

## Call for Policy Relevant Research Proposals on Local Democracy

**Application Deadline:** 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2019

**Amount of funding that may be sought:** Up to 1 million SEK. The total amount to be granted to all the approved projects is a maximum of 6 million SEK. This grant can be used in combination with other grants.

**Responsible Organization:** Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy - ICLD

### **Background:**

The overall objective for ICLD – Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy - is to promote the development of sustainable local democracy in OECD-DAC countries and in Sweden. For ICLD, well-functioning local democracy is specifically characterized by four core areas: equity, participation, transparency and accountability. ICLD works in 21 countries through international training programmes for local politicians and government officials and through municipal partnerships. In these programmes, government officials and politicians work in projects that reduce poverty through the promotion of functioning, democratic local and regional governments, where residents are enabled to influence local political processes.

To contribute to knowledge development and policy guidance within the field of local democracy, ICLD has a Knowledge Centre that provides financial support to policy-relevant research projects that are innovative and closely related to priority areas of the organization. Research financed by ICLD plays a supportive and strategic role in relation to the other units at ICLD: the international training programs and the municipal partnerships. The Knowledge Centre strives to use research to increase capacity and awareness among municipalities in ICLD's partner countries, but research should also shed light on problems and strategic issues that are relevant to local democracy enhancement in other places.

In line with Swedish International Cooperation, ICLD works towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it follows a sustainability, human rights, gender and conflict perspective.

### **Aim of this Call for Proposals and Thematic Framework:**

The overarching aim of the call is to better understand the role of local governments and local democratic institutions in addressing global challenges. Proposed research should focus on problems and opportunities where there is a potential to generate innovative and transformative policies that can increase the influence of vulnerable people in the decisions made by local governments that affect their lives. ICLD will prioritize research projects that include the countries where ICLD operates: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Research

projects in other countries are welcomed if they show an important contribution to core areas of this call.

### **Prioritized Themes:**

Research proposals should touch on the role of local governments in at least two of the following themes:

1. Social accountability and participation of vulnerable groups,
2. Climate crises and action,
3. Migration decisions,
4. Children and youth influence in local decision making,
5. Inclusive cities,
6. Post-conflict recovery: challenges and opportunities,
7. Contesting gender inequality.

### **Who can apply:**

The main applicant should be a researcher with a deep knowledge within the field of development and democracy that holds a PhD and is affiliated with a research institution or an accredited university or college. The research team should have a gender balance and preferably include researchers based in one of the countries being studied.

### **Duration:**

The research should be carried out within 18 months starting no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2020.

### **Deliverables:**

- (a) A research report to be published in ICLD's publications series.
- (b) A policy brief to be published in ICLD's publications series,
- (c) A policy debriefing workshop with local government authorities in the study countries arranged by the researchers in coordination with ICLD,
- (d) Presentations of the results in at least two workshops organized and financed by ICLD,
- (e) Teaching materials or methods from the study aimed for use in ICLD International Training Programmes or Municipal Partnerships. For more information about our programs see: <https://icld.se/en/municipal-partnership> and <https://icld.se/en/international-programmes>

### **Submission of proposals:**

The research proposals should be submitted in English at the latest on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September at 24:00 (Swedish Time). Applications must follow ICLD's template for research proposals.

### **How to apply:**

Applications should be made using the following link:

<https://response.questback.com/icld/proposal>

**Results:**

The results of selected candidates will be published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2019.

**Evaluation of Application and Assessment Criteria:**

The application will be evaluated by at least two senior researchers, one of them from ICLD Advisory Group and a committee from ICLD.

Proposal evaluators will assess the proposals according to:

- Scientific quality and its contribution to fill a research gap,
- Novelty and originality in relation to the theme of this call,
- Quality of the research team, including gender balance in the team,
- Feasibility and rigor of the project plan in relation to proposed resources (human resources, budget, schedule)/ Value for money,
- Relevance for policies and local governments, and
- Potential to affect positive change.

The ICLD committee will assess the proposal according to:

- Relevance to the theme of this call,
- Communication plan and engagement with local governments,
- Relevance to ICLD International training programs and municipal partnerships,
- Use of innovative research approaches.

**Contact:**

Questions about this grant should be addressed to:

- Emma Olofsson, Program Officer, Knowledge Centre, + 46 (0) 76 611 88 71, [emma.olofsson@icld.se](mailto:emma.olofsson@icld.se)
- Björn Möller, Quality Manager, ICLD, +46 (0) 70-240 99 01 - [bjorn.moller@icld.se](mailto:bjorn.moller@icld.se)

## About ICLD

ICLD is managed by a board that consist of SALAR, the Region of Gotland and Lund University. The overall objective for ICLD - International Centre for Local Democracy - is to promote the development of sustainable local democracy in low and middle-income countries. This contributes to a fair and sustainable global development and creates the conditions for poor people to improve their living conditions. ICLD's work has an important role to fill within the framework of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) by strengthening local governments to fulfill the goals in a democratic and inclusive manner.

## ICLD's Knowledge Centre

ICLD has three units: the municipal partnership program, the international training programs and the knowledge centre. This research project is carried out within the ICLD's knowledge centre.

- Municipal Partnerships (MPP) is a form of decentralized cooperation in which a municipality in Sweden works with a municipality in one of ICLD 21 partner countries in projects to contribute to the development of well-functioning and democratic local authorities. ICLD provide financial support for government officials and politicians in the partnership to meet twice a year and exchange knowledge and experience. Project funds are for 1 to 3 years. In average there are 60 to 70 partnerships running at any time.
- International training programs (ITPs) help to strengthen the local democracy through different educational programs. The programs are aimed at local politicians and civil servants in ICLD partner countries. Each program last 18 months and participants meet in an inception workshop, a regional workshop, a Swedish visit, and a final workshop. In 2016 ICLD trained a total of 247 people from 20 countries, of which 50 were politicians and 197 government officials. 61% of participants have been women. In 2017 ICLD trained a total of 255 government officials and local politicians.
- Knowledge Center (KC) helps to develop knowledge and support research on local democracy, decentralization and local self-government in international development cooperation. The Knowledge Centre funds research projects, organizes workshops and provides arenas for researchers to actively engage in dialogue with local politicians and civil servants part of ICLD training programs and partnerships.

For more information about the activities, see the ICLD website, [www.icld.se](http://www.icld.se).