



Request for Research Proposal

Open Call: Women's Economic Empowerment in Transport

1. Introduction

Sustainable, affordable and accessible transport is fundamental to inclusive economic growth. Yet transport systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are frequently designed and evaluated without women's economic lives and personal safety in view, limiting their ability to work, trade, and move freely.

Women make up only 12% of the global transport and storage workforce¹ and hold just 17% of executive and managerial roles in transport and supply chain companies worldwide, despite representing 34% of entry-level roles in the sector². In transport research specifically, women account for fewer than 18% of the most cited authors over the past fifty years, with the gap widest in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.³ These gaps are mutually reinforcing: research that overlooks women's economic empowerment produces policy that does the same, while a field with few women researchers is less likely to ask the questions that would close that gap.

The United Kingdom has a strong global track record in transport research for international development, reflected in FCDO-funded programmes such as the [High Volume Transport \(HVT\) programme](#), the [Research for Community Access Partnership \(ReCAP\)](#) and the [ieConnect for Impact programme](#). The [Research on Infrastructure in Developing Economies \(RIDE\)](#) Programme builds on this foundation to deliver high-quality, high-impact research, positioning research as a public good that pushes the frontier of knowledge, with the potential for systemic, transformational change.

Alongside its transport research portfolio, the United Kingdom has a strong track record in Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) research, reflected in FCDO-funded programmes such as [Women's Economic Empowerment and Growth in Low-Income Countries \(2013–2018\)](#), the [Work and Opportunities for Women \(WOW\) programme \(2017–2025\)](#) and, alongside IZA – Institute of Labor Economics, the [Gender, Growth, and Labour Markets in Low-Income Countries \(G²LM|LIC\) programme](#), launched in 2019 as an extension of the IZA/FCDO partnership established in 2011, and concluded in 2026.

While this body of work has built a strong evidence base on gender and labour markets broadly, a gap remains on how transport specifically shapes, and is shaped by, Women's Economic Empowerment.

¹ International Labour Organization (2023) cited in World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Investment Bank, GIZ and International Transport Forum (2025) Addressing Barriers to Women's Participation in Transport, World Bank. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099010925132542721/pdf/P506086-86091978-a3ad-4c47-9bd9-942a8efc6448.pdf>

² World Economic Forum (2023) cited in World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Investment Bank, GIZ and International Transport Forum (2025) Addressing Barriers to Women's Participation in Transport, World Bank
Souche-Le Corvec, S. (2025). Trends affecting women's contributions in transportation science. A brief bibliometric analysis. Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 34, 101714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2025.101714>



Existing evidence on gender-responsive mobility — shaped by availability, affordability, accessibility, social acceptability, and safety — shows how transport systems can enable or constrain women's access to jobs, education, and services. This call extends RIDE's ambition to build on that evidence base across the full range of mobility systems that shape women's economic lives in LMICs.

2. About this call

RIDE aims to generate high-quality evidence and novel insights on transport infrastructure and service challenges in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia through action-oriented research and partnership. This is an open call for research proposals on **Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in transport**. The call is managed by RIDE's Partnership Pillar, led by *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*, and RIDE's Research Pillar, led by the World Resources Institute (WRI), delivered in partnership with [WomenMobilizeWomen \(WMW\)](#).

Research Uptake into Practice: The primary goal of this call is practical, reportable change: concrete improvements to transport infrastructure, services, policies, or operational practices that improve mobility, safety, accessibility, or inclusion for women and vulnerable groups. Proposals are expected to already know which decision-makers they will work with to make that change happen, not identify them after the research is complete. This call is further shaped by the following considerations:

- **Closing a persistent evidence gap:** dedicated funding for research that treats Women's Economic Empowerment as the central subject, not a secondary lens, generating evidence that can directly inform FCDO's research and policy programming.
- **Aligning with and informing FCDO priorities:** this call responds to FCDO's continued focus on violence against women and girls (VAWG), and on climate resilience and mitigation. This call treats freedom from violence as integral to women's economic empowerment, not a parallel concern, and treats the low-carbon transport transition as a source of economic opportunity for women, not only a risk of exclusion.
- **Strengthening female and LMIC research leadership:** evaluation criteria weight the involvement of female and female LMIC-based researchers as a core factor.
- **Leveraging an established network:** WMW and the [Global Alliance for Feminist Transport](#) volunteer network of over 40 member organisations act as partner for the reach and implementation of this call as well as support the dissemination of its findings for greater impact.

