

**Call for Proposals for Research:
Money, Technology, and Financial Inclusion**

The **Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion** at the **University of California, Irvine**, is soliciting proposals for original research on the use of money of all kinds as a means of saving, storing, and transferring value among the world's poorest people. By money, we include both traditional nationally-issued money and technologically-mediated instruments and systems, as well as systems based on personal relationships and social networks. Examples of the range of media we are including under the rubric of money are: livestock, land, gifts of labor, jewelry and other valuables, cash, coin, checks, cards, mobile phones or other electronic devices, and rotating savings and credit associations or similar arrangements.

Research proposals are especially welcomed that focus on one or more of the following broad topics:

- What objects, relationships, social practices, or intangibles are used to fulfill the basic functions of money as a means of exchange, store of wealth, measure of value, and method of payment? How are these objects, relationships or social practices understood and used among the world's poorest people?
- What practices exist now among the world's poorest people to protect against theft, fraud, and other forms of risk? How do the very poor cope with the dangers of handling and holding onto traditional currency objects? Research foci here might include rotating savings and credit associations, storage practices, concealment practices, and long-distance relationships involving transfers of wealth.
- What social factors go into the creation and use of value and wealth? How do social payments such as tribute, marriage or death payments affect people's understanding and use of money, other wealth goods, and relationships? What is the role of sharing and pooling in managing money? And how are new technologies transforming all of these above kinds of payments?
- What is the impact of new technologies on saving, storing and transferring wealth? New technologies might include mobile banking, card-based systems; the sharing of technology; informal means of distributing the kinds of savings, transfers and exchanges that such technology makes possible; the adoption of new money or financial technologies.

The Institute is also interested in proposals for research aimed at impacting the design and implementation of new systems for increasing financial inclusion among the world's poorest people. We seek proposals that have the potential for transformative interventions, new thinking and unexplored possibilities.

The Institute seeks proposals from researchers in the developing world associated with an organization or institution such as a university that can accept a transfer of research funds. The researcher's institution should also ensure that the research is conducted in a manner compliant with the ethical standards for human subjects research in the country where the research will be undertaken. If such guarantee cannot be made, then the University of California, Irvine, will conduct a review of the research's protocols for human subjects protection.

Eligibility: This call for proposals is open to all researchers who work in the developing world. Researchers are encouraged to submit proposals that involve a partnership with universities or other organizations in the developing world.

Evaluation process and criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following five criteria. Each of these criteria must be addressed in the proposal:

- 1) **Applicant capability:** Does the applicant have a track record of conducting research that is of publishable quality? Does the applicant's institution have the administrative capability to process the grant? Evaluators will consider the applicant's training and prior research record.
- 2) **Fit of project with Institute goals:** Does the proposal speak to the issue of poor people's existing money and financial practices and/or does it address the potential for new technologically-mediated systems to impact those practices? Does it focus on the poorest people in the developing world, defined for these purposes as those making do on less than US\$1/day?
- 3) **Methodology/feasibility:** Does the proposal have a reasonable plan for accessing the target population? What is the likelihood of success of this plan? Are the methods sound? Does the applicant have or can the applicant be expected to develop the necessary methodological expertise to carry out this plan?
- 4) **Significance:** Will the project result in research that will shed light on important problems? Is the project potentially transformative or scalable? Will it provide generalizable knowledge, and/or will it result in in-depth knowledge of a particular region, people, or practice?
- 5) **Originality:** Is the project merely replicating existing studies or will it contribute to new knowledge, new methods, or new research questions?

Proposal format

Proposals should be in English, French or Spanish. If the applicant wishes to submit a proposal in another language, please inquire in advance via the contact information below. Proposals must consist of:

- 1) A proposal abstract of no more than 300 words.
- 2) A project narrative of no more than 10 typed, double-spaced pages, including within that page limit a bibliography of references cited.
- 3) One copy of an abbreviated (2 page) curriculum vitae or resume of all of the people involved in the project.
- 4) A detailed budget listing specific expense categories (which may include stipend or salary support for researchers). The Institute will consider budgets of up to US\$20,000 (US) to be used for direct research expenses only, and expects most budget requests to fall between US\$5,000 and \$15,000.
- 5) A timeline for the research activity and completion of the project, with the expectation that projects will last no more than 12 months.

Deadline for submission: January 15, 2009. Decisions will be announced by March 15, 2009.

Conditions of accepting the award: As a condition of accepting the award, researchers will be expected to submit a 6-month project report to the Institute as well as attend a conference at the University of California, Irvine in September, 2009, where researchers funded under this initiative will have the opportunity to meet one another, share their research, forge new collaborations and discuss the dissemination of their research findings with the eventual aim of publication in academic journals and other venues (travel and accommodation to UC Irvine will be paid in full by the Institute in addition to the research grant). After the conclusion of the funded project, researchers will be required to submit at least one article of publishable quality. The Institute intends to publish articles as working papers, and to assist researchers in placing their articles in peer-reviewed academic journals. There are no language restrictions on this requirement.

Proposal submission:

Proposals may be emailed, FAXed or mailed via any postal service or courier to:

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