**Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE):**

**Data and Evidence for Smart Policy Design[[1]](#footnote-2)**

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**Request for Proposal(RFP) for Pilot Projects**

*The Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) program at HarvardUniversityaims to identify and supportPilot Projects that link policy actors with researchers; its goal is to create innovative and effective ways to utilize data and research evidence to improve public policies, programs and social outcomes. BCURE Pakistan is now accepting Pilot Project applications from individuals and groups working on a range of issues in Pakistan. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis, beginning in January2015.*

**Application Form and Instructions**

**Overview**: The Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) program is being implemented by Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) at the Center for International Development at Harvard University, in collaboration with the Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP). BCURE Pakistan aims to support Pakistani policymaker and program implementers’ efforts to leverage data and research evidence to inform policy-relevant decisions. To this end, BCURE Pakistan will support multiple groups working throughout Pakistan that use innovative means to incorporate data and/or research evidence to improve policies, with a particular emphasis on projects that seek to make the implementation of programs and/or policies more effective. Selected groups will receive technical assistance from a dedicated research team and, when necessary, seed funding to support project implementation.

**Focus**: Proposals will be selected from a wide variety of sectors. Successful proposals will clearly outline an opportunity to use data or research evidence to improve the design and/or implementation of public policiesor programs through the development of new tools, analytical techniques or application of research evidence, with technical assistance from a research team.

For examples of pilot projects that have already been selected, visit: <http://epod.cid.harvard.edu/pilot-projects>.

**Who Can Apply:** Applications will be accepted from individuals or groups within the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, or private sector companies whose projects have a clear social/public-serving mission, as well as from researchers or research teams with one of the types of policy partners described above.

**Duration and Support Specifications (Financial and Technical):** Selected projects will run for a maximum of two years. Technical assistance will be awarded; additionally, projects can apply for up to Rs. 1,000,000 for necessary project expenses. (An increase to this limit may be considered in extraordinary circumstances.) Successful projects should develop products, tools, research or learnings that will continue to be used and incorporated into programs and policies long after technical assistance and funding has ended. We may work with highly successful projects to determine how they can be further developed beyond the initial pilot stage; this continuation will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Awardee requirements:** In order to receive support, selected applicants will be required to:

1. Provide quarterly progress reports, including narrative and financial (where applicable) updates. Project members must also be willing to engage in verbal communication via teleconference with the BCURE Pakistan team at regular mutually-determined intervals. Groups will submit a final written report upon completion of the project.
2. Agree to participate in a BCURE activity. This activity could be a policy dialogue, networking event, evidence workshop, training session, matchmaking conference or other event.
3. Work collaboratively with the BCURE Pakistan team for the development of a case study about the pilot project, should the project be selected for a case study.

**Review Process:** Selection of awards will proceed in the following manner:

Proposals will be reviewed and selected by BCURE Pakistanteam in consultation with the core BCURE team at Harvard. After receiving the proposal, the BCURE team may revert back to the applicants with clarifying questions before determining whether or not to grant approval. Proposals can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

**Requirements:**

Awarded projects will be required to submit a formal letter of intent from the partnering institution. While it is possible to submit a proposal without a letter of intent, we strongly recommend securing such a letter prior to the award announcement to expedite the project timeline.

In the case that your project has a data-gathering component involving human participants, the project team will be required to work with researchers to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the host institution of your research partner. If there are questions as to whether or not your project will require IRB approval, please contact EPoD BCURE Program Manager Robert Rosenbaum at [robert\_rosenbaum@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:robert_rosenbaum@hks.harvard.edu).

**Budget (if applicable):**

If your proposal is accepted for a financial award, funds will be provided under a contract from CERPto your host institution or a relevant consultant/vendor per your project plan, using the following guidelines:

* Awards that include funding will normally be set up as milestone-based contracts, with specific milestones determined individually for each project.
* Allowable costs include those approved for implementation of the selected project (e.g., software programs), training, travel and subsistence as necessary and allowable, and funding for technical support or project implementation (including for consultants or vendors).
* Awarded funding may not be used to purchase equipment.

**How to Apply:** Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis**.** To apply, please complete the attached Proposal Application Form as well as a Budget Form (if applicable), and send to adeel.shafqat@cerp.org.pk

**BCURE Pilot Project Proposal Form**

1. Policy Partner Team

*Name(s), affiliation(s) and email address(es) of the Project Lead and the other key personnel.*

Technology for People Initiative (TPI) – LUMS

1. Research Partner Team

*Name(s), affiliation(s) and email address(es) of the collaborating researcher(s) if known at the time of the proposal. (If there is no research partner, the BCURE Pakistan team will help facilitate such a partnership if the project is selected for approval.)*

Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP)

1. EPoD Research Counterpart

*Provide the name of the EPoD Research team member who will advise this project. (If there is no EPoD counterpart yet determined, please indicate below and the EPoD team will help facilitate such a partnership if the project is selected for approval.)*

Professor Asim Khwaja, EPoD co-Director and BCURE Pakistan Country Lead

1. Institution

*Please indicate the lead institution through which the project will be managed. Also provide contact details for the signatory on the contract.*

**Technology for People Initiative (TPI)**

Technology for People Initiative (TPI) is a research and design institute focused on leveraging technology to design innovative, low-cost and practical solutions to problems prevalent in the public and development sector. With a strong focus on achieving maximum impact, TPI frequently collaborates with international and local civil society organizations and various departments of the government to develop solutions for problems in healthcare, education, governance, and accountability. Being located at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), one of the country’s most prestigious universities, TPI also has the advantage of being closely connected with a diverse and interdisciplinary set of academics and researchers.

