

Call for concept notes: Socio-economic impacts of artificial intelligence in Africa

URL: <https://idrc-crdi.ca/en/call-concept-notes-socio-economic-impacts-artificial-intelligence-africa>

Funding amount and duration of funding: CAD 1 million for 36 months.

Funder deadline: 17 September 2025

UCT Internal Deadlines

- **UCT Intention to submit deadline:** Please complete [Intension-to- Submit](#) form by **20 August 2025**
- **UCT eRA:** Approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system is **REQUIRED** before submission to the funder. Applicants should:
 - Complete the Intention to submit form and contact the faculty finance/budget reviewer by no later than **20 August 2025**
 - [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) should reach the Finance Approver by no later than **10 September 2025**

Contacts: Faculty of Health Sciences: FHS.ResearchFunding@uct.ac.za ; All Other Faculties - internationalgrants@uct.ac.za

About the Funding Opportunity

This call supports research that explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping labour markets, productivity, and inequality across Africa, supporting policymakers to ensure AI works for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

IDRC invites concept notes that explore the socio-economic impacts of AI in African low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with a focus on differential impacts, inequality, and marginalized populations. Projects should address key knowledge gaps and generate evidence to guide responsible AI policies.

Research should align with one or more of the following themes:

- **Labour and Livelihoods:** How AI is transforming labour markets and employment, especially for youth and informal workers.
- **Productivity and Economic Transformation:** The role of AI in reshaping sectors and supporting inclusive growth.
- **Poverty and Inequality:** Risks of exclusion and unequal benefit distribution across demographic groups.
- **Global Inequality and AI Colonialism:** Power imbalances in AI development and strategies for local innovation.

Through this call, AI4D will award up to four grants for up to CAD1 million per project. Projects must be completed within 36 months, including all research and reporting activities. Only short-listed teams will be asked to submit full research proposals for review and funding consideration. Selected projects are anticipated to begin on 01 January 2026.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be legally registered organizations based in African LMICs, with relevant expertise and institutional capacity. Proposals and team expertise must align with the call's themes. Teams need to meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the call.

More details

- For more information, please read the detailed [Call for Concept Notes](#).
- Following the launch of the call for proposals, IDRC will organize an information session to address any queries from potential applicants. This will take place on 27 August 2025, from 8 to 9 a.m. EDT. [Click here to join the session](#).

Submission Process

This call for concept notes requires the PI to complete an online application on the funder’s portal, the [Survey Monkey application platform](#), as well as request institutional approval via UCT’s electronic Research Administration ([eRA](#)) system is required before submission.

Format and requirements for proposals

The [application form](#) for this call for concept notes includes nine fields that applicants will need to complete, considering the maximum number of words allocated per question.

Additional Required Documents and Information

As part of the application, applicants must prepare the following:

- One-page CVs for the PI and proposed team members
- Signed letters of commitment from each applicant organisation
- Legal registration documents
- High-level budget in local currency using the [IDRC budget template](#). IDRC budget template (refer to IDRC’s General Terms and Conditions for guidance [here](#))
- Disclosure of any use of generative AI in the application development
- Optional supporting documents such as reference letters, consortium letters, workplans, stakeholder endorsements, and other relevant legal documents

UCT internal requirements

| | Deadline |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| PI to initiate an eRA Proposal Approval request and alert their faculty finance office of the budgetary support needed | Immediately |
| PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request with a draft budget to the Budget Reviewer step on eRA at least 4 weeks before the funder deadline | 20 Aug 2025 |
| PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request to the Finance Approver step on eRA at least 2 weeks before the funder deadline | 03 Sept 2025 |
| Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA at least 1 week before the funder deadline | 10 Sept 2025 |
| PI to submit the application on the funder portal by the funder deadline | 17 Sept 2025 |

Please complete the [intention-to-submit](#) form if you intend to apply for this call.