

Advanced Policy Focused-Poverty Analysis Project in Zimbabwe 2nd Call for Proposals, September 2021 – June 2022

Introduction

The World Bank in partnership with the Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU) is calling for the second Call for research proposal for Advanced Policy Focused Poverty Analysis in Zimbabwe. The objective of the second call for research proposals is to produce research papers on selected topics which will comprise background material for Zimbabwe Poverty Assessment. This call also seeks to strengthen the capacity of national research community to conduct high-quality research on topics of policy relevance.

Scope of Research

The policy papers developed under this round will be a part of the Zimbabwe Poverty Assessment, led by the World Bank, which will synthesize existing research on topics related to poverty and vulnerability as well as carry out new analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the drivers of an increase in poverty in Zimbabwe and the pathways out of poverty. The poverty assessment will comprise background chapters on the following thematic areas: (i) climate shocks, agricultural productivity, and poverty; (ii) urban-rural linkages, structural transformation, and off-farm labor markets; and (iii) poverty and equity implications of fiscal and social policies. Each research team will be matched with a team of senior technical advisor with subject-matter expertise.

The following are the proposed problem statements for proposal solicitation under the second call for proposals. Where applicable, disaggregated analysis must be performed on population subgroups that are vulnerable, marginalized, and historically excluded from the mainstream development process. Strategies informed by the analysis to build back better post COVID 19 pandemic need to be highlighted. In developing research proposals researchers need to also demonstrate how the analysis will inform the implementation of the National Development Strategy (NDS1)¹ within the specific area of focus.

A. Climate shocks, agricultural vulnerability, and poverty

1. The papers under this thematic area will investigate how productive and how resilient to climate shocks are different types of farmlands in Zimbabwe, i.e., smallholder farms in communal areas, resettled farms (A1 and A2 farms), and large- and small-scale commercial farms.

1

http://www.zimtreasury.gov.zw/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=64&Itemid=789

2. Agricultural production in Zimbabwe remains highly dependent on climate, with farming relying primarily on natural rainfall, low technology production base, low adaptive capacity, and large seasonal climatic variability. The papers under this thematic area will analyze the impact of climate shocks on agricultural yield, consumption, and poverty, and the factors (such as access to savings, credit, and insurance products for ex-ante and ex-post risk management) or household choices that mitigate the impact of shocks.

B. Urban-rural linkage, structural transformation, and off-farm jobs

3. According to the recent Zimbabwe Urbanization Review, urbanization is not playing as big of a role as it could in raising incomes because of rigidities in land and housing markets. Most of the urban expansion has been new development in urban periphery, disconnected from existing urban agglomeration. Living in peripheral urban locations with poor connection to the city center can mean exclusion from urban facilities, services, and employment. This may increase the ranks of urban poor, living in poor conditions and working in low value-added, precarious, informal jobs. The papers under this thematic area will investigate the relationship between urban to rural migration (structural regression/transformation); proximity to urban centers and outcomes such as employment, nature of work, income, consumption, and poverty.
4. Evidence from some settings (e.g., [India](#), [Ghana](#)) shows that urbanization reduces rural poverty through backward linkages such as higher demand for primary products due to changes in urban consumption patterns and diet, remittances, increase in rural farm wages, and a switch to non-farm employment in rural areas. But Zimbabwe has an unusual pattern of settlement owing to its colonial history, confining rural households in densely populated but isolated pockets, away from the main infrastructure networks ([World Bank, 2020](#)). Against this background, the papers under this thematic area will explore what effect urbanization has on rural poverty in Zimbabwe and the channels of operation.

C. Role of fiscal and social policies in reducing poverty and vulnerability

5. Given the growing frequency and severity of climate shocks and other shocks such as pandemics and economic crises, the need for a shock-responsive social protection system that can flexibly respond to the altered circumstances by expanding the reach to the most vulnerable or temporarily increasing the level of support is becoming clearer. The papers under this thematic area will assess the shock-responsiveness of Zimbabwe's social safety net system.
6. Over the years, government has adopted an array of fiscal and social policies to foster economic development, including the recent fiscal consolidation measures such as the removal of subsidies on maize, wheat, fuel, electricity among other things. However, fiscal and social policies have potential to accentuate or ameliorate poverty. The papers under this thematic area need to interrogate the impact of fiscal and social policies (including social protection, health and education) in reducing poverty and vulnerability.

