

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

CALL FOR ORD REVIEWERS (CONSULTANTS)

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a public international organisation that supports high-quality, policy-oriented, social science research in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), to promote better lives. Founded in 1999, GDN is headquartered in New Delhi (India), with offices in Clermont-Ferrand (France) and Arlington (USA). Our work spans the Global South.

Background

The Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD) is a competitive research grant programme under the umbrella of the [Global Development Awards Competition](#) administered by the Global Development Network (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 awards programme identifies and funds outstanding research proposals in low-income or middle-income countries¹ with high potential for excellence in research and clear policy implications for addressing development issues.

Scope of the Call

GDN is recruiting reviewers to conduct the assessment of research proposals under the ORD category of the Global Development Awards Competition. The review is scheduled to take place in two phases:

¹ Press [here](#) to visit the list of countries which are recognised as low- and middle-income countries by the World Bank

- **Lot 1** - Reviewers will be selected to conduct a first assessment of proposals based on the ORD selection criteria and shortlist the best proposals.
- **Lot 2** - Experienced researchers to review the shortlisted proposals and select the three finalists of the ORD category. The final decision will be validated by the Panel Organiser.

Panel Organiser

Out of the Lot 2 reviewers, a Panel Organiser is selected based on their professional experience, upon demonstrated availability for this additional task. This individual will have the additional task of approving the final ranking after taking into consideration all comments and (normalised) scores. Interested candidates can apply to one lot only, depending on their profiles.

Profile of applicants

- **Lot 1:** Be a researcher with 2-10 years of research experience, with a track record of work and publication in the award theme for the current edition
- **Lot 2:** Be a researcher with 10+ years of research experience, with a track record of work and publication in the award theme for the current edition

Application structure

Interested individuals must submit the following information:

1. Indicate to which Lot (1 or 2) they are applying for
2. Overview of how their expertise matches the theme and scope of the competition
3. Description of past experience on similar assignments
4. Full CV

Selection Criteria

The criteria for the selection of Reviewers are as follows:

1. Research background on the theme of the call
2. Policy background



3. Leadership experience
4. Evaluation and experience on project implementation experience

Application Procedure

- Head to GDN's dedicated online submission platform using the following link: app.gdn.int/grantee_portal
- 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.
 - 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.
- Upload all necessary documents and fill in all sections; otherwise, your application will not be submitted.
 - Indication of which Lot (1 or 2) the application refers to
 - Overview of how your expertise matches the theme and scope of the competition
 - Description of past experience on similar assignments
 - Full CV
- 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.

Enquiries must be addressed to awards@gdn.int.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of applications is on **Friday, May 22 2026 (Indian Standard Time 6 PM)**.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Objective of the Assignment

GDN is recruiting reviewers to conduct the assessment of research proposals under the ORD category of the Global Development Awards Competition.

The review is scheduled to take place in two phases:

- **Lot 1** - a first-level review by early-career scholars (less than 10 years of experience)
- **Lot 2** - a second-level review of experienced researchers (above 10 years of experience)

Interested candidates can apply to one lot only, depending on their profiles.

Panel Organiser

Out of the Lot 2 reviewers, a Panel Organiser is selected based on their professional experience, upon demonstrated availability for this additional task. This individual will have the additional task of approving the final ranking after taking into consideration all comments and (normalised) scores.

Lot 1: First level review

Reviewers will be selected to conduct a first assessment of proposals based on the ORD selection criteria and shortlist the best proposals.

Lot 2: Expert level review

Experienced researchers to review the shortlisted proposals and select the three finalists of the ORD category. The final decision will be validated by the Panel Organiser.

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

Structure of the review and timeframe

Each review consists of:

- 1) Scoring each proposal against the criteria
- 2) Comments to complement the quantitative evaluation for each of the 11 criteria
- 3) Indication of recommendation to advance to the following stage
 - a. Lot 1 Reviewers – Yes/No to “Should this proposal advance to the next stage?”
 - b. Lot 2 Reviewers – Yes/No to “Is this proposal among the top 3 you have reviewed?”

Applicants receive the anonymised comments and can revise their proposals between phases. It is expected that all comments submitted are respectful and contribute to the professional development of the applicants, regardless of the quality of their proposal.

Lot 2 reviewers (second level review) will not have access to the comments from the 1st level reviewers, but the applicants will provide a reaction to their comments.

Selected reviewers will comply with the timeline defined for their assignment, which is expected to be (subject to change):

➤ **Lot 1: First level review**

Between **June 22 and July 15, 2026**, with up to 10 proposals per reviewer, a minimum of 3 reviews per proposal. This number might differ depending on how many applications are received and how many reviewers are selected.

➤ **Lot 2: Second level review**

Between **July 27 and August 17, 2026**, with up to 10 proposals per reviewer, a minimum of 3 reviews per proposal (the workload on each reviewer may vary).

➤ **Panel Organiser**

Between **August 19 and 20, 2026**, to approve the final ranking upon reception of all normalised scores and ranking provided by GDN.

Finance and Budget

- **Lot 1:** The reviewer will be paid USD 40 for every proposal reviewed.
- **Lot 2:** The reviewer will be paid USD 80 for every proposal reviewed. GDN also pays USD 200 to the Panel Organiser as a management fee.

Reporting

All reporting will be done to João Costa, Senior Programme Manager, through the email addresses awards@gdn.int and jcosta@gdn.int (all communications are to be addressed to both emails mandatorily).

Theme | 2026 Global Development Awards Competition

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.**