The contract will be signed by Ali Inam, Director, TPI, [ali.inam11@gmail.com](mailto:ali.inam11@gmail.com), and Dr. Sohail Naqvi, Vice Chancellor, LUMS, [vc@lums.edu.pk](mailto:vc@lums.edu.pk)

1. Timeline Overview

*What is the start and end date of your proposed project?*

18 August, 2015 – 17 August, 2016

1. Project Title

Building the Appetite and Capacity to Use Data through Statistan and Moodistan

1. Abstract:

*Please briefly describe the project you are submitting for consideration, making sure to highlight the area in which data and/or research evidence is lacking and how your project would address this evidence gap to improve decision making in your organization or enhance the design of a policy or program*.(500 words or less)

The data deluge of the 21st century presents opportunities to inform, and thus empower, policymakers and the public in ways not possible before. For instance, broad patterns hidden within the noise can be identified using big data analytics and daily developments can be zoomed out to view the bigger picture using data visualizations. Despite these advancements, most important national issues remain broadly elusive in Pakistan, ranked 67th out of 77 countries in data openness.[[2]](#footnote-3)

We propose developing a two-part data innovation platform that aims to expose policymakers, young researchers, NGOs and the public to high quality data and research in useful, interesting and compelling ways as a means of increasing the demand and ability to use this information.

The first platform, called Statistan, targets policymakers, researchers, journalists and NGOs to increase the availability of meaningful data and research on the specific issue areas in which they work. The platform will pool together existing data sets and research findings and integrate them onto the map of Pakistan, enabling users to see the direct application of these data. By putting data at the forefront and letting it speak for itself, we hope to cut through the noise and put an objective spotlight on issues that are of greatest national concern.

The second platform, called Moodistan, will process natural language articles and social media posts in order to gauge the mood of Pakistanis within the context of different themes that are of significant interest to the public. This tool primarily seeks to encourage and foster a culture of civic engagement with data in order to better inform the public in innovative and entertaining ways by operating at the intersection of data, technology and civic action. Moreover, Moodistan aims to use data to make important issues accessible to citizens in order to improve participation and accountability by civil society.

While each platform has a different target audience, they will both be open access, enabling any interested user to engage with the data.

1. Problem Statement and Project Plan

*What is the primary problem or challenge you plan to address through this project? How will your project meet this challenge? (750 words or less)*

While there has been a significant increase in the number of structured data sets over the past decade, this trend has been unable to stimulate a shift towards evidence-based reporting and policymaking. Moreover, regular and reliable sources of data such as newspaper articles remain entirely untapped.

Despite this abundance of data sources, policymakers, academics and journalists are unable to gain access to data in a manner that would support meaningful engagement, and the public at large often lacks the interest and know-how to effectively understand what the data is saying.

In order to fill this evidence gap, we propose developing two data platforms: an open-access web tool that would allow users to visualize datasets using maps and charts; and a citizen focused platform that aims to stimulate a culture of civic engagement with data and research.

These projects will include:

1. **Data Portal:**

Both platforms will utilize data portals.

With Statistan, users will have the option to visualize data sets using maps and charts along with being able to track changes in variables over time. The tool will allow users to visualize results of specific queries, choose indicators to graph, zoom in and out of regions and compare variables across regions. All data on the portal will be accessible through a RESTful API, allowing third party developers to build apps using the datasets available.

Using newspaper archives, Moodistan will utilize online publications and data collected through social media such as Twitter and Facebook, to create a tool to gauge the mood of Pakistanis within the context of different themes that are of interest to the masses, such as economics, politics, sports, security, entertainment, environment, weather and social. For each theme, we would present the mood in terms of intensity as a continuous spectrum from negative to positive and this ‘barometer’ will be visualized as a vertical barometer graphic**.**

1. **Infographics:**

The portals will use embeddable infographics that presents daily or up to hourly values for each of the themes defined. For instance, with Moodistan, users will have the option to select specific themes and explore the top two or three articles/social media posts that played a significant role in determining the related mood for the particular theme. Users will then be able to open up the original articles using these links in order to read up more on these events. Both portals will feature:

Facebook/Twitter Share: All infographics, maps and graphs will have a “share” button allowing users to Facebook share or tweet the image of the current view of the tool with a custom message.

Embeddable Maps/Graphs: All maps/graphs would also have an embed button that would reveal a code snippet which would allow others to embed maps/graphs in their web pages. This is particularly targeted towards journalists so that they can complement their stories with data driven visualizations from the tool.

Exportable Raw Data: The portal will also include the ability to export raw data to users in csv or some other standard format.

