



**Request for Applications (RFA)  
Research to Advance Bilateral and Multilateral Donor Institutions' Development  
Effectiveness**

RFA Number:	DTI 23-01
Issued Under:	DT Institute
Issuance Date:	February 3, 2022
Funding Floor:	USD \$10,000
Funding Ceiling:	USD \$40,000
Total Funding Available:	USD \$40,000
Period of Performance:	2-3 months
Questions Due Date/Time:	February 9, 2023
Answers Provided By:	February 13, 2023
Submission deadline	February 24, 2023
Anticipated Time to Award:	March 3, 2023

DT Institute seeks applications from qualified individual researchers and research institutions to conduct research analyzing the policies, strategies, approaches, and systems of leading bilateral and multilateral donor agencies related to promoting effective development outcomes. DT Institute anticipates awarding up to \$40,000 total for this solicitation, and between one to three awards. Grants and/or cooperative agreements awarded as a result of this request for applications (RFA) will be implemented and managed in accordance with CFR 200 that governs grants and cooperative agreements and DT Institute's internal grant management policies.

This funding opportunity is posted on DT Institute's website and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this RFA. If you have difficulty accessing this document, please contact the Research and Grants team at [impact.grants@dt-institute.org](mailto:impact.grants@dt-institute.org).

Any explanation desired by an applicant regarding the meaning or interpretation of this RFA must be requested in writing, in English, via [impact.grants@dt-institute.org](mailto:impact.grants@dt-institute.org) and must be submitted no later than the date and time specified in the Questions Due line stated above. This will allow sufficient time for a reply/amendment to reach all applicants before they submit their responses. Any information that substantially changes the requirements of this RFA shall be released through the issuance of an amendment to the RFA. DT Institute may, at its own discretion, extend the deadline for the submission of applications or alter any information contained within this RFA.

## Table of Contents

<b>A. Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B. Objective .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>D. Cost Share .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>E. Excluded Activities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>F. Authority/Governing Regulations.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>G. Eligibility .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>H. Application Guidelines and Submission Instructions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Application Requirements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Questions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Application Submission .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Point of Contact .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. Application Review and Evaluation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Selection Criteria .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Selection Process .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>J. Award and Administration Information .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>K. Other Information.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>L. About DT Institute.....</b>	<b>7</b>

## A. Background

Over the past two decades, the international development agenda has become increasingly focused on development effectiveness – with efforts at both the global and individual country levels to better define, measure, and support the implementation of effective development principles. To this effect, global entities such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (the Global Partnership), and various multilateral and bilateral donor institutions around the world have sought to define development effectiveness and operationalize these principles and understandings in their programming through various policies, systems, frameworks, and other approaches. As a complement to development effectiveness, donor institutions are also increasingly coordinating their development assistance and working to harmonize their policies, procedures, and practices – thereby enabling them to leverage financial and technical resources, knowledge, expertise, and other assets,<sup>1</sup> and ultimately strengthening both policy and programming.

While donor institutions have made significant strides in promoting more intentional and effective development programming, numerous gaps and challenges persist. This includes divergent donor priorities; differing definitions and approaches to development effectiveness; unreliable indicators and means of measuring effectiveness; continuously evolving contexts; limited country and/or implementer capacity; insufficient local ownership of development efforts; and instability and a lack of understanding of how effectiveness principles should be applied in fragile states, among other challenges.<sup>23</sup> At this point in time, there is great need for additional research to improve overall understanding of the varied definitions, frameworks, policies and approaches to development effectiveness used by bilateral and multilateral donor institutions, as well as gaps and opportunities that can serve to strengthen donor coordination and enhance the effectiveness of development programming.

## B. Objective

Through this RFA, **DT Institute seeks one or multiple qualified applicants to produce a research product that enhances understanding of the ways in which various bilateral and multilateral donor institutions define, facilitate, and measure the effectiveness of their programming, with a focus on four key donors: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the European Union (EU).** Successful research will identify commonalities and divergences among these four donors in defining, guiding, and measuring development effectiveness overlaid with priorities, approaches, and practices. A sample of two-to-three case study programs/countries per donor will be included in the research implementation. Applicants should make case study recommendations during the application phase, but an agreed-upon case studies list will be finalized in coordination with DT Institute upon award. The resulting research findings are intended for use by DT Institute,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/12/17/how-international-development-donors-can-collaborate-in-southeast-asia/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2022-12/GPEDC%20-%20Special%20Report%20-%20ENG\\_0.pdf](https://effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2022-12/GPEDC%20-%20Special%20Report%20-%20ENG_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/building-evidence-around-effectiveness-principles>

and other implementers, donor institutions and the broader development community to design more effective and impactful programs.

