (i.e. per day/month or per item). Details must be included in the 'Justification' section, as well as in the budget narrative section of the proposal.
- Transfers of funds between budget headings are permitted. For deviations up to 20% of the original funds allocated within a budget heading, no approval is needed. For deviations over 20% from the approved budget, a formal request must be submitted. This formal request must include a narrative description and justification for the proposed changes.
- Unless specified in the call you are applying for, budgets should be in the range of £10,000 - £25,000.
- No additional funds will be made available to grantees to cover currency exchange losses over the course of the grant.
- When submitting financial reports, grantees will be required to submit all documents and receipts proving expenditure. Any costs found to be ineligible will be rejected.
- Applicants are advised to be mindful when preparing their budget of how to demonstrate value for money. Some brief guidance on this issue is provided in Section 9.
- CEPR reserves the right to request changes to or seek further clarification of the project budget after the grantee's proposal has been accepted by the ReCIPE Scientific Committee.
- Reverse-VAT is only eligible in exceptional cases and upon prior approval by CEPR Staff.

Category: Data Acquisition/Field Work

The items included in this category should relate only to expenditure that is directly linked to the scientific process of data acquisition.

Eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data purchase • Survey running costs (e.g. materials, communication tools) - survey costs should be justified and the method of selecting the firm conducting the survey should be described in the 'Justification' section of the budget. CEPR reserves the right to request copies of any institutional policy on procurement of any such services • Data entry • Data analysis tools (e.g. software) (Note: software costs can only be covered if they are directly related to the project. Software used for purposes outside the project will not be eligible).
-----------------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries for field staff (should be able to demonstrate that staff are directly involved in the acquisition of data) • Subscription costs for databases • Training costs (note: training costs can only be covered if the training is directly related to the project. General trainings are not eligible).
Non-eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs should not be included in this category even if the expenditure is incurred while collecting data. These items should instead be listed under the 'Travel' section • Equipment costs (e.g. phones and laptops) • Salaries for PI and Co-Is and Research Assistants

Category: Travel

This category should contain all items that relate to travel, accommodation, and meals. These can be linked to different parts of the project and should be split accordingly (e.g. travel to the field location, travel to conferences and workshops). Travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs should be listed as separate entries in the budget justification template and the total cost for each figure should be broken down e.g. cost per night x number of nights.

Applicants should actively seek value for money where it is practical and feasible, or if appropriate, the lowest price. All travel, accommodation, and subsistence claims must be supported by receipts and/or tickets.

Eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel (e.g. flights, trains, taxis, car rental, fuel) • Meals and accommodation • Note: Conference-related travel costs can only be included if the PIs are selected to present their ReCIPE project at the conference and the expenditure for the conference is incurred within the contract dates. • Visa costs directly related to travel for the project.
Non-eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see below

Please note that CEPR will only reimburse economy-class flights and second-class train travel. CEPR requests that participants electing to travel by train must take advantage of early booking fares where this is cheaper than purchasing tickets near to departure. Where travel by public transport is impossible or impractical, applicants may request funding for travelling by car. Note that funding is limited to renting costs of the vehicle, and expenses for fuel and parking. Please also note that ReCIPE does not fund flights between developed countries unless the trip has to do directly with the project (for example, if the project is being presented at a conference).

Expenses should be recorded including the start and end points of the journey (addresses or landmarks) and the number of miles travelled. Miles can be reimbursed at 45p per mile up to 10,000 miles. Above 10,000, miles are reimbursed at 25p a mile. More information on mileage allowance can be found [here](#).

When overnight accommodation is required, it is expected that applicants will obtain accommodation at the most economical rate available. Applicants may claim the cost of meals when it is necessary for them to stay in overnight accommodation provided they are of a reasonable cost.

Please note that the prices entered for accommodation and subsistence should not exceed reasonable values. Use [UK Gov Subsistence rates](#) to see what such values are in each country.

Category: Research Stipend

This category should include research stipends to be paid directly to the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigators (Co-I). The daily rate and number of days to be charged for the research stipend must be supplied for each researcher.

Eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily rate for the Principal Investigator’s research stipend • Daily rate for the Co-Investigator’s research stipend
Non-eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees paid to Research Assistants and support staff • Expenses for the PI and Co-I (e.g. travel, meals) • Recruitment costs

Research Stipends are eligible costs under ReCIPE to the extent that PI’s and Co-I’s 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 working in upper-middle and high-income countries are not funded under the CRG 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 value for money and may require further justification or amendments before approval.

