



International
Growth Centre

International Growth Centre
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IGC Research Priorities

The International Growth Centre (IGC) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. We seek to fund high-quality research projects relevant to economic growth and development in developing countries through our call for proposals, which is currently open for anyone to apply. The IGC supports research focused on four main themes which are essential to economic growth: (i) State Effectiveness, (ii) Firm Capabilities, (iii) Cities, and (iv) Energy.

The IGC supports research through its two programmes. **The Research Programme** is primarily focused on the production of cutting-edge and policy-relevant academic research with potential to inform effective policymaking in the global south. **The Country Programme** commissions high-quality research with the specific policy needs of the IGC's partner countries.¹

While the IGC welcomes proposals on all aspects of its four themes, it is particularly interested in the areas summarised below. For more details, we encourage applicants to read IGC's evidence papers, which summarize current evidence and gaps in knowledge on each of these themes and can be found on our website [here](#). See [here](#) for examples of projects IGC has funded in the past.

State Effectiveness

The IGC seeks to investigate how to increase the capacity of the public sector to deliver the public goods necessary for firms to grow, as well as ways to help the state raise the resources necessary to its functioning. In addition, it also would like to examine political institutions, since they provide the framework in which policy-making takes place. Successful political institutions help polities ameliorate broader social tensions and focus government action towards the public good. This requires research not only on public organization and public finance, but also on governance and political economy.

There are major questions in public organisation which concern not only how to incentivize existing bureaucrats, but also how to select individuals who are best suited to the tasks they need to perform. There are significant research gaps on topics such as recruitment strategies and civil servants' traits, job attributes and performance, incentive design, and monitoring. With regard to public finance, the IGC would like to sponsor research on tax policy and optimal tax design, as well as work on the determinants of fiscal capacity and on ways to improve it. Issues such as tax evasion, avoidance, and informality are central here. Of equal importance is the efficient taxation of natural resources.

Turning to broader issues around political institutions, they might not provide the incentives necessary for optimal delivery of public services. For instance, improved understanding of the processes of local decision making is needed if the promise of decentralization as an avenue to increase the accountability and efficiency of the state is to be fulfilled. The IGC's goal is to support work that examines existing institutional structures, as well as evidence-based policy guidance for new institutional designs for the public sector. In particular, the IGC would like to sponsor research that sheds light on the source of political failure, including issues related to political accountability (elections, political competition, information provision) and aggregation of societal preferences (socio-economic or ethnic conflict).

¹ IGC's partner countries include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India (Central and Bihar), Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

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