

## Global Development Awards Competition Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD) 2026 Edition

### CALL FOR RESEARCH (ORD) PROPOSALS

#### Competition Theme

The [Global Development Network \(GDN\)](http://www.gdn.int) invites researchers from low- and middle-income countries to submit research proposals within the theme **“Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) for Peace and Human Security”** for the [Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development \(ORD\)](http://www.gdn.int).<sup>1</sup>

#### The Award

The Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development is a competitive research grant programme under the umbrella of the [Global Development Awards Competition \(GDAC\)](http://www.gdn.int), administered by GDN, funded under the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD) trust fund managed by the World Bank, and generously supported by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. This award programme identifies and funds outstanding research proposals in low- or middle-income countries with high potential for excellence in research and clear policy implications for addressing development issues.

The **three winning projects will receive grants worth US\$ 60,000**. Finalists will be invited to join a communications training in preparation for a pitch of their project in front of a high-level jury, which will decide which research proposal to award. The awards will be given to the researcher(s) whose proposals hold the greatest promise for improving our understanding of development issues and put forth clear, articulate and well-researched policy implications to address relevant developmental problems.

The first prize winner will receive a grant of US\$ 30,000. The second prize and third prize winners will receive a grant of US\$ 20,000 and US\$ 10,000, respectively. The

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the theme of the competition is available at the end of this document.

funds will be used to support the research work proposed by the winners towards the completion of their research. Additionally, awardees will be paired with a world-class academic in their area of work who will play the role of a Scientific and Technical Advisor.

The deadline for submission of applications is **June 17, 2026 (Indian Standard Time 6 PM)**

### Gender Bias

GDN recognises the imbalance in the opportunities provided to women in professional research, as well as the consequences of unconscious gender bias in review processes in environments across the world. GDN also recognises the impact these factors can have on the prospects of women researchers in securing awards and funding.

Since the 2022 edition, GDN has embedded more equitable grant-making processes to guarantee that more women can compete and win while still maintaining a high-quality standard on the evaluation. Therefore, GDN instituted a selection process for GDAC, where we will make all efforts to guarantee gender representation amongst the 3 finalists of the ORD category.

GDN strongly encourages female researchers to engage and apply.

### Connector Grant

This grant aims to stimulate international cooperation through the development of collaborative projects to support scale-up efforts with research-based evidence. The Connector grant will be awarded to ORD grantees based on a project developed in collaboration with the MIDP grantees who received the JSDF grant. This grant will support the award recipients' collaborative efforts towards measuring and analysing scale-up impact, as well as enhancing the robustness of their M&E activities. The application for this grant will only take place after the full implementation of the funded ORD project and will not be part of the selection of the ORD winners.

### Important Dates

- **Deadline for submissions: June 17, 2026**

- Eligibility screening results: [June 22, 2026](#)
- First Level review results (shortlisted applications) and comments from reviewers: [July 17, 2026](#)
- Resubmission of the updated application by the shortlisted applicants: [July 24, 2026](#)
- Second Level review results (finalists) and comments from reviewers: [August 21, 2026](#)
- Resubmission of updated applications by the finalists: [August 31, 2026](#)
- Announcement of finalists: [September 14, 2026](#)
- Announcement of winners: [December 2026](#)

Finalists, 1 representative per project, are expected to be available for the Communications Training and the physical event for the presentation of their projects to the jury during the Global Development Conference, to take place in December 2026 in Asia.

## Competition Rules and Guidelines

Please review carefully. Any application that does not follow the guidelines mentioned below will NOT be considered.

### General Rules

- Please note that the **submission of all documents is mandatory** for your application to be treated as complete and eligible.
- For a joint research **proposal with more than one researcher, only the principal investigator applies**. However, the institutional affiliation, position/designation, e-mail address, citizenship and current residence of each co-researcher **MUST** also be included in the application. In cases with more than one researcher, all researchers must meet **ALL** the eligibility criteria.
- **Researchers must have an affiliated institution for the project**. Winners of the Competition will be engaged with GDN through a Grant Agreement signed with the institution, which shall provide administrative and financial oversight

throughout the implementation of the project (including certifying the use of the budget using the forms provided).

- The application and the required documents **must be submitted as electronic files at GDN's online submission platform**. Please note that GDN accepts applications through the online submission platform **EXCLUSIVELY**.
- **CVs for all team members must be included in the application**. The CVs should clearly state the age of all team members, the citizenships of all team members and the country of residence for the past five years for all team members and the current institutional affiliations for all team members. These details are mandatory, and an application will be deemed incomplete if these details are not submitted.
- Proposals **must be submitted in English** only.
- Please note that all personal information details provided in the application (along with the CV) should be correct; the **application will be liable for disqualification at any stage of the competition**, including after the grant has been conferred.
- **GDN will take into consideration the geography, gender, and issue area, among other factors**, aiming to increase the diversity and representativeness of applicants and projects awarded.