If difficult to acquire for reporting purposes, receipts for the research stipend can come in the form of a signed and dated letter stating the hours worked and the rate of pay.

Category: Research Assistance

This category relates to the costs incurred for employing Research Assistants and academic support staff. The daily rate for each Research Assistant and the number of days to be spent on the project must be supplied.

Eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily rate for Research Assistants and support staff
Non-eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal Investigator’s research stipend • The Co-Investigator’s research stipend • Costs for field staff • Recruitment costs

Research personnel are eligible costs under ReCIPE to the extent that the research staff are directly involved in providing services to the project. All research personnel costs will be evaluated for value for money and may require further justification or amendments before being approved by CEPR.

For both Research Stipend and Research Assistance categories, only actual hours/days worked by the personnel exclusively on the project may be charged. If the person does not work exclusively on the project, is working part-time or working only part of the year on the project, a *pro rata* calculation must be made based on the hours/days worked on the project.

Research stipend and assistance costs should be recorded through timesheets for all employees working on the project. Once declared, the personnel costs cannot be adjusted/changed due to a re-calculation of the daily rate. CEPR reserves the right to ask for proof of expenditure in the form of payslips and payroll data, or other means of tracking personnel costs such as signed statements from personnel confirming receipt of money.

Category: Other

This category should contain all project-related costs that do not fit into the other categories. They must be clearly defined and described.

It is expected that researchers and institutions will 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 there is a purchase limit.

Eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment (e.g. notebooks, online storage, support software) – laptop and tablet costs are limited to £500. • Tablet rental costs may be eligible if the rate is reasonable and if the tablet(s) are necessary to carry out the project. • Dissemination activities (including venue hire, catering, speakers’ honoraria (where applicable), travel and accommodation of participants (when absolutely necessary), conference fees for conferences where PIs are accepted to present) • Publication costs (including printing workshop/conference materials, costs related to the publication of research results, costs associated with open access of outputs)
Non-eligible costs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect costs (e.g. indirect taxes and currency exchange/transaction fees) • Contingency costs

Category: Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those eligible costs which cannot be directly attributed to the project, but which are incurred under the project. **Indirect costs will be automatically calculated as a**

20% maximum flat rate of the total eligible direct costs and added to the total grant award only for CRGs and PhDs that are contracted with an institution.

These costs include building costs, electricity/gas/water, maintenance, insurance, office equipment, communication costs and postage as well as costs of general management and administration of the grants and project audit.

The portion of funds requested should be proportionate to the value of the project in relation to the partners' other income.

Non-eligible costs

The following costs cannot be reimbursed by ReCIPE:

- Any identifiable indirect taxes (e.g. reverse VAT);
- Interest owed;
- Provisions for potential future losses;
- Exchange losses;
- Excessive expenditure;
- Transaction fees/international transfer;
- Fringe benefits which are not mandated by law in the hiring country; and
- Recruitment costs.

Value for Money

Value for money (VFM) means that we maximise the impact of each pound spent to improve people's lives. VFM does not simply mean minimising the cost of the project but also involves making judgements about the results we expect to achieve. In this regard, the 3Es framework may be helpful:

- **Economy** Does the proposal plan to buy inputs of the appropriate quality at the right price? (i.e. cost minimisation)
- **Efficiency:** How well does the proposal plan to convert inputs into outputs? (i.e. is the value of the final research output high relative to the cost)
- **Effectiveness:** How well are the outputs from an intervention achieving the desired policy outcome and, ultimately, poverty reduction? (i.e. is the value of the final outcome high relative to the cost)

The VFM of proposals will be assessed on these three criteria. It is important to note that while the research output is substantially under the control of the research team, it is recognised that the policy outcome and its ultimate impact on poverty reduction are subject to many other factors. Nevertheless, evaluators will assess the quality and credibility of the policy impact plan to judge whether the project is likely to be effective in the sense of achieving policy change.

Conflict of Interest:

Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

A 'conflict of interest' exists if shared interests:

- influenced the consultants/subcontractor/partner organisation's selection/award procedure;
- influenced the consultants/subcontractor price and this does not correspond to the market price; or
- affected the project's performance, as measured by the appropriate quality standards.

If there is a (risk of) conflict of interests, the applicant must inform CEPR so that steps can be taken to resolve or avoid it.

If you have any questions, please contact the ReCIPE Team at recipe@cepr.org.