Eligibility

While the Call is open to Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean researchers, priority will be given to research teams that are led by seasoned Zimbabwean researchers with a track record of research and publications in the selected thematic area. Priority will also be given to teams that collaborate with an official from ZIMSTAT and an official from a relevant government Ministry. This will facilitate partnerships between researchers and the government officials in the production of policy relevant research outputs. Similarly, involving ZIMSTAT officials in the research team will help promote a good understanding of the data, among others.

Datasets

This Call is leveraging the use of anonymized household survey micro-data that are now available from ZIMSTAT, by researchers to produce quality research papers on selected topics. ZIMSTAT has conducted a consistent effort to anonymize and prepare micro-data which include the PICES 2011/12, the PICES 2017 and its Agricultural Productivity Module and the mini-PICES 2019. The PICES surveys are multiple topic household surveys and cover demographics, migration, employment, education, health, access to government and NGO support programs, food and non-food consumption and income. Data from various labor force surveys (LFS) as well as the micro-data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019 are also available. A recently completed spatial database of ward level poverty data, based on the poverty mapping exercise of 2012, as well as ward level summaries of census variables from the 2002 and 2012 can also be accessed. In addition, for some analyses, there may be scope to combine geospatial datasets with household surveys.

Application Process and the Deadline

This Call is based on a one step application process which involves the preparation of a proposal. The best proposal for each research question will be selected for funding. More than one proposal for the same research question may be selected if they approach the question using sufficiently different methodology and data. The technical advisors will also select the best proposal from the pool of applications using the following rubric.

Literature review (20%)	Detailed methodology and data sets to be used (40%)	Policy Focus of the Research (20%)	Work programme, timelines and allocation of tasks (20%)
Relevance of the theoretical and empirical literature cited to the proposed study (20%)	Relevance and robustness of methodology in answering the research questions and achieving research objectives (20%) Demonstration of familiarity of the requisite data sets to be used in the study (10%), Evidence that the data is robust enough for the proposed analysis (10%);	Experience in the Research Team to Articulate Policy (20%)	Clearly spelt timelines falling within the project time frame (10%) Balance in allocation of Tasks to ensure quality and timely output (10 %)

Research teams whose proposal is selected will receive detailed feedback on methodology, empirical strategy, data source, and other components of the paper from the technical advisors.

Timeline

The tentative timeline of activities is as follows:

- Mid-October: Selection of proposals and grant award
- End-November: Progress update
- End-February: First draft due for internal review and comments
- Mid-March: Draft circulated to peer reviewers for comments
- End-April: Revised final draft due for final approval

Research Proposal Requirements

Each research proposal, not exceeding 15 pages, should include the following:

- i) Literature Review: A brief review of literature to demonstrate the team's familiarity with the topic and prior research in the area
- ii) Methodology and Data: A description of how the research objectives are to be achieved. Researchers intending to draw on other data sets beyond the available national household data sets must demonstrate availability and access to the requisite data required for the study.
- iii) Proposed research team and Statement of Qualification and Current CV(s) for each member (as annexes). Female researchers in particular are encouraged to apply.
- iv) Detailed Budget: Estimated expenditure by major line items. The total budget should not exceed US\$10,000.

Expected Outputs

A high quality and policy relevant research paper publishable as a working paper. A policy brief of no more than 5 pages should also be produced as well as a set of powerpoint slides of maximum 20 slides.

Submission Requirements and Key Dates

Proposals should be sent to ZEPARU on the following email address: administration@zeparu.co.zw. Research Teams with selected proposals will be notified by end-October 2021 by email. The deadline for submission of the proposal is **October 22, 2021**.