



APPLY FOR
RESEARCH GRANT

CGP 6.0

CALL FOR RESEARCH
PROPOSALS

RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND ADVANCEMENT
RASTA Competitive Grants Programme for Policy-oriented Research
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad
rasta.pide.org.pk



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The '*Research for Social Transformation and Advancement*' (RASTA) is the largest economics and public policy research grants programme in Pakistan. RASTA's mission is to develop an extensive research network of academia and think tanks across Pakistan producing high-quality, evidence-based policy research to inform Pakistan's public policy process. Started in October 2020, today RASTA Network is comprised of 60+ universities and think tanks, 10+ international institutes, and 2,300+ researchers, academicians, practitioners, and professionals.

The objectives of RASTA programme are to:

- i Reduce research-policy gap by stimulating economic and social science research and debate across Pakistan.
- ii Provide a knowledge-sharing/generating platform where different actors can present and share evidence-based research to inform decision-making in the government.
- iii Revisit the public policy agenda in line with the evidence produced in this programme.
- iv Build capacity and improve policymaking and implementation by involving and engaging local universities, think tanks, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

With these objectives, the programme seeks to develop local thought communities and generate knowledge. Substantial outputs will be completed in critical areas of public policy that will produce insightful research and facilitate goals that the Government wants to achieve according to its vision. So far, RASTA has awarded 64 research projects in five rounds of the Competitive Grants Programme (CGP) worth PKR 159 million; of these, 48 research projects have been completed. More information about RASTA is available at rasta.pide.org.pk

This is the **Sixth Call for Research Proposals** under the **Competitive Grants Programme (CGP 6.0)**. Research proposals are invited on five broad themes around "*Islaah*" اصلاح (means reform, correction). It is an intellectual drive by PIDE that encapsulates the ideals of "Rethink, Reform, and Revive". It is a conscious effort and rigorous drive to engage in critical reflection, share insights, and propose pragmatic recommendations for fixing socio-economic and public policy problems the country is facing, leading it to the path of progress and prosperity.

The themes/sub-themes of this call, detailed grant description, application guidelines, and review process are presented in the following sections.



RASTA CGP 6.0 CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

RASTA Competitive Grants Programme (CGP) 6.0 invites research proposals on the following themes/topics



I. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

- Public Expenditure Review & Rationalization
- Debt Management: Immediate Interventions
- Circular Debt Management: Immediate Reforms
- Fiscal Decentralisation: Strengthening the 18th Constitutional Amendment Agenda
- Evaluations of PSDP/ADP Development Projects/ Programmes/ Government Initiatives



II. PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

- Governance Reform – Permission Economy
- Restructuring State-owned Enterprises
- Public Private Partnerships
- Government Footprint



III. BUSINESS, INVESTMENT AND EXPORTS

- Domestic Commerce
- Investment Opportunities
- Compliance & Regulations
- Tech for Competition and Growth



IV. INSTITUTIONS

- Elections and Democracy: National, Provincial, and Local
- Making Parliament Relevant: Constitution, Amendments, Debates, Standing Committees, Public Interest, and Participation

- Higher Education: Expansion, Technology, Training, and Quality
- Local Social Safety Networks



V. GIG ECONOMY

- Online Freelancing: Experience and Potential
- Internet for All
- Tech Skills for Freelancing Opportunities
- Policy Communication and Influence through Social Media

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: RASTA CGP 6.0 invites research proposals on the above-listed research themes/sub-themes. Proposed studies must identify key policy issues and public policy decisions in Pakistan; assess the outcomes of those decisions empirically; evaluate constraints to policy reform; and examine alternative policy recommendations to enhance their impact. The proposal submission is due by **20th December 2023, midnight PST.**



CGP GRANT DESCRIPTION

This is the RASTA Competitive Grants Programme's (CGP) sixth call for research proposals. Submissions will be thoroughly reviewed, and the progress of award studies will be closely monitored by the 'Research Advisory Committee' (RAC) of RASTA. The following are the broad principles of the programme:

- 1 The maximum duration to complete a project will be 12 months. Shorter duration studies are encouraged.
- 2 The maximum grant available for a project is PKR 5.0 million; PKR 3.5 million for desk research.
- 3 Proposals will be evaluated by the choice of the problem and expected knowledge

outcomes for countrywide or local development.

