



# RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND ADVANCEMENT

## RASTA Competitive Grants Programme for Policy-oriented Research

[www.pide.org.pk/rasta](http://www.pide.org.pk/rasta)



### COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAMME – ROUND III

The 'Research for Social Transformation and Advancement' (RASTA) is the largest social sciences research grants programme in Pakistan. RASTA's mission is to develop a high-quality research network of academia and think tanks across Pakistan producing high-quality, evidence-based policy research to inform Pakistan's public policy process. More information about RASTA is available at: [www.pide.org.pk/rasta](http://www.pide.org.pk/rasta). The objectives of RASTA programme are to:

- i. Reduce research-policy gap by stimulating economic and social science research and debate across Pakistan.
- ii. Build a network to stimulate internally defined and produced policy-relevant research within a context of crowd-sourced ideas.
- iii. Provide a knowledge-sharing/generating platform where different actors can present and share evidence-based research to inform decision-making in the government.
- iv. Revisit the future policy agenda in line with the evidence produced in this programme.
- v. Build capacity and improve policymaking and implementation by involving and engaging local universities, think tanks, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

With these objectives, the programme seeks to develop local thought communities and generate knowledge. Substantial outputs will be completed in important areas of public policy that will produce insightful research and facilitate goals that the Government wants to achieve according to its vision. So far, RASTA has awarded 30 research projects in two rounds of the Competitive Grants Programme (CGP) worth PKR 88.5 million.

For the third round of the CGP, the RASTA Research Advisory Committee (RAC) has decided to invite applications on two themes, i.e., (i) Foreign Aid Effectiveness, and (ii) Trade, Domestic Commerce & Markets. Details are provided in the section below.

### RASTA CGP ROUND 3.0: CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

<https://pide.org.pk/rasta>

RASTA Competitive Grants Programme invites third round of research proposals on the following themes/sub-themes:



#### 1. FOREIGN AID EFFECTIVENESS



##### 1.1 Review of Development Partners in Pakistan

- Review of official development partners in Pakistan
  - Review of official multilateral/bilateral donors' country partnership strategies and development priorities for Pakistan
  - Explore donors' allocation/expenditure of funds and development operations in Pakistan
  - Review of donor-government relationships at federal and provincial levels
  - Role and significance of official development partners for public policy and economic development in Pakistan: Do we need their advice & money? Why & why not?



##### 1.2 Evaluation of Donor-led Development Initiatives in Pakistan

- Cost & benefit analyses of donor-led development initiatives in Pakistan
- Impact evaluation of donor-led projects/interventions in a city/district
- Impact evaluation of projects/interventions implemented by NGOs/CSOs in a city/district
- Assessment of foreign technical assistance: quality and relevance of donor-funded research studies; benefits and utility of donor-funded foreign trainings in the government; and evaluation of the contribution international consultants and contractors made to the development sector in Pakistan.



## 2. TRADE, DOMESTIC COMMERCE & MARKETS



### 2.1 Export Industry: Role and Significance in Economic Growth

Review of textile industry; leather and sports goods; surgical and cutlery industry; chemicals, carpets, fisheries, agricultural products.

State of particular exports industry; business environment; financial model; revenue model; burden of regulations; drivers and dynamics of business operations; R&D, human resource and technology; overcoming challenges; trade policy and competitiveness; role of TDAP, Pakistan foreign missions, chamber of commerce & industries and associations; how Bangladesh and Vietnam surpass Pakistan; branding Make in Pakistan (trade) and make in Pakistan (investment); fulfilling regional demand; CPEC – threats and opportunities.



### 2.2 Imports: Role and Significance in Economic Growth

Review of mineral fuels, oils, distillation products; machinery; electrical and electronic equipment; iron and steel; plastic; edible oil; organic chemicals, vehicles, cereals, pharmaceuticals, etc.

