



Request for research proposals

Tax-benefit microsimulation analysis

Background

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), together with the EUROMOD team at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex, and Southern African Social Policy Research Insights (SASPRI), has launched a major project [SOUTHMOD – simulating tax and benefit policies for development](#), in which tax-benefit microsimulation models were built for selected developing countries in Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia), and also elsewhere (Ecuador and Vietnam).

Many developing countries are currently building up their social protection systems and the financing of public spending will need to be increasingly based on domestic tax revenues. In this process, understanding the system-wide impacts of different policy choices is critically important, and tax-benefit microsimulation models are very well suited for this purpose.

This research initiative, part of UNU-WIDER's 2014-18 research programme, aims at deepening our understanding of tax-benefit systems and their implications in developing countries.

Offer and expectations

In order to improve the understanding of tax-benefit systems and their role in developing countries, and to increase the use of tax-benefit microsimulation models, UNU-WIDER invites proposals from qualified researchers for detailed economic analysis.

The specific objectives of this request for research proposals are to:

- 1 Understand better the role of tax-benefit policy in developing countries regarding poverty reduction and inequality.
- 2 Contribute to a better understanding of modelling behavioural effects within tax-benefit microsimulation models to inform the policy debate.
- 3 Push the limits of tax-benefit microsimulation models in areas posing challenges specifically when applying tax-benefit microsimulation in a developing country context, such as the role of indirect taxes, informality, and tax evasion.

Researcher(s) are free to base their analysis on the microsimulation model of their choice, including but not restricted to the microsimulation models developed under the SOUTHMOD project, which are freely accessible for non-commercial research purposes [here](#).

Proposals from individuals, groups of individuals, as well as non-profit organizations are welcome. Applications from suitably qualified early-career, female, and developing country researchers are particularly encouraged.

Individual researchers will be issued Consultant Contracts (CTC), while non-profit organizations will be issued an Institutional Contractual Agreement (ICA) by UNU-WIDER. Based on the qualifications of the lead researcher and an assessment of the research proposal, a total research honorarium in the range of US\$4,000–6,000 for an accepted proposal will be paid for a working paper of a maximum 10,000 words including a one-page summary of the main research findings. The working paper will be considered for publication in the [WIDER Working Paper series](#). The deliverables must be deemed satisfactory by the UNU-WIDER project focal points before payment is made.

The remuneration will be expected to cover all costs associated with the conduct of all research proposed under this proposal and attendance (one author per paper) at the work-in-progress workshop (see below). Travel costs for attending this workshop will be borne separately by UNU-WIDER in accordance with United Nations University travel rules.

All successful applicants will be expected to:

- 1 Produce a relevant research paper of sufficient quality to merit publication in the WIDER Working Paper series.
- 2 Attend (one author per paper) a 1-1.5-day workshop in Helsinki, Finland, (date tbd) where work in progress will be presented to other contracted researchers and selected international experts.

Dates

8 February 2018	Final opportunity for questions on the request for research proposals
26 February 2018	Proposals due
9 March 2018	Target date for informing on funding decisions
23 March 2018	Target date for completion of necessary administrative procedures
Mid-June 2018	Target window for work-in-progress workshop
30 October 2018	Target date for submission of final paper

Evaluation process and criteria

Proposals will be scored by UNU-WIDER using the following criteria: (a) technical merit as assessed through written proposals (30 points); (b) technical capabilities of the researchers (25 points); (c) policy relevance (25 points); and (d) potential contribution to analytical capacity in developing countries (20 points). The decision panel will consider additional criteria such as diversity of topics addressed and geographic diversity.

A maximum number of two (2) proposals per researcher may be received, and only one (1) contract per individual researcher may be awarded (the panel may consider more awards in the case where the researcher is part of multiple teams).

Only the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not will be communicated to applying researchers.

The working language of the workshop and its related papers is English.

Other considerations

For successful proposals:

- 1 Researchers or their institutions (non-profit) will sign a consultant contract or institutional contractual agreement with UNU-WIDER that follows the UNU conditions of service for [Consultant Contracts \(CTC\)](#) or [Institutional Contractual Agreements \(ICA\)](#).
- 2 Researchers/institutions will transfer copyright of research produced under the contract to UNU-WIDER. An important purpose of this copyright transfer is to allow UNU-WIDER to effectively negotiate with book publishers and 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).

Proposal submission details

- 1 The submission of proposals is done electronically 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 one for non-profit organizations. Details (such as address, gender, nationality, date of birth) of all researchers involved are required to be entered in the form, and the proposal and short CVs (five pages or less) of researcher(s) uploaded. It is recommended to familiarize yourself with the form in advance.
- 2 The technical proposal should be no more than five pages of A4 paper in length, excluding cover page and references, using 12 point font, 1.5 line spacing, and standard margins. The cover page should contain the complete contact information of researcher(s) and a 200-word proposal abstract, which should summarize the research question, main methods, data, and expected contribution to the policy debate.
- 3 Submission of a budget is not required for the proposal.
- 4 Any questions on the proposal process should be sent to proposal@wider.unu.edu by 8 February 2018. All queries and responses will be published on the [RFRP announcement page](#) after this date.