



Request for research proposals

World Income Inequality Database

Background

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) is requesting research proposals on the World Income Inequality Database (WIID) project. Proposals for original research that speak to the core themes of this project and offer strong empirical, methodological, or theoretical contributions will be considered.

There is a growing need to understand income inequality trends and how they interplay with other social, economic, and political outcomes, both at the country level and worldwide. Despite significant progress during the last decades in improving the availability of data to study inequalities, substantial constraints still limit our ability to conduct consistent cross-country comparisons and analyses of long-term trends of income distributions.

This project aims to better understand inequality — 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. It maps empirical patterns and trends in inequalities and builds our understanding of inequality as both an outcome and a causal variable.

UNU-WIDER has contributed to this important task by hosting and updating the World Income Inequality Database (WIID), which includes all of the main survey-based data on income distributions which is available for most countries. Since March 2021, UNU-WIDER also releases alongside the WIID two companion datasets, one with information about the income distribution at the country level for 200 countries and historical entities, the other with estimates of the global income distribution.

The project mainly helps to monitor the progress made in achieving SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Provision of the WIID, a global public good, may also be instrumental to policy makers' ability to analyse the role that reducing inequality can play in achieving other SDGs.

We seek to encourage research extensively using the WIID and its companion datasets to provide novel insights on key questions related to various topics, including (but not limited to):

- Empirical and theoretical analyses of the drivers of economic inequality trends and patterns globally, as well as in specific regions or countries.
- The impact of economic inequality levels, trends, and patterns on other relevant socioeconomic outcomes (wellbeing, labour market, conflict, governance, welfare state, trade, etc.).
- New methods that help to better understand the income distribution, as well as its causes or its implications, whether at the country or global levels.

- Innovative proposals to improve the quality and quantity of information in the WIID, alone or in combination with other data, to make the most of the limited survey-based data on income distributions to more accurately conduct distributive analyses.

We seek to commission research papers from researchers working in inequality, income distribution, welfare, and related fields who would like to contribute to the project. As part of the project, researchers will be asked to take part in a workshop tentatively scheduled for June 2022. Researchers may also be invited to present their research at a WIDER Development Conference on inequality to take place tentatively in October 2022.

Offer and expectations

UNU-WIDER invites proposals from qualified researchers for papers examining inequality broadly. Following formal acceptance and initial publication in the [WIDER Working Papers Series](#), the aim is that these papers will be 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 maximum (inclusive of text, tables, figures, boxes, footnotes, references, etc.).

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 two instalments. In cases of co-authorship the honorarium will be divided equally among the contributors. The first payment will be made following delivery of a satisfactory first draft paper, and the second payment will be made after submission and review of the revised full version of the working paper. The deliverables 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 payments are 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.

One author from each successful proposal is expected to attend an online project workshop in June 2022 (exact date TBD). Authors may also be invited to attend a WIDER Development Conference on inequality in October 2022, which is tentatively planned to be held in Bogota, Colombia, to present their research there (exact date and location TBC). Costs of attending the conference will be borne by UNU-WIDER in accordance with the United Nations University travel policy.

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.

This call is open to all researchers; preference will be given to applications from early career and female scholars, as well as researchers from developing countries.

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)

31 August 2021	Publication of request for research proposals
15 October 2021	Final opportunity for questions on the request for research proposals
31 October 2021	Proposal submission deadline
21 November 2021	Target date for informing on decisions
21 May 2022	Target date for submission of first drafts of papers
June 2022	Online project workshop (exact date TBD)
21 September 2022	Target date for submission of final papers
October 2022	WIDER Development Conference on inequality (invited papers)

Other considerations

For successful proposals:

- 1 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).
- 2 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.

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 the online application 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 researchproposal4@wider.unu.edu by 15 October 2021. All queries and responses will be published on [the RFRP announcement page](#). Selected answers will be updated on a rolling basis.