State of particular exports industry; business environment; financial model; revenue model; burden of regulations; drivers and dynamics of business operations; R&D, human resource and technology; overcoming challenges; CPEC – threats and opportunities.



### 2.3 Retail Markets

State of retail markets in Pakistan; consumer goods and value chain; revenue model; drivers and dynamics of business operations; overcoming challenges; price control and competition; case studies of particular retail market (sector) and/or city survey.



### 2.4 e-Commerce Potential

State and future of ecommerce landscape in Pakistan; B2B and B2C ecommerce models; SMEs potential; business environment; drivers and dynamics of business operations; R&D, human resource and technology; overcoming challenges; transformation from wholesaler to retailer and service provider; ecommerce platforms – websites, mobile App and social media; security and customer satisfaction – frauds and scams; transparency and customer experience, etc.



### 2.5 Sales Tax Policy and Compliance

Sales tax policy and its consequences (documentation, compliance and avoidance); documenting the economy – registration of producer, wholesaler, and retailer; exploring implementation of VAT in Pakistan; etc.



### 2.6 Real Estate Markets

Public sector versus private sector housing projects; single/comparative case studies to understand housing projects from initiation to completion, and post-completion operations & maintenance services in a city; case studies on large-scale urban housing projects in a city; dynamics of real estate markets; progress review of PM housing projects (such as Naya Pakistan Housing scheme and Mera Pakistan Mera Ghar housing finance scheme) in a district/city, etc.



### 2.7 Construction Industry

State of construction industry – trend, opportunities and its linkages (residential, non-residential/ commercial and engineering construction); business environment; financial model; revenue model; burden of regulations; drivers and dynamics of business operations (small/medium/ large developers); R&D, human resource and technology; overcoming challenges; public versus private sector investment and returns, etc.

RASTA CGP 3.0 invites research proposals on the above listed themes/sub-themes. Studies on related sub-themes will also be entertained. Proposed studies must identify key policy issues and public policy decisions in Pakistan; assess outcomes of those decisions empirically; evaluate constraints to policy reform; and examine alternative policy recommendations to enhance their impact. The proposal submission is due by 15th November 2021, midnight Pakistan Standard Time (PST).



## GRANTS DESCRIPTION

This is RASTA Competitive Grants Programme's third call for research proposals. Submissions will be thoroughly reviewed, and progress of award studies will be closely monitored by the 'Research Advisory Committee' (RAC) of RASTA. Following are the broad principles of the programme:

- 1 The maximum duration to complete a project will be 12 months.
- 2 The maximum grant available for a project is 4.0 million.
- 3 Proposals will be judged by the choice of the problem and expected knowledge outcomes for countrywide or local development.
- 4 All data collected and work produced under RASTA will have to be submitted for authenticity checks.
- 5 Multiple conferences/workshops will be organized allowing all reviewers, award winners and sector specialists to see progress and develop network learning.
- 6 Evaluation of government initiatives, policies and processes, and assessment of institutions and their performance in broader socio-economic and development context are encouraged.
- 7 Female applicants, students and researchers from less developed areas of Pakistan are encouraged to participate in the RASTA programme.

**Application Qualifications:** Research proposals are solicited from qualified individuals (and/or groups of individuals) interested in the economic development and public policy issues of Pakistan, including faculty members and staff at international, national and provincial universities and research institutes within and outside Pakistan. Research proposals are encouraged from Pakistani graduate students enrolled in PhD and thesis-based MS/MPhil degree programmes at Pakistani and foreign universities, or from faculty members to support the research of these students.