2.1. Research Themes

This call funds research on specific transport elements through which Women's Economic Empowerment can be enabled or constrained: Women's ability to enter and remain in employment, access markets and customers, control their time and income, pursue economic opportunities, and respond to economic shocks depends in part on whether transport systems are safe, affordable, reliable, accessible, and responsive to their needs. The research themes below address specific transport conditions that can constrain or enable these dimensions of women's economic empowerment. Proposals are expected to demonstrate not only that women experience a transport disadvantage, but how that disadvantage translates into a measurable constraint on their economic participation. Proposals are encouraged to consider the implications of these findings for public investment and financing decisions, including how improvements in women's transport access may



translate into changes in labour force participation, productivity, income, business activity, or other measurable economic outcomes.

Violence against women and girls in transit can directly constrain Women's Economic Empowerment by limiting where, when, how, and whether women travel for work and economic activity. Fear of harassment or violence may lead women to reject jobs, avoid markets or customers, change working hours, forgo education or training, pay more for safer modes, or withdraw from economic opportunities altogether. While evidence on harassment and violence in transport settings is extensive globally, it remains methodologically inconsistent and particularly thin in LMIC and informal transport contexts. These constraints may also be shaped by social norms and expectations around women's mobility and participation in the transport sector, including perceptions of safety, appropriate occupations, and women's suitability for transport-related work. Evidence that quantifies how these constraints translate into lost income, employment, business opportunities, or economic agency is even more limited. Proposals under this theme should establish this economic link and use the resulting evidence to inform a specific change in transport practice, service, infrastructure, regulation, or operations.

Climate-related disruption to transport can undermine Women's Economic Empowerment by interrupting women's access to employment, markets, customers, supply chains, childcare and other service infrastructure. These effects may be particularly significant where women have less access to alternative transport, fewer financial buffers, or greater responsibility for unpaid care. Transport disruption therefore does not translate into the same economic consequences for all users. Proposals under this theme should identify how and when transport disruption translates into economic loss for women (including lost income, customers, employment, productive time, or business continuity) and the point at which temporary disruption becomes difficult or impossible to recover from. The research should use this evidence to inform a specific resilience, adaptation, investment, or operational recommendation.

The illustrative research question for each theme below is indicative. Proposals are not expected to address it directly.

Theme	Illustrative focus areas
Violence against women and girls in transit	How harassment and violence on public and informal transport as well as social norms around women's mobility and employment shape women's mode choice, timing, and range of travel, and the resulting cost to their economic participation. For example: what does restricting travel time, routes, or job choices out of fear of violence cost women in income or opportunity, and what would a transport operator or regulator need to change to remove that cost? How do social expectations translate into employment decisions?
Climate resilience	How climate shocks disrupt women's transport-dependent economic activity. For example: when a climate event damages a transport route, how long can women afford to lose access before the economic damage becomes permanent (a lost customer, a lost job) and is that breaking point reached sooner for women than for men?



2.2. Eligibility, Scope and Collaboration

This call is open to individual research teams or research consortia based at universities and research institutes. Teams may be based anywhere, but research must focus on an LMIC context, and partnership with LMIC-based institutions is strongly encouraged. Proposals must include a country or regional focus selected from RIDE's partner countries:

- **Group 1 Priority Countries:** Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania
- **Group 2 Affiliate Countries:** Ghana, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam

We strongly encourage applications from, and led by, women researchers and researchers based in Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

2.3. Format and Content

2.3.1. Part 1: Narrative Proposal and CVs

- Identify the lead institution and all participating institutions, including LMIC partners.
- Specify which theme(s) from Section 2 you will address and your geographic focus.
- Articulate the specific research question(s), the knowledge gap (incl. scientific evidence), and why it matters.
- Show how findings could inform the economic case for investment, including evidence that can be translated into productivity, labour force participation, income, or other economic returns.
- Set out your uptake and impact pathway (see Section 3.1): the specific policy actors and windows targeted, and how they will be engaged throughout the research.
- Explain your methodology and approach.
- Explain how the proposed team's skills, roles and composition make it well-placed to deliver the research.
- Attach CVs of all research team members delivering the project.

2.3.2. Part 2: Timeline, Theory of Change and High-level Budget

- An overview of planned activities/ workplan and timeline.
- A Theory of Change showing how activities and outputs are expected to lead to outcomes, including the specific policy actors or decisions the research aims to influence.
- A high-level budget overview showing allocation by theme, by participating institution (including LMIC partners), and overall project cost (incl. travels), with brief justification for major items.