### C. Detailed Program Description

DT Institute will issue between one to three awards, with an anticipated project duration between two and three months. The total amount of funding available is up to \$40,000. Individual applicants and organizations should submit only one application in response to this RFA. DT Institute will prioritize applications whose research examines the ways in which bilateral and multilateral institutions define and understand development effectiveness and apply those principles in programming through their established policies, systems, approaches, and processes.

The research should focus on the core set of approaches that each donor has in place to promote effective development outcomes, regardless of geography or modality of aid, and should consider a variety of sectors such as peacebuilding, democracy and governance, economic growth, health, and agriculture. Applicants should propose the sectors they would like to focus on in their application; however, the sectors to be included in the research will be finalized with DT Institute upon award. Within the selected sectors, applicants should also consider a subset of cross-cutting areas and priorities which may be considered important or necessary to achieving strong development outcomes. This may include gender, climate change, localization, capacity building, and/or other areas.

The research should take the following into consideration:

- the current policies, systems, strategies, frameworks, principles and/or approaches that each donor has in place to ensure development effectiveness;
- how these are (or are not) applied in practice, and why;
- where the four donors converge in policy and practice and where they differ.

The research should also assess the extent to which global development effectiveness standards, accords, and principles are operationalized by the selected donors (these include, but are not limited to, the Kampala principles, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, the United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs) and OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Evaluation standards). In addition, the research should consider how implementing partners of donor-funded development programs understand and operationalize these development effectiveness principles, policies, and approaches in their programming, and should explore any gaps, successful approaches and/or new ideas they have identified that can be utilized by donors. Lastly, it is often most challenging to operationalize and measure development effectiveness in conflict-affected or fragile environments, so applicants are encouraged to consider this in their research.

Applications should propose research that will result in recommendations for donors, policymakers, and international development professionals which enable them to better understand development effectiveness from a global perspective and adopt practices in program implementation that are most likely to lead to effective outcomes. In addition, the research should enable donors to learn from one another, increase coordination to enhance their approaches to development effectiveness, and understand and address any barriers to doing so.

Excellent applications will demonstrate how research findings will be drawn from rigorous analyses of evidence and show a clear line of sight from published policies and strategies to



application in practice through program implementation. Methodologies may include desk research, policy analysis, key informant interviews, case studies and other approaches.

## D. Cost Share

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility factor or requirement for this RFA and providing cost share will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking.

## E. Excluded Activities

DT Institute's grants under this RFA are intended to reduce the gaps in programmatic and operational coverage under existing funding flows, which focus heavily on humanitarian relief, medical assistance, and military support. While those needs are extremely important and will persist in the months and years to come, DT Institute has excluded the following types of activities or support, given the significant resources already allocated towards them from other sources:

- Provision of emergency/essential humanitarian relief (e.g., housing/shelter, food, clothing, hygiene items, travel allowances unless directly connected to a programmatic need);
- Cash assistance and/or microloans to refugees, IDPs, and survivors (including CSO staff);
- Purchase of medical supplies and provision of medical assistance/care;
- Purchase of military supplies and weapons, and other support for military/paramilitary entities;
- Training for CSO staff, unless directly connected to programmatic activities and assistance;
- Construction activities or building materials;
- Provision of psychosocial support.

## F. Authority/Governing Regulations

DT Institute requires all recipients to comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to the following: The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in 2 CFR Chapter 200 (Sub-Chapters A through F) shall apply to all non-Federal entities, except for assistance awards to Individuals and Foreign Public Entities. Sub-Chapters A through E shall apply to all foreign organizations, and Sub-Chapters A through D shall apply to all U.S. and foreign for-profit entities. The applicant/recipient of the award and any sub-recipient under the award must comply with all applicable terms and conditions.

Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Grantee shall not make or promise to make either directly or indirectly any gift or payment of money or anything of value to any government official, political party or official thereof, or candidate for political office for the purpose of influencing any act or decision of the official's government, department, agency, or instrumentality thereof in order to obtain or to retain business for itself, Grantee or any subsidiary or affiliates thereof.

## G. Eligibility

DT Institute welcomes applications from non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public organizations, including but not limited to think tanks, academic institutions, and individual researchers.



Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR,1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR,1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

DT Institute is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its projects and activities. DT Institute welcomes applications irrespective of race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. DT Institute seeks applications that demonstrate that the recipient does not discriminate against any beneficiaries in implementation of a potential award, such as, but not limited to, by withholding, adversely impacting, or denying equitable access to the benefits provided through this award on the basis of any factor not expressly stated in the award. This includes, for example, race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or veteran’s status. The recipient should insert this provision, including this paragraph, in all sub-grants and contracts under a potential award.