In light of the RASTA objectives and inclusion policy, three Tiers have been defined so as to give equal opportunity to the applicants from less developed areas. Tier 1 includes applicants/institutes in the North and Central Punjab, Karachi and all foreign institutes; Tier 2 includes applicants/institutes in the South of Punjab, Sindh (except Karachi), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Quetta; while Tier 3 includes applicants/institutes in Balochistan (except Quetta), Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Proposals from each of the three tiers will be evaluated in separate competitive categories. Outstanding proposals from each category are anticipated to be funded. Proposals may be submitted by individual applicants or by teams of up to four co-investigators. Collaborative proposals by teams based at multiple institutions and/or involving practitioners from the relevant policy sector organization are encouraged



## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

**Elements of the Grant Application:** English is the language to be used in the RASTA Competitive Grants Programme. Applications must include the following:

1. RASTA Form A-1 (Cover Sheet)
2. RASTA Form A-2 (Research Proposal)
3. RASTA Form A-3 (Proposed Budget)
4. Additional Documents:
  - For professional applicants: A brief curriculum vitae (1-3 pages) for Principal Investigator/Co-PI.
  - For student applicants: (i) Official transcript of graduate coursework completed and list of planned additional course enrolment, and (ii) A letter of recommendation from the applicant's supervisor.

**Submission Process and Deadline:** Download all RASTA Application Forms (A-1, A-2 and A-3) from RASTA website. Complete forms (in MS Word format) must be submitted electronically to [rasta@pide.org.pk](mailto:rasta@pide.org.pk) before the deadline. Complete applications will be acknowledged by return email within 14 days after the submission deadline.

Do NOT mention your name and/or organization anywhere except in Form A-1 (Cover Sheet). The application will not be processed in case of non-compliance. There is no need to submit a hardcopy of the application.

The deadline for applications submission is 15th November 2021 by midnight, Pakistan Standard Time (PST). Incomplete applications and applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

**Budget Guidelines:** Remuneration of maximum Rs. 150,000 per month for each member of the research team and/or a maximum of 75% of the total announced grant, i.e., Rs. 3.0 Million can be availed under RASTA CGP. A research team can be comprised of a maximum of four members, including the PI. The Co-PIs may not be paid more than the PI. Income tax on remuneration will be deducted at source. For field visits/data collection, TADA/accommodation costs can be included as per the Federal Govt rules. A maximum of 03% contingency and 10% institutional overhead of the calculated budget are permissible.



Disbursement of funds to successful grant applicants will occur in three tranches linked to the deliverables: (i) 30% upon selection of the proposal for an award; (ii) 30% upon satisfactory acceptance by the review panel of an interim research report & presentation at the Mid-Term Review Workshop; and finally (iii) 40% upon satisfactory acceptance by the review panel of the project's final research report & presentation at the RASTA Conference.

- NOTE: There is No provision for any hardware/software purchases including data, books, laptop, software, equipment etc. Publishing, printing and dissemination of studies are the responsibility of RASTA. Awardees shall provide duly verified receipts of all expenses. If there is any unspent balance, it will be adjusted in the 3rd instalment.



## PROCEDURE OF COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAMME

**Selection Criteria and Process:** All complete grant applications will be reviewed by a scholarly review panel comprised of members of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Proposals will be evaluated based on (i) The importance of the topic and relevance to the given research themes; (ii) Cohesion and creativity of the proposed research; (iii) Research design and technical feasibility of the proposed research approach and analysis; (iv) Value of expected research outcomes for public policy; and (v) Qualifications of the Principal Investigator(s) for undertaking the proposed study. Equal weight will be given to each criterion. Top-ranked proposals will be invited for oral presentation (in person or online) before the review panel.



## EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

RASTA grant recipients are expected to produce a research article or monograph of international peer-reviewed publication quality. Interim and final reports submitted to the review panel for approval of grant fund disbursements are expected to be intermediate products leading to final published output as RASTA Working Paper and/or a Book Chapter. The RAC may also ask the grant recipient to produce one or two RASTA Policy Briefs for wider research dissemination.

The RASTA programme will organise bi-annual research conferences/workshops. RASTA grant recipients will be expected to make two presentations of their work: an initial presentation corresponding to their interim research report at the Mid-Term Review Workshop and a final presentation corresponding to their final research report at the RASTA Conference. Members of the RAC and other invitees from the public & private sector will participate in these events.