## Eligibility Criteria

### Geographical scope:

Eligible countries for the ORD competition are those classified by the **World Bank as low-income or middle-income countries**<sup>2</sup>. The **competition is open only to researchers who are citizens or permanent residents of these countries**. The applicants (including team members) can be asked to submit proof of their citizenship and residency through documents with legal standing at any point during the competition. The information on the Identity Card will remain strictly confidential with GDN.

- Citizens of eligible countries currently residing in a non-eligible country are allowed to apply only if they have been living in the non-eligible country for no more than five years as of January 1, 2027. This should be clearly shown, as in the

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<sup>2</sup> Press [here](#) to visit the list of countries which are recognized as low- and middle-income countries by the World Bank

CV, and personal information should be provided. **In case any information is found to be incorrect, the proposal is liable for disqualification during any stage of the competition, including after the grant has been conferred.**

#### **Age limit:**

The upper age limit for all applicants is **45 years by the end of 2026**. Individuals above 45 years of age as of January 1, 2027 are not eligible to apply. This applies to EVERY MEMBER OF THE TEAM, NOT JUST THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.

#### **External funding:**

The **proposal should not be receiving or scheduled to receive funds from other sources to be eligible**. However, this would be allowed if it is clearly explained how the additional funds would reinforce the successful completion of the research.

#### **Employment:**

Staff members of multilateral and bilateral organisations (The World Bank, IMF, IADB, UN agencies, UKAid, etc.) **are not eligible to apply**.

Previous and current employees of GDN or its Regional Network Partners<sup>3</sup> are not eligible to apply for up to 5 years from the completion of their tenure. Previous GDN Board Members, project mentors and members of evaluation teams are not eligible to apply.

#### **Previous GDN funding:**

Similar proposals or papers resulting as products from full or partial GDN-funded activities (Global Research Projects and other competitions, not limited to Regional Research Competitions, Global Research Competitions, etc.) **cannot be submitted for this competition**.

#### **Previous winners:**

Past ORD winners and finalists are not eligible to apply with the same or a similar research proposal.

Past ORD winners are not eligible to apply for a period of 3 years after the end of their agreement with GDN.

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<sup>3</sup> Press [here](#) to visit the list of GDN's Regional Network Partners

### Plagiarism:

Please note that all forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable to GDN, plagiarism being one of them including self-plagiarism. Plagiarism is unauthorised use of other people's work, ideas and/or writings (in part or in full) and presenting or giving the notion that these work(s), ideas and/or writings are one's own work, idea(s) and/or writing(s). **GDN takes plagiarism very seriously and will take immediate and appropriate action, including and not limited to withdrawal of funding for any such grantees found guilty of plagiarism.**

### How to Apply

1. Head to GDN's dedicated online submission platform using the following link: [app.gdn.int/grantee\\_portal](http://app.gdn.int/grantee_portal)
2. Register or log in to the platform to have access to your profile. You will receive an email confirming the successful registration of your profile. Only after verifying your profile will you be able to apply.
  - You must pass the automated *Eligibility Screening* before having access to the *Full Proposal*. If you fail it, you will not be able to apply but reach out to GDN if you are facing issues.
  - Take note that you will be able to resume your entry at any time up to the deadline. If there are duplicate entries, the most recent one will be considered as only one proposal per applicant is allowed.
3. You must invite your team members by placing their name and email address.
4. Upload all necessary documents and fill in all sections otherwise, your application will not be submitted.
5. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email to confirm it.

Check our website for additional information on how to interact with the platform, or reach out to us if you need any assistance.

### Review Criteria

Throughout the review process, the proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

### Academic quality

- Quality of the research question formulated
- Quality of methodology and methods chosen to answer the research question
- Quality of literature review
- Originality and Innovativeness
- Ethics

### Clarity of the links to policy

- Link to specific development outcomes
- Specific relevance to the policy process

### Feasibility

- Timeline
- Budget
- Research team

## Selection Process

Once the submission of proposals is closed, a multi-stage review process will be used to select the winners.

The review process will follow the blind review process, wherein the identities of the authors and reviewers will be concealed to eliminate any selection bias.

The proposals will be reviewed at all stages based on the review criteria given in the previous section.