2.3.3. Part 3: Detailed Budget Template

- Submit a detailed project budget using the *GIZ Budget Template* (MS Excel), provided in Annex A.
- The budget must clearly set out the proposed allocation of costs by budget line and, where applicable, by participating institution and major project activity. All costs should be entered in accordance with the categories, guidance, and format specified in the template.



3. Mandatory Requirements

3.1. Research Uptake and Impact Strategy

This is a core requirement of this call. A strong uptake plan names the specific policy actors and policy windows the research is aimed at, and builds their engagement into the research process itself, rather than presenting findings to them only once the research is complete. For example, if a project aims to influence a transport operator or regulator to adopt hiring targets and safe working conditions for women drivers and technicians, that operator or regulator should be a research participant from the start, for instance through joint workshops during the research, so that by the time findings are ready, decision-makers already understand the evidence behind them. Proposals must therefore include:

- **Named policy actors:** the specific national, sub-national, or institutional decision-makers the research aims to reach, not a general reference to "policymakers." These may include transport authorities, finance ministries, development finance institutions, infrastructure investors, operators, or other relevant decision-makers.
- **Named policy windows:** the regulation, standard, investment decision, or programme design the research aims to influence, and the timing that makes it actionable. These may include transport investment plans, infrastructure financing decisions, budget allocations, or programme design.
- **An engagement plan:** concrete activities (e.g. joint workshops, advisory input, co-designed pilots) that involve those actors during the research.

3.2. Partnerships and Collaboration

Collaboration i.e. with WMW and the Global Alliance for Feminist Transport is an integral part of research implementation under this call. The partnership is intended to strengthen the relevance, visibility, knowledge exchange, and uptake of the research, while connecting funded researchers to a wider community of feminist transport practitioners and researchers. The precise form and timing of collaboration will be agreed in light of the research theme, geographic focus, and needs of each project.

At a minimum, funded teams will be expected to:

- **Participate in up to two virtual Community of Practice sessions**, including, where appropriate, presenting interim findings and engaging with feedback from the wider community of researchers and practitioners.
- **Contribute to up to two virtual webinars, lectures, or other online learning activities** as part of RIDE's capacity-development and knowledge-sharing activities. The format and content will be agreed with the RIDE/WMW team.



- **Present the research and/or findings at at least one regional or local event** relevant to the project's thematic or geographic focus, to support dissemination and engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- **Contribute, where relevant, case study examples and written inputs to cross-programme synthesis and learning products** bringing together evidence from FCDO-funded research on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), including short summaries of relevant findings, approaches, lessons, and implications for policy and practice.
- **Contribute a researcher profile** to a potential future *Remarkable Female Researchers in Transport* edition co-developed by RIDE and WMW, subject to the development and timing of that initiative and the researcher's consent.

3.3.Data and Ethics

- **Gender, intersectionality and inclusion:** Projects must collect, analyse, and report gender-disaggregated data wherever relevant, and should use an intersectional approach to examine how outcomes vary across relevant characteristics such as age, disability, socioeconomic status, location, ethnicity, migration status, or other context-specific factors. In the implementation, projects must explain how these dimensions will be incorporated into data collection and analysis and justify any dimensions that cannot be included. Projects must also report the gender composition and leadership of the research team, including participation by women researchers and women LMIC-based researchers. All data collection and management must comply with applicable ethical and data-protection requirements.
- **Open data approach:** Provide quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the research, where legally and ethically permissible, as raw, open, non-proprietary data (e.g. CSV) for upload to the [Transport Data Commons](#) platform and other relevant platforms. Write a short blog post (maximum 1,500 words) to inform the public about newly available data produced through the research.
- Where research involves human subjects, institutions are responsible for obtaining ethical approvals from their own and relevant in-country authorities prior to fieldwork.

4. Evaluation Process and Criteria

All proposals will be assessed on individual merit against the criteria below. Proposals undergo technical and administrative review by the RIDE Consortia and FCDO for final selection.



Criterion	Weight
Strategic relevance and thematic fit: alignment with the WEE themes and research questions outlined in this call; clear articulation of the knowledge gap and why it matters.	25%
Technical quality and originality: robustness of methodology; evidence that the research generates genuinely new insight rather than restating known challenges.	25%
Consortium strength and leadership: involvement of female researchers and LMIC-based researchers, including in leadership roles; demonstrated capacity to deliver.	10%
Uptake and impact pathway: named policy actors and policy windows; a credible, applied plan for engaging them throughout the research, not only at the end.	30%
Value for money and cross-cutting considerations: efficient use of resources relative to scope; incorporation of gender and inclusion principles beyond the core WEE focus; data management and open access commitments.	10%