## RASTA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK



### RASTA COMMUNITY

Since the successful launch of RASTA in October 2020 at PIDE, the RASTA Community is growing on a fast pace. In line with the RASTA objectives and to develop a local knowledge network in Pakistan, RASTA has established a multi-disciplinary platform of researchers, policymakers, practitioners, academicians, graduate/post-graduate students and observers, from government and private sectors, called the 'RASTA Community Network'. The objective of this network is to facilitate interactions and initiate meaningful public policy debate between different actors to reduce research-policy gap in the country. To join the RASTA Community Network, fill the RASTA Form C-1 (available on the RASTA website) and send it to [rasta@pide.org.pk](mailto:rasta@pide.org.pk). There are no membership charges.



### RASTA PANEL OF PRACTITIONERS

As part of a large knowledge network in the country, the Panel of Practitioners (POP) is comprised of well-reputed public policy experts, professionals, civil servants, project managers and other experienced practitioners. Practitioners of this esteemed panel come together to express their views, share their practical experiences, and guide the research & policy community to expedite studies and suggest policy interventions for effective, actionable, and evidence-based policymaking in Pakistan. The membership of this Panel is through invitation from RASTA. To join the RASTA Community Network, invitees are required to fill the RASTA Form POP-1. For more details, please contact the RASTA PMT at [rasta@pide.org.pk](mailto:rasta@pide.org.pk)



## RASTA PANEL OF ACADEMICIANS

As part of a large knowledge network in the country, the Panel of Academicians (POA) is comprised of leading intellectuals and academicians including researchers, university professors and distinguished PhD scholars. The learned community of this panel engage regularly to exchange research ideas and evidence to debate public policy issues facing Pakistan. Scholarly discussions in this panel helps to identify policy problems and formulate research scope to explore/examine the complexities and challenges in transforming policy into action. The membership of this Panel is through invitation from RASTA. To join the RASTA Community Network, invitees are required to fill the RASTA Form POA-1. For more details, please contact the RASTA PMT at [rasta@pide.org.pk](mailto:rasta@pide.org.pk)

## RASTA KNOWLEDGE HUB

<https://pide.org.pk/rasta/rasta-knowledge-hub/>

Visit RASTA Knowledge Hub to find out RASTA Research Reports, RASTA Working Papers and Policy Briefs. The research produced and published through its earlier PSSP Competitive Grants Programme is also available here. Open Access is provided.

## RASTA UPDATES & CONTACT

For queries and/or correspondence related to the RASTA Competitive Grants Programme, write to [rasta@pide.org.pk](mailto:rasta@pide.org.pk). For latest updates, follow @RASTA\_PIDE on Twitter.

## RASTA PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

<https://pide.org.pk/rasta/rasta-program-management/>



## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The RASTA Competitive Grants Programme is managed by the Project Management Team (PMT) at PIDE, Islamabad. The RASTA PMT manages all programme activities under the leadership of Dr Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman RAC/Vice Chancellor, PIDE Islamabad and Dr Faheem Jehangir Khan, Project Director, RASTA/Senior Research Economist, PIDE Islamabad. The PMT, stationed at an independent Project Management Unit, is responsible for the administration of grant selection procedure made by the scholarly RAC, disbursement of funds based on the fulfilment of the grant requirements by recipients, and other operational aspects of the programme.



## RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The RASTA is guided by a scholarly Research Advisory Committee (RAC), chaired by Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, PIDE Islamabad. The members of the RAC are well-reputed national and international researchers, academics, practitioners, international economic development scholars, and senior federal and provincial government officials. The role of RAC is critical from the call for applications stage to final submission of the research report. Each member of RAC critically reviews research proposals, participates in the decision to award funds, monitors the progress, and mentors some awarded research studies during the course. Details available at: <https://pide.org.pk/rasta/research-advisory-committee/>



### RASTA Project Management Unit

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