

GERPA Third Research Competition
“Analysis of Policies Affecting Women’s Economic Well-being and
Participation in MENA”

Call for research proposals

The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) is launching the third research competition of the Gender Economic Research and Policy Analysis (GERPA). The GERPA initiative is funded by the World Bank with the objective to reach out to economic researchers and research centers in the MENA region to mainstream gender issues within their ongoing work. GERPA aims to make gender sensitive research an essential component of economic policy over time.

Unlike other disciplines which have a large body of research on gender issues, there is still need for high quality economic literature on gender and economic development. Gender research is particularly needed in MENA as gender barriers remain a serious challenge for the region’s economic and social development. In fact, while women’s access to education and health has improved in quantity and quality over the past decades, these gains have not yet translated into women’s participation in the economy and decision making due to existing gender-based norms and barriers. The World Bank (2003) estimated that the lower than potential female labor force participation in MENA in the 1990s alone resulted in a 0.7 percent loss in GDP per capita across the region. Access to a large talent pool and low cost productive labor is central to economic growth and competitiveness.

For this reason, GERPA offers grants to researchers in the MENA region to integrate gender into the economic research in MENA. The ultimate goal is to build up the empirical evidence on gender issues to inform economic policy makers on the impact of policy reform on women’s access to resources and opportunities and, vice-versa, how women’s access to resources and opportunities can impact the outcomes and success of government actions.

GERPA has launched three competitions with different focuses. The first research competition (2006) covered a broad set of topics. The second competition (2008) focused more on themes that were underrepresented

in the first round but are increasingly cutting edge within the economic environment. This third competition, while not ruling out strong proposals on interesting topics and understudied themes, will seek to focus more on policies and government actions that have or have successfully improved women's access to resources and opportunities, or have failed to address these issues adequately in the policy design. A number of countries in MENA have embarked on reforms such as modernizing labor laws, pension laws, banking regulations, investment laws, nationality laws, etc. or implemented projects to improve people's access to infrastructure, credit, jobs, or even introduced quota systems in Parliament to increase women's voice in decision making. This call invites researchers to analyze whether such reforms were able to create a more inclusive and enabling environment for women. For instance, a number of countries have improved their investment regulations, simplifying the process, reducing the time and steps needed to register, or the minimum capital requirements. Researchers could explore if the simplified regulations have led to an increased business registration by women or not, and if not, why.

Proposal submission procedure:

The focus of this competition is to select the highest quality proposals within the given budget of \$300,000.

GERPA will award high quality proposals as defined below, in three rounds or until funds are used up, whichever is shorter.

Deadline for proposal submission: 1st round; 31st January 2010

2nd round: 31st March 2010

3rd round: 30th June 2010

Decision for acceptance first round: 28th February 2010

Please note:

Researchers may need to bear in mind that while more time may help them to improve the quality of the proposals, they may also run the risk that the funds may have been used up.

Please send a title and an electronic copy of the proposal to:

CONTACT: Reem Limam

Email: reem.limam@cawtar.org

Eligible Applicant(s): Eligible proposals must include at least one researcher from the MENA region* (residing inside or outside the region) and at least one economist.

Proposal Elements and Length: The proposal should clearly state the research background and literature, research question, data, methodology, expected results, budget, time frame, team composition and any other information (optional). Applications could be made for seed money only (\$3000–5000) or full proposals. Seed money proposals should not exceed 3 pages, while full proposals can reach up to 5 pages. All research must be finished by December 2011.

Evaluation criteria

Two types of considerations will be taken into account. Each proposal will be rated according to the following criteria.

Criteria	Rank				
	1 – –	2 –	3 0	4 +	5 ++
1- Clear research question					
2- Originality of the methodology and approach					
3- Soundness of the theoretical framework					
4- Soundness of the gender aspect of the research					
5- Appropriate methodology					
6- Feasibility of the project/data availability					
7- Consistency of research budget					
8- Policy relevance					
9- Replicability of research to other countries					
10- Partnerships among researchers across themes, disciplines and countries					
Overall Evaluation					

Incomplete proposals will be disqualified. Referees will provide technical comments that help principal investigator/s improve/develop their research project. The comments of the reviewers become a condition for completion.

* The definition of the MENA region follows the World Bank delineation which includes the following countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine/West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Djibouti.

Evaluation process

Each submitted proposal will go through the following evaluation process

	Reviewed by research coordinator	Reviewed by research coordinator + 2 reviewers	Reviewed by research coordinator + 2 reviewers + 1 GERPA Advisory Committee member
Requested seed money \$ 3-5,000	X		
Budget \$ 10-70,000		X	
Budget above 70,000			X
Dispute cases			X

GERPA website: www.gerparesearch.org

CAWTAR website: www.cawtar.org