5. Grant Terms and Conditions

Non-Profit Status

- Implementing institutions must be non-profit entities as defined in their articles of association and must operate on a non-profit basis.
- As GIZ (a German organisation) administers this call using FCDO funding, projects must meet German non-profit requirements. Specifically, the research project must promote public-benefit purposes in accordance with German Fiscal Code stipulations for non-profit organisations.
- For each institution involved in implementing the proposal that is expected to receive grant funds, applicants must submit one document from the list below as evidence of the institution's non-profit status. The document provided should be the one applicable to the institution's legal and tax status:
 - Notice of exemption
 - Corporation tax assessment
 - Provisional exemption certificate
 - Statutes
 - Shareholder Agreement
 - Confirmation of non-profit status

Type of Financing

- Implementing institutions will receive a Grant Agreement.
- All funds are administered in accordance with GIZ procedures.
- Implementing parties must not generate profit from grant funds.

Project Duration



- Research activities are expected to commence in January 2027, subject to the successful finalisation and execution of the Grant Agreement by the GIZ Contracting Department. The exact start date will be confirmed during the contracting process.
- Projects will have a maximum duration of 15 months and are expected to be completed by 31 March 2028.

Funding Amount

- This call will fund at least two research projects, each with a budget of between £150,000 and £200,000.
- A mark-up for administrative overheads is eligible for funding in principle, although these costs must not exceed 12% of direct expenditure.

Auditing Requirements

- Implementing institutions will be audited annually and upon project finalisation in accordance with GIZ procedures.
- Cost of the auditors will be covered by GIZ.

For further information on contractual and financial requirements, please visit:

<https://www.giz.de/en/partner/funding/downloads> (see “Grant Agreements with non-German recipients”).

6. Indicative Timeline of this Call

Date	Activity
20 Nov 2026	Submission deadline for all proposals (by CoB / 6:00 pm CEST)
21 Nov – 11 Dec 2026	Evaluation period
14/18 Dec 2026	Award letters (incl. templates for grant contract processing)
18 Dec 2026 – 7 Jan 2027	Finalisation period for contracting documents
8 Jan 2026	Handover of contracting documents to GIZ Contracting Department
Jan - Feb 2027	Contract processing period and preparation of first payment request
Early Mar 2027	Expected contract start date and submission of first payment request

7. Submission

Please submit the following documents as zipped file to Cristal Stefania Cedeno Tobanda (cristal.cedenotobanda@giz.de) and Viviane Weinmann (viviane.weinmann@giz.de) by **Friday, 20th November 2026 (by CoB / 6:00 pm CET)**.

For each proposal:

- **Cover letter** (PDF format) stating: (a) lead institution and partner organisations; (b) thematic area(s) selected for proposal; and (c) contact person’s name and email for queries.



- **Research proposal** (Word format) maximum 4,000 words excluding CVs and/ or bibliography, budget overview and Theory of Change, addressing all requirements in Section 2 and Section 3.
- **Detailed budget proposal** (Excel format) as outlined in Section 2.
- Evidence of the non-profit status as outlined in Section 5.

Questions about this call can be directed to: Cristal Stefania Cedeno Tobanda
(cristal.cedenotobanda@giz.de)

8. Legal Disclaimer

This restricted research call is being issued in the context of the prospective continuation (Phase 2) Commissioning of the RIDE programme by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH, as the lead consortium partner, under a standing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations.

The release of this restricted call does not constitute a formal commitment by FCDO, GIZ, or any other entity to commission or fund the research described herein. Progression of this call, the assessment of proposals, and any potential contracting are entirely conditional upon the successful conclusion and activation of the relevant MoU and associated commissioning arrangements between FCDO and GIZ.

Accordingly:

- Participation in this restricted call and submission of any proposal does not create any contractual, financial, or legal obligation on the part of FCDO, GIZ, or their partners.
- FCDO and GIZ reserve the absolute right to amend, postpone, withdraw, or cancel this call in whole or in part, without notice and without incurring any liability or obligation to participating organisations.
- No bidder shall be entitled to claim or receive compensation, reimbursement, or any form of redress for costs incurred in preparing or submitting a proposal, or for any other related activity, whether the MoU or commissioning process proceeds.
- Any subsequent decision to fund or contract research will be subject to FCDO's formal procurement and governance processes and will not be legally binding until a written contract is duly executed by authorised representatives of the contracting parties.
- By submitting a proposal in response to this call, invited organisations acknowledge and accept the above conditions in full and waive any right to legal or financial claim against FCDO, GIZ, or their representatives arising from this process or its possible non implementation.