## H. Application Guidelines and Submission Instructions

### Application Requirements

- All applications must be written in English with costs given in U.S. Dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided;
  - All pages are numbered, including budgets and attachments;
  - All documents are formatted to A4; and,
  - All documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with 2.5 cm margins. Captions and footnotes may be 10-point Times New Roman font. Font sizes in charts and tables, including the budget, can be reformatted to fit within 1 page width.
- Complete Applications *must* include the following:
    - Cover Page (not to exceed 1 page)
    - Project Narrative (not to exceed 4 pages)
    - Detailed CVs for all researchers including references
    - Budget (not to exceed 1 page)
    - Implementation plan and timeline (not to exceed 1 page)

### Questions

- Please submit questions to [impact.grants@dt-institute.org](mailto:impact.grants@dt-institute.org) no later than 5:00 pm ET on Wednesday, February 9, 2023. A complete list of questions and responses will be emailed directly to all applicants.



### Application Submission

- All proposals must be received electronically to [impact.grants@dt-institute.org](mailto:impact.grants@dt-institute.org) no later than 5:00 pm ET on February 24, 2023. All proposals received after this time and day will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed.

### Point of Contact

- Please direct all questions and inquiries related to this RFA to [impact.grants@dt-institute.org](mailto:impact.grants@dt-institute.org).

## I. Application Review and Evaluation

### Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated as follows:

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Corresponding Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Past experience	Detailed technical proposal staff CVs References	20%
Overall approach and methodology	Detailed technical proposal Detailed cost proposal	25%
Specific expertise	Detailed technical proposal staff CVs	25%
Timeframe of implementation	Implementation plan and timeline	10%
Total cost	Detailed cost proposal	20%

### Selection Process

A technical review panel will be convened to review eligible applications. The panel will include subject matter and technical experts from DT Institute as voting members. In addition, the panel will include one or more external non voting reviewers from either the profit or non-profit sectors.

## J. Award and Administration Information

DT Institute anticipates awarding either a grant or cooperative agreement depending on the needs and risk factors of the program. The final determination on award mechanism will be made by DT Institute. The distinction between grants and cooperative agreements revolves around the existence of “substantial involvement.” Cooperative agreements require greater participation in the project. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, DT Institute will undertake reasonable and programmatically necessary substantial involvement. Examples of substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to: Active participation or collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award; Review and approval of one stage of work before another can begin; Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub-awards or contracts; or Approval of the recipient’s budget or plan of work prior to the award.



DT Institute may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. DT Institute reserves the right (though it is under no obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of DT Institute, nor does it commit DT Institute to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of an application. This notice is subject to availability of funding. DT Institute may reject any or all applications, accept other than the lowest cost application, accept more than one application, and waive irregularities in applications received.

To maximize the impact and sustainability of the award(s) that result from this RFA, DT Institute retains the right to execute non-competitive continuation amendment(s). Any non-competitive continuation is contingent on performance and pending availability of funds. A non-competitive continuation is not guaranteed, and DT Institute reserves the right to exercise or not to exercise this option.

Depending on the length of the project, DT Institute will require between 2-3 financial and progress reports on a quarterly basis, culminating in a final report. Reports will include relevant contextual information; a detailed explanation and analysis of project activities and their impact; relevant success stories; continued efforts to achieve sustainability; an explanation of the reasons project goals were not met; upcoming activities; and any other requirement as indicated by the Grants Committee in the letter of agreement.

## K. Other Information

DT Institute will make all efforts and take all precautions to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the information contained within the applications submitted. The information in this RFA may be subject to change without prior notice.

Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Grantee shall not make or promise to make either directly or indirectly any gift or payment of money or anything of value to any government official, political party or official thereof, or candidate for political office for the purpose of influencing any act or decision of the official's government, department, agency or instrumentality thereof in order to obtain or to retain business for itself, Grantee or any subsidiary or affiliates thereof.

## L. About DT Institute

DT Institute is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to doing development differently through dual implementation and funding mechanisms which are informed by research activities. We implement complex global development programs in conflict, fragile, and closed environments. We also fund thought leadership initiatives that drive innovation and improve lives through evidence-based programming.

DT Institute is a global non-profit organization with offices in Washington D.C., Berlin and Iraq that operates as both a funder and implementer. As a funding organization, DT Institute supports research activities and program implementation globally through grants in the areas of civil society



strengthening, independent media and information integrity, human rights, democracy, rule of law, stabilization, transition, countering violent extremism, and peacebuilding. As an implementer, DT Institute focuses on strengthening communities and leaders, working with local organizations, and developing new approaches through action-oriented research. DT Institute's operational cycle ensures its programming is evidence-driven, captures and leverages program lessons learned to improve the impact of future projects, and informs future research and programming. Our philanthropic strategy complements, informs, and expands these initiatives. The impact grants we make are expected to build, test, and advance bold, innovative approaches to development.

With years of experience operating in challenging and dynamic security environments and closed societies, DT Institute's team is adept at conducting programs remotely and adapting programs to shifting environments. DT Institute has worked in complex contexts and conflict zones around the world and is currently supporting grants and managing programs in 37 countries globally.

More information may be found at [www.dt-institute.org](http://www.dt-institute.org).