- 4 Applications will be thoroughly reviewed and discussed by the members of the RAC and the Review Panel before reaching the Award decision.
- 5 Reviewers' comments on the research proposals will be shared with all applicants regardless of the outcome.
- 6 Mentor(s) will be assigned to provide technical assistance on each award study and M&E Desk at RASTA will facilitate the research process.
- 7 All data collected and work produced under RASTA will have to be submitted for authenticity checks.
- 8 Multiple conferences/workshops/webinars will be organized allowing all reviewers, award winners and sector specialists to see progress and develop network learning.
- 9 Evaluation of government initiatives, policies and processes, and assessment of institutions and their performance in broader socio-economic and development contexts are encouraged.
- 10 Female applicants, postgraduate university students, and researchers from less developed areas of Pakistan are encouraged to participate in the RASTA programme.

APPLICANTS' QUALIFICATION: Research proposals are solicited from qualified individuals (and/or groups of individuals) interested in the economic development and public policy issues of Pakistan, including faculty members and staff at international and local universities and research institutes within and outside Pakistan. Freelancers, policy specialists and/or practitioners may also submit proposals to win the CGP Awards. Research proposals are

encouraged from Pakistani university students enrolled in PhD and thesis-based MS/MPhil degree programmes at Pakistani and foreign universities, and/or from faculty members to support the research of these students.

To keep the competition fair and transparent, RAC Members and their family members (including parents, spouse and children) are NOT eligible to participate in CGP. Read FAQs for more details.

INCLUSION POLICY: In light of the RASTA objectives, three **Tiers** have been defined to give equal opportunities to applicants from less developed areas. **Tier 1** includes applicants/institutes in the North and Central Punjab, Karachi and all foreign institutes; **Tier 2** includes applicants/institutes in the South of Punjab, Sindh (except Karachi) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; while **Tier 3** includes applicants/institutes in Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Proposals from each of the three tiers will be evaluated in separate competitive categories. Outstanding proposals from each category are anticipated to be funded. Proposals may be submitted by individual applicants or by teams of up to four investigators. Collaborative proposals by teams based at multiple institutions and/or involving practitioners from the relevant policy sector organization are encouraged.

CGP APPLICATION GUIDELINES

ELEMENTS OF THE GRANT APPLICATION:

English is the language to be used in the RASTA Competitive Grants Programme. However, applicants may articulate their research argument/problem in Urdu if they find it difficult to express it in English. All CGP applications must include the following:

- 1 RASTA Form A-1 (Cover Sheet)



- 2 RASTA Form A-2 (Research Proposal - Technical)
- 3 RASTA Form A-3 (Proposed Budget)
- 4 Additional Documents:

For professional applicants: A brief curriculum vitae (CV) (1-3 pages) for Principal Investigator/ Co-Principal Investigator.

For university student applicants: (i) Official transcript of graduate coursework completed and a list of planned additional course enrolment, and (ii) A letter of recommendation from the applicant's research supervisor.

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND DEADLINE:

Download the RASTA Application Forms (A-1, A-2 and A-3) from the RASTA website. Complete forms (in MS Word format) must be submitted electronically to rasta@pide.org.pk before the deadline. Complete applications will be acknowledged by return email within 14 days after the submission deadline.

- Do NOT mention your name and/or organisation anywhere except in Form A-1 (Cover Sheet). The application will not be processed in case of non-compliance. There is no need to submit a hard copy of the application.
- The deadline for application submission is **20th December 2023** by midnight, Pakistan Standard Time (PST). Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

BUDGET GUIDELINES: The maximum grant available for a project is 5.0 million. Remuneration of maximum Rs. 150,000 per month for each member of the research team; a

maximum of 70% of the total announced grant, i.e., Rs. 3.5 million can be availed under RASTA CGP. A research team can be comprised of a maximum of four members, including the PI. The Co-PIs may not be paid more than the PI. Income tax on remuneration will be deducted at source as per FBR rules. For field visits/ data collection, TADA/accommodation costs can be included as per the Federal Govt rules. A maximum of 03% contingency and 10% institutional overhead of the calculated budget are permissible; to be included within the upper limit of the grant.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS: The disbursement of award money will occur in three tranches linked to the deliverables:

