India Sustainable Growth Hub
Call for proposals 2025

Information session for ISGH call for proposals

Speakers

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ISGH Call for Proposals

Open Day

Outline

- ISGH overview
- Call for proposal details
- Tips for writing a good research proposal
- FAQs
- Open Q&A

Overview

India at a glance:

- Aspirational growth of 8% and wants to become developed by 2047
- How does India get 8% growth in a sustainable way?
- How do we develop and de-carbonize at the same time ?
- ISGH hopes to contribute to these objectives through rigorous research and policy dissemination

Overview

Path is fraught with challenges

- India is still heavily a fossil fuel economy
- Emission reductions means phasing out coal which may not be feasible right now
- Carbonizing will preceed de-carbonizing (at 2800 USD per capita, rising per – capita income implies that the demand for energy will increase)

Overview

- Common developing country view is that if the work on combating poverty is not finished, this should not clash with the green agenda
- More efforts in adaptation because economic development matters
- India uniquely vulnerable to climate change

Overview

Financing Net Zero targets along with increasing prosperity a big challenge

- How can reduction targets be financed ?
- Short term NDC Commitments by 2030 require approx. USD 2.5 Trillion
- Long Term Net Zero Commitments (by 2070) require approx. USD 10-17 Trill
- North-South flows only USD 10 billion annually
- Big funding gaps: Bond finance ? International situation ? Bond ratings ? Domestic vs. Int. ?

Overview

- The government of India has enacted several policies to foster long term sustainable growth
- India's emission intensity of GDP will possibly see a reduction by in 2030 by 50% relative to 2005
- 50% of India's electric generating capacity to come from sources other than fossil fuels likely to be met by 2030 (500GW installed by 2030)

Overview

- Investment will be the core of the new growth story.
- Climate action will drive growth
- Investment in sustainable infra and other assets can boost short run demand and growth, sharpen supply and efficiency
- Trade-offs
  - Where are the win-win opportunities ?
  - Do you fund the improvement in the “bad” first and then fund the “good” ?
  - But improvements in the “bad” first will delay the transition

ISGH mission

- ISGH inputs will be critical to the growth-sustainability-finance debate in India
- ISGH uniquely posed to leverage top research (empirical and theory) to influence policy in the Government, Reserve Bank, Ministries.
- ISGH to provide regular input into the (G20, COPs, etc)

ISGH activities

- Regular Academic Seminars / Webinars with top climate experts to address India's challenges
- Discussions with key policy makers
- Research in top economic journals
- Simplified policy notes to make technical research accessible
- Annual Conference

ISGH research priorities

- **Sustainable Growth**: How can India continue to grow rapidly while protecting its environment?
- **Why it matters:**
  - Environmental stress now constraining India's growth
  - Severe air pollution harming health & productivity
  - Groundwater depletion and persistent sanitation challenges
  - Escalating impacts of climate change:
    - Floods
    - Heatwaves
    - Glacial melt
    - Monsoon disruption

ISGH research priorities

- **Key Research Themes within Sustainable Growth:**
  - **Firms, Trade, and Productivity:** Boost productivity through firm innovation, market efficiency, and green practices.
  - **State Effectiveness:** Strengthen state capabilities for inclusive growth and address environmental challenges.
  - **Cities:** Increase urban productivity and inclusiveness, focusing on resilience to climate change.
  - **Energy and Environment:** Improve energy access and support the transition to clean, sustainable energy.
  - **Climate change and Macroeconomics:** Explore the macroeconomic risks and opportunities of climate change to support growth, stability, and the green transition.
  - **Data and Methods:** Develop novel, policy-relevant datasets and methods to advance research across priority areas, with an emphasis on reusability and broad policy value.

Call for proposals

- **Key Dates:**
  - Call closes: 6 Jul., 11:59pm IST
  - Applicants notified: Aug. 2025
  - Project start date: from 1 Sep. 2025
  - Project end date: by 31 Dec. 2026

- **Eligibility Criteria:**
  - The Lead PI must be based in India and affiliated with an Indian institution.
  - The contracting institution must be a registered entity in India.
  - The Lead PI should hold or be pursuing a PhD.
  - Research should align with ISGH's thematic priorities.

Call for proposals

- **Full grants vs small research grants:** For both types, projects must have strong policy relevance, coupled with robust research methods.
  - Full research grants (limit is GBP 40,000)
  - Exploratory or pilot grants (limit is GBP 15,000)
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Alignment with ISGH research priorities, quality of research design, potential for policy and academic impact, engagement with local institutions, and value for money.

Tips for preparing your proposal

What makes a compelling proposal?

- Clear, precise & focused research question
- Expands our knowledge base on a topic, even if only in a small way
- Convincing & feasible methodology
- Novel data
- Partnerships with government or important stakeholders
- Structured and organised proposal
- Ambition

Defining a research question (good example #1)

“What is the impact of the EU’s carbon pricing (CBAM) on manufacturing industries in India’s heavy industry belt?”

- **Focused:** Targets a clear intervention and outcome in a specific context.
- **Policy relevant:** Addresses a significant policy issue, with potential to inform strategies.
- **Clarity and precision:** Clear and focused on a single, well-defined issue.
- **Empirically testable:** Measurable outcomes allow for robust analysis.
- **Grounded in literature:** Builds on existing research while addressing a specific gap.

Defining a research question (bad example)

"How can education improve economic development in India?“

- **Broad and unfocused:** Lacks specificity, addressing multiple broad topics.
- **Weak policy relevance:** Too general to provide actionable insights for policymakers.
- **Lacks precision:** Vague and open-ended, making it difficult to focus the research.
- **Difficult to test:** Broad scope makes it hard to measure outcomes.
- **Not grounded in specific literature:** Fails to build on or address specific gaps in existing research.

FAQs

Frequently asked questions

1. Can anyone apply under the call for proposals, or are there any specific requirements for researchers?

2. Should all (or any) PI/co-PIs be based in the country of research?

3. Does the research need to be focused in India, or can it be conducted in any country? Does the IGC fund research in multiple countries?

4. Should the managing institution be based in the country of research?

Frequently asked questions

4. Does ISGH fund projects in health or education? Do I have to follow the ISGH research priorities?

5. Do you only accept projects that involve RCTs?

6. Should I apply for the small or full research grant?

7. What is ISGH's policy on paying fees for researchers?

Contacts

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