- In the first stage, a preliminary assessment will be undertaken by GDN staff to check for eligibility, originality, and coherence.
- The eligible applications are then reviewed by external scholars in two steps. At a first step, *Lot 1: First level review*, reviewers will be selected to conduct a first assessment of proposals and shortlist the best proposals, taking into consideration the process GDN has installed to counter gender bias. The shortlisted applicants receive comments from reviewers and are allowed to update their proposals. At the second step, *Lot 2: Expert level review*, experienced researchers review the shortlisted proposals. The final ranking is validated by the *Panel Organiser*, selected based on their professional experience from the Lot 2 reviewers.

- The final selection of proposals will be undertaken by the ORD High-Level Jury, after a public presentation of the projects by the finalists. The decision of the Jury will be final.

### Terms and Conditions

- GDN reserves the right not to grant one or more than one award.
- GDN reserves the right to modify, cancel or not award grants at any stage of the competition and grant-making.
- Cancellation of the award: The award is liable to cancellation in case of unsatisfactory progress of research work, and if any of the researchers in the award team are found ineligible later.
- GDN will award the funds to winners through a written grant agreement.

### Selection Committee

The Selection Committee for this year's competition has not yet been determined. Past Selection Committees have included distinguished scholars and representatives from the following organisations:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ANU - Australia's National University, Australia</li><li>• Ateneo de Manila University, The Philippines</li><li>• CEDLAS - Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina</li><li>• Czech National Bank, Czech Republic</li><li>• EADI - European Association of Development, Research and Training Institutes, Germany</li><li>• FERDI - Foundation for studies and Research on International Development, France</li><li>• Harvard University, USA</li><li>• IIDS - Institute for Integrated Development Studies, Nepal</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• James Cook University, Australia</li><li>• KOICA - Korean International Cooperation Agency, Republic of Korea</li><li>• National Agricultural Research Institute of Tunisia, Tunisia</li><li>• South Eastern European University, Republic of Macedonia</li><li>• Tallinn University, Estonia</li><li>• The Netherlands Institute of Social Research, The Hague, The Netherlands</li><li>• The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, Austria</li><li>• The World Bank</li><li>• Tulane University, USA</li></ul> |
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- INASP-International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, United Kingdom
- Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands,
- Inter-American Dialogue, USA
- James Cook University, Australia
- Veolia Environment Institute, France
- West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD), Senegal

### List of Eligible Countries

Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; American Samoa; Angola; Argentina; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belarus; Belize; Benin; Bhutan; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; China; Comoros; Colombia; Costa Rica; Congo, Dem. Rep; Congo, Rep.; Côte d'Ivoire; Cuba; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Eritrea; Eswatini; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Fiji; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Ghana; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Kenya; Kiribati; Korea, Dem. People's Rep; Jamaica; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kosovo; Kyrgyz Republic; Lao; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Libya; Madagascar; Malaysia; Malawi; Maldives; Mali; Marshall Islands; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nepal; Namibia; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Romania; Russian Federation; Rwanda; Samoa; São Tomé and Príncipe; Senegal; Serbia; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Sudan; Suriname; Syrian Arab Republic; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Timor-Leste; Thailand; Togo; Tonga; Tunisia; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; Uganda; Ukraine; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; Vietnam; West Bank and Gaza; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe

## Theme | 2026 Global Development Awards Competition

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION (STI) FOR PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are often viewed as the "hardware" of development - the tools, laboratories, and digital infrastructures that drive economic growth. However, the ultimate impact of STI on human lives is determined by the "software" of society: the institutions, capabilities, and diplomatic relations that govern how knowledge is created and shared.

This edition seeks to explore the role of the social sciences in, on, and for STI.

We are looking beyond the tools themselves to the human systems that surround them. Centered on the Japanese guiding principle of "Human Security" - freedom to live in dignity and from fear and want - this call invites proposals that demonstrate how STI ecosystems can be shaped to foster peace, build human capability, and protect the most vulnerable through cross-border cooperation and Science Diplomacy.

*GDN encourages the submission of projects that are either gender-specific or gender-transformative but requires that all projects be designed to respond to gender concerns.*

### Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD)

We invite research proposals that push the frontiers of how social sciences interact with Science, Technology, and Innovation in the Global South and how they relate to Human Security.

We particularly welcome practice-oriented research that recognizes Human Security as not only a conceptual framework but also an operational agenda. We encourage research proposals that explore the institutional, governance, and capability-building

dimensions of strengthening systems that protect people from threats, as well as those that empower individuals and communities to respond to threats by themselves.

Researchers are urged to focus on their own interests within the 2026 topic. Proposals must, however, demonstrate **policy relevance, originality, and clear methodologies, along with a direct and well-articulated link to the call topic.**