- 30% upon selection of the proposal for an award and submission of the Inception Report
- 30% upon satisfactory acceptance by the review panel of an Interim Report & presentation at the Mid-Term Review Workshop; and finally
- 40% upon satisfactory acceptance by the review panel of the project's final Research Paper & presentation at the RASTA Conference.

NOTE: There is No provision for any hardware/software purchases including data, books, laptops, software, equipment etc. Publishing, printing and dissemination of the study is the responsibility of RASTA. All CGP Awardees (RASTA Fellows) shall provide duly verified receipts of all expenses. If there is any unspent balance, it will be adjusted in the 3rd instalment. Detailed accounting procedures of RASTA will be shared afterwards.



CGP PROCESS

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS: All complete grant applications will be reviewed by a scholarly review panel comprised of members of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Proposals will be evaluated based on (i) The importance of the topic and relevance to the given research themes; (ii) the Cohesion and

creativity of the proposed research; (iii) the Research design and technical feasibility of the proposed research approach and analysis; (iv) value of expected research outcomes for public policy; and (v) qualifications of the Principal Investigator(s) for undertaking the proposed study. Only top-ranked proposals will be invited for oral presentation (in person or online) before the RASTA review panel. The complete CGP Process is illustrated below:



EXPECTED OUTPUTS & RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

RASTA Fellows are expected to present their papers at the RASTA Conference and other national and/or international conferences/research events. There will be three types of publications: (a) RASTA Conference Papers, (b) RASTA: Local Research, Local Solutions Volumes, and (c) Journal articles to be published in the Special Issue of the Pakistan Development Review (PDR).

All Fellows will be asked to produce one or two

RASTA Policy Briefs for wider research dissemination.

The RASTA programme will organise multiple research conferences/workshops. RASTA Fellows are expected to make two presentations of their work: (i) a presentation corresponding to their interim research report at the Mid-Term Review Workshop, and (ii) a final presentation corresponding to their research paper at the RASTA Conference. Members of the RAC and other invitees from the public and private sectors will participate in these events.



RASTA PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The RASTA programme is managed by the Project Management Team (PMT) at PIDE, Islamabad. The RASTA PMT manages all programme activities under the leadership of Dr Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman RAC / Vice Chancellor, PIDE Islamabad and Dr Faheem Jehangir, Project Director, RASTA / Chief (Policy), PIDE Islamabad. The PMT, stationed at an independent Project Management Unit, is responsible for the administration of the grant selection procedure made by the scholarly Research Advisory Committee (RAC), the disbursement of funds based on the fulfilment of the grant requirements by recipients, and other operational aspects of the programme. For more details about the RASTA PMT, visit the RASTA website.



RASTA RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)

The RASTA is guided by a scholarly RAC, chaired by Dr Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, PIDE Islamabad. The members of the RAC are well-reputed national and international researchers, academics, practitioners, international economic development scholars, and senior federal and provincial government officials. The role of RAC is critical from the call for applications stage to the final submission of the research paper. Each member of RAC critically reviews research proposals, participates in the decision to award funds,

monitors the progress, and mentors some awarded research studies during the course. For more details about the RAC, visit the RASTA website.



RASTA EVENTS & KNOWLEDGE HUB

Visit RASTA Events & Knowledge Hub to find out more about RASTA events, research videos, RASTA publications, and policy briefs. As per the RASTA Open Access policy, all research material is available on the web free of cost. For more details about the RASTA events and knowledge hub, visit the RASTA website.



RASTA SOCIAL MEDIA & CONTACT

For queries and/or correspondence related to the RASTA programme, write to rasta@pide.org.pk

For the latest updates and activities, follow [@RASTA_PIDE](https://twitter.com/RASTA_PIDE) on Twitter.



RASTA

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