

## Guideline for Applicants

### Research Initiative on Development, Governance, and Economy (RIDGE)

#### Introduction

The Research Initiative on Development, Governance, and Economy (RIDGE) is a unique collaboration between BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Policy Research Institute (PRI), and Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), funded by UK International Development from the UK government. RIDGE aims to nurture the next generation of social science researchers in Bangladesh through funding, mentorship, and training to generate policy-relevant insights and build the skills required to produce high-quality research that informs the design of policies aimed at improving the lives of Bangladeshi citizens.

#### Objective

RIDGE will focus on supporting young researchers, creating a unique opportunity for them to engage with secondary data in transformative ways. Secondary data, especially novel sources such as administrative data from government agencies or private sources, often require a combination of technical expertise, creativity, and contextual knowledge to analyze effectively. By prioritizing projects that explore new and innovative uses of such data, RIDGE enables young researchers to build their capacity in handling complex datasets, employing cutting-edge methodologies, and addressing critical policy questions.

This emphasis on young researchers reflects the program's broader mission to develop a pipeline of skilled social scientists capable of shaping the future of evidence-based policymaking in Bangladesh. Young researchers often bring fresh perspectives, energy, and a willingness to experiment with unconventional approaches—qualities that are essential when working with novel secondary data. By offering funding, training, and mentorship, RIDGE not only equips these researchers with the tools they need to succeed but also encourages them to contribute to a culture of innovative, data-driven policymaking.

#### Thematic Areas

Twelve thematic areas have been identified to guide researchers in shaping their proposals. Each theme includes examples of possible research areas to illustrate the nature of questions that fit within the broader theme. These examples are meant to support—not limit—researchers in developing their research questions. Researchers are encouraged to explore other relevant topics that align with the overall themes. Proposals should engage with one or more of the thematic areas, address important policy challenges, and contribute to both academic research and policy discussions.

1. **Labor Markets and Employment** (Examples: Geographic mobility and labor market adjustment mechanisms; How workers migrate in response to economic shocks using

migration and employment datasets; Gig economy's impact on traditional employment relationships; Rural-urban migration patterns and regional wage differentials).

2. **Monetary Policy, Finance and Banking** (Examples: Central bank communication effects on market expectations; Exchange rate pass-through to domestic prices; Financial inclusion's impact on economic development; Study access effects through account ownership surveys; Access to credit in rural and hard to reach areas and their roles in economics development).
3. **Fiscal Policy and Public Finance** (Examples: Estimate government spending multipliers using expenditure and GDP data across economic conditions; Public debt sustainability across institutional frameworks; Domestic resource and tax mobilization).
4. **International Trade and Development** (Examples: Impacts of trade policies on bilateral trade flows and supply chains; Foreign direct investment patterns and economic growth; Exchange rate volatility effects on trade volumes).
5. **Economic Growth and Productivity** (Examples: Sectoral productivity growth patterns; Innovation spillovers across industries; Evaluate public capital effectiveness using investment data and regional growth outcomes; Analyze education's economic impact through administrative education and wage records).
6. **Poverty and Inequality** (Examples: Intergenerational mobility patterns; Social safety net effectiveness; Assess program impacts through administrative participation data).
7. **Energy, Environmental Economics and Climate Change** (Examples: Study energy price effects on labor markets using price indices and job data; Carbon pricing policies' macroeconomic effects; Renewable energy adoption and regional economic development; Energy efficiency improvements and total factor productivity).
8. **Technology and Digital Economy** (Examples: Automation's impact on employment across skill levels; E-commerce growth effects on retail employment; Study online retail impacts using census business data).
9. **Health Economics and Human Capital** (Examples: Healthcare expenditure trends and economic growth; Study health crisis impacts through employment data).
10. **Gender, Care Work and Education** (Example: Implications of including unpaid care work in GDP).
11. **Governance and Institutions** (Examples: Government efficiency measures and economic growth; Corruption perception impacts on foreign investment).
12. **Agricultural Productivity, Food Security and Nutrition** (Examples: Farm Productivity, technology choice, value chain in agriculture, non-crop sector).

