



UNITED NATIONS  
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**UNU-WIDER**

Request for research proposals

# Economic Transformation Database

## Background

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) is requesting research proposals on the Economic Transformation Database (ETD) project. This project aims to better understand structural transformation—how it varies, why it varies, and what the implications of this might be—and to offer new frameworks that provide insight into how to address it. This will generate new knowledge on how developing economies, in particular low-income ones, can achieve sustainable, inclusive development. Proposals for original research that speak to the core themes of this project and offer strong empirical, methodological, or theoretical contributions will be considered.

Changes in the sectoral structure of the economy shape growth and poverty reduction. Historically, the reallocation of workers from traditional to modern activities has driven improvements in living standards. When resources shift from low-productivity to high-productivity activities, aggregate productivity increases. Structural change often involves the emergence and expansion of new industries that can contribute to better jobs and improved livelihoods.

To support research efforts and informed policy making, UNU-WIDER partnered with the Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC) of the University of Groningen to construct the [GGDC/UNU-WIDER Economic Transformation Database \(ETD\)](#). The ETD provides time series of employment and real and nominal value added annually by 12 sectors in 51 economies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America for the period 1990–2018. The latest version of the ETD was released on 15 July 2021.

The project mainly helps to monitor the progress made in achieving SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth. The ETD, a global public good, may also be instrumental to policy makers' ability to analyse the role that structural change can play in achieving other SDGs.

We seek to encourage research using the ETD to provide novel insights on key questions related to various topics, including (but not limited to):

- Empirical and theoretical analyses of the patterns and drivers of structural change globally, as well as in specific regions or countries.
- The industrialization experience of a country or group of countries in recent decades.

- The relation between growth, poverty reduction, and sectoral patterns of employment and production.
- Whether countries can achieve growth, provide good jobs, and reduce poverty without industrialisation.
- Whether modern agriculture and modern services serve as an alternative mechanism of structural transformation and economic growth.

Innovative proposals to improve the quality and quantity of information in the ETD are encouraged, to make the most of the data on sectoral employment and production to analyse patterns of structural transformation.

We seek to commission research papers from researchers working in growth and economic development and related fields who would like to contribute to the project. As part of the project, researchers will be asked to take part in an online workshop tentatively scheduled for November 2022.

## Offer and expectations

UNU-WIDER invites proposals from qualified researchers for papers examining structural transformation broadly. Following formal acceptance and initial publication in the [WIDER Working Papers Series](#), the aim is to have these papers published in high-quality journals or books in economics, political science, development studies, or related fields. The papers must be written in English and should be around 10,000 words (inclusive of text, tables, figures, boxes, footnotes, references, etc.—further information is found [here](#)).

Proposals from individuals (or groups of individuals) as well as non-profit organizations are welcome. Applications from women and developing country researchers are particularly encouraged.

Individual researchers will be issued UNU Consultant Contracts (CTC), while non-profit organizations will be issued UNU Institutional Contractual Agreements (ICA). A total research honorarium of US\$6,000 will be paid in one instalment. In cases of co-authorship, the honorarium will be divided equally among the contributors. The payment will be made after submission and review of the revised full version of the working paper. The deliverable must be deemed acceptable by UNU-WIDER's project focal point before payment is made. The honorarium is expected to cover all expenses associated with the conduct of the proposed research (including data collection, research assistance, etc.). It is not required to submit a budget.

After payment has been made, researchers are asked to respond to reasonable requests by the project coordinators and the UNU-WIDER Publication Team with respect to finalization of the working papers and promotion of their findings.

While payment is thus made prior any subsequent publication, we ask that contributors make a professional commitment to submitting the paper to a peer-reviewed journal. As per standard academic publishing practice, subsequent publications—journal articles, book chapters, etc.—must state due acknowledgement of UNU-WIDER as the original commissioning institute. Please note that UNU-WIDER prefers to retain copyright should the paper then go on to be included in a UNU-WIDER managed collection, or the selected journal satisfies the criteria for UNU-WIDER to cover the full open access fee. Copyright can be transferred to the author(s) should these conditions not apply.

At least one author from each successful proposal is expected to attend an online project workshop in November 2022 (exact date TBD).

## Evaluation process and criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed for scientific merit and feasibility. Proposals will be selected on the basis of three criteria: (i) relevance to the research project, (ii) strength of theoretical, methodological, or empirical contribution, and (iii) clarity of writing.

Only the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not will be communicated to applicants. Applicants must not expect feedback on their proposals.

Dates (EET – Eastern Europe Time)

1 December 2021	Publication of request for research proposals
15 January 2022	Final opportunity for questions on the request for research proposals
31 January 2022	Proposal submission deadline
28 February 2022	Target date for informing on decisions
25 October 2022	Target date for submission of first drafts of papers
November 2022	Online project workshop (exact date TBD)
30 January 2023	Target date for submission of final papers

## Other considerations

For successful proposals:

- Researchers or their institutions (non-profit) will sign a consultancy contract or an institutional contractual agreement with UNU-WIDER that follows the UNU conditions of service for Consultant Contracts (CTC) or Institutional Contractual Agreements (ICA).
- Researchers/institutions will transfer copyright of research produced under the contract to UNU-WIDER. The purpose of this copyright transfer is to allow UNU-WIDER to effectively negotiate with editors of journals in order to seek the most desirable possible publication outlet for a related set of papers. If no (further) publication is to be expected by UNU-WIDER, the copyright can be transferred to the author(s). Any material published externally thereafter resulting from this body of work should carry due acknowledgement of UNU-WIDER as the original commissioning institute.

## Proposal submission details

- 1 Proposals for papers authored by one or multiple scholars will be considered. The proposal shall include: (1) an up-to-date CV for each author; and (2) an extended abstract of 500–1500 words that summarizes the research question, data, and proposed methods for the analysis in sufficient detail to warrant an evaluation.
- 2 Submission of proposals is done electronically by using a form on the [RFRP announcement page](#). There are three forms to select from: one for individuals, another for groups of individuals, and a third for non-profit organizations. Details (such as address, gender, nationality, date of birth) of all researchers involved are to be entered onto the form. Please familiarize yourself with the form in advance.
- 3 Submission of a budget is not required for the proposal.
- 4 Any questions on the proposal process should be sent to [researchproposals5@wider.unu.edu](mailto:researchproposals5@wider.unu.edu) by 15 January 2022. Selected queries and responses will be published on the RFRP announcement page, on a rolling basis.