## Eligibility

- All researchers must be Bangladeshi nationals currently residing in Bangladesh and must remain inside Bangladesh until the completion of the assignment.
- All researchers must be aged 35 years old or below.
- Researchers may be:

- o Currently enrolled in a bachelor's, master's, or PhD program at a recognized university in Bangladesh;
- o Graduates of a bachelor's, master's, or PhD program; or
- o Employed by a higher education institution, research organization, or other relevant institutions in Bangladesh.
- Independent researchers who are not affiliated with any institution are also welcome to apply. However, preference will be given to researchers with institutional affiliations.
- If the Principal Investigator (PI) is an undergraduate student, they must have completed at least 75% of their degree requirements or be in their final year of study.
- Researchers within the same team may be affiliated with different organizations or studying at different universities.
- The same researcher(s) may submit multiple applications; however, only one proposal per researcher(s) may be selected for funding.

## Application Process

Interested researchers must submit their EOI application through the designated [Google Form](#). All sections of the form should be accurately filled out, and the required supporting documents must be uploaded as part of the submission. It is important to review all information carefully before final submission to ensure completeness and accuracy.

## Application Process

The selection process for the award consists of three stages: **an initial screening, a proposal development stage, and a final selection.**

In the **initial screening stage**, the EOI applications will first undergo a desk review. EOI applications meeting the required criteria will then undergo technical evaluation to assess the policy relevance, feasibility, and quality of research approach. Based on this review, 8-10 applications will be shortlisted and will undergo a due diligence check before proceeding to the proposal development stage.

In the **proposal development** stage, shortlisted researchers will be paired with an expert mentor to refine their research idea and develop a full research proposal in alignment with the program's objectives. They will also be provided an opportunity to participate in a workshop on proposal development to enhance the quality of their proposal.

**In the final selection stage**, researchers will submit their completed proposals and budgets. Proposals will be evaluated in two steps: an external review by a pool of academicians, followed by in-person presentations to the Executive Directors of BIGD, CPD, PRI and RAPID. Up to 4-5 highest-scoring proposals based on this screening will be awarded funding to support their research and implementation in this round of the RIDGE initiative.

## Mentorship Support

Shortlisted researchers will receive dedicated mentorship throughout both the proposal development and programme stages to ensure continuous academic and professional development. Researchers will be paired with experienced mentors whose expertise aligns with their proposed research area. This tailored mentorship will include regular guidance, feedback on research progress and advice on methodological approaches. This aims to strengthen the candidates research capabilities and enhance the quality of their work.

## Training Opportunities:

RIDGE will organize three workshops to support researchers throughout the proposal development and programme stages. The tentative workshop topics are as follows:

- 1. Proposal Development:** This workshop will offer training in developing effective research proposals using secondary data to address policy issues in Bangladesh.
- 2. Research Methodology:** This workshop will aim to equip participants with practical knowledge on conducting quantitative studies using secondary data.
- 3. Writing Academic Papers with Secondary and Administrative Data:** This workshop will be designed to train the awarded grantees to prepare publishable academic papers using secondary data from public sources and administrative records.

Please note that the organizers have the authority to change the content and timeline of the workshops.

## Funding Support:

In this round, RIDGE aims to support 4-5 awardees, each receiving a grant of up to BDT 1,250,000 (including VAT and tax). These funds are intended to support research projects over a one-year period.

## Award Disbursement & Deliverables:

The award prize will be disbursed in three installments in line with timely submission of required deliverables, which include a research paper and an op-ed/blog-post.

## Timeline:

The timeline may change due to unforeseen situations and decisions by the organizers.

- RIDGE EOI Announcement - June 15, 2025
- Last date to submit EOI - August 15, 2025
- Announcement of the shortlisted candidates - September 2025



*Last updated: 24 June 2025*

- Submission of final proposal and budget - December 2025
- Announcement of final awardees - January 2026
- Research activities begin – February, 2026

Contact Details:

For any questions or further information regarding the RIDGE Initiative, please contact:  
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