1. **Information Extraction[[3]](#footnote-4):**

Statistan will allow users to input “What” (Event), “Where” (Location), “Who” (Actor), “When” (Date/Time), “How” (Subfilter for Event) and “How Much” (Intensity).

Output would include spatial, tabular and temporal view and the user will have the option to export data, all views will be shareable and embeddable.

1. **Trend Analysis:**

With Moodistan, users will be able to trace mood trends across time for one or more themes, visualizing the impact of specific events on the mood within a context of one or more themes through the use of event lines projected on the trends. The trend lines will feature hover capabilities where the most relevant or important articles will be automatically highlighted by hovering the mouse over a particular point on the trend line. Users will also have the capability to analyze the impact of particular events on the mood, within the context of one or more themes, by typing in particular events and dates which will be integrated and visualized as vertical lines on the mood trend graph. Finally, Moodistan will feature correlational analysis opportunities, enabling users to plot two “sector moods” next to each other to see how they track each other over time. This could prove especially insightful when plotted against major historical events.

1. **Application and Integration into BCURE training:**

Working with CERP and EPoD, both data platforms will have applicability in BCURE training modules. In particular, CERP will plan to use Statistan to highlight the value and applicability of high-quality data-use to trainees from the National School of Public Policy. The platform will thus enable project leads to create simulated exercises for training purposes. Moodistan, too, will help people get over the idea that data is only about financial aggregate numbers (such as GDP) and can instead be used for qualitative subject-area analysis.

1. Broader Implications and Policy Relevance

*Will the results and lessons learned from the project have relevance to other programs or policies beyond this particular case and these particular end users?How will you ensure that the knowledge gained from this project is shared with other individuals or organizations working in this policy area? Are there other sectors where findings may also be relevant?(200 words or less)*

With these tools, we aim to encourage the use of data and evidence in the public discourse in order to empower all Pakistanis by making issues of national importance more accessible, increasing public engagement in the political discourse. With elements aimed at both policy actors and the general public, we hope to simultaneously increase the broad and specific demand for better access to data. And by introducing citizens to a more entertaining means of sifting through data we hope to stimulate a culture of data-driven research, allowing citizens to be better informed about events and issues that are of greatest interest to them. Finally, we believe that there is no better way to increase the capacity of policy actors than by facilitating first-hand data use experience.

1. Policy-Research Partnership
2. *If this proposal is being submitted by the policy partner, explain how support from a research team will help complete the project.(150 words or less)*

This proposal is being submitted jointly by CERP and TPI. While both teams will work collaboratively on the projects, Statistan will live with TPI while CERP will be provided with an API to incorporate Moodistan on its website. CERP will provide research expertise and access to training outlets, while TPI, also offering research expertise through its connection to the Lahore University of Management Science as well as its public reach as a civil society organization (CSO).

1. If this proposal is being submitted by the research team, explain how you will ensure that the work has lasting effects with the policy counterpart. (150 words or less)
2. Measuring Success

*How will you define success for your project? How will you measure it?(200 words or less)*

In order to gauge the accuracy and precision of the tool we will test the results of the tool using dataset labelled by hand and match outcomes.

Furthermore, in order to measure public engagement with the tool we will be using statistics such as the following:

1. Number of page views and other traffic statistics for the Statistan and Moodistan portals
2. Number of datasets extracted by people using the tools
3. Number of times out maps/graphs are embedded in news stories
4. Number of times our extracted datasets are used in an academic study
5. Number of apps built by third party developers using our API
6. Number of Facebook shares and Twitter tweets generated from the tools

CERP may plan and conduct a survey to gauge the opinion of users regarding aspects such as the usefulness and ease of use of the tools.

1. Timeline

Provide a projected timeline for the project will major steps and outputs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Approximate timeframe** | **Outputs** |
| Online Platform  Improve and Polish the Tool | 6 months  6 months | Website Wireframe, Functional Prototype, Provide CERP with an API key for incorporating Moodistan into their website  Incorporate feedback and improve accuracy of the tool |

1. Project Personnel

*Describe the project team and their credentials to undertake this project. (500 words or less)*

**Dr. Muhammad Fareed Zaffar (TPI):** Dr. Zaffar is currently an Assistant Professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in the Department of Computer Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Duke University, USA. He has previously worked with Stanford Research Institute and is an expert in Network and Distributed Systems Security.

**Dr. Tariq Mahmood Jadoon (TPI):** Dr. Jadoon is currently an Associate Professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in the Department of Electrical Engineering. He completed his Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Strathclyde, UK in 1998. Before joining LUMS, he worked at the NWFP University of Engineering & Technology (UET), Peshawar. There he co-founded the Center for Computer Information Systems Engineering and taught at the EEE department.

**Ali Inam (Director, TPI)**

**Anum Pasha (Engagement Lead, TPI)**

**Research Assistants:**

Hashim Shareef, Saad Ismail and Raza Ahmed

1. Is Financial Support Requested with this Proposal?

Yes  No

*If yes, please complete the remaining questions. If no, you may leave the remainder of this form blank.*

1. Budget

*What is the total amount of funding requested? Please also attach a budget, in a spreadsheet, separately and include detailed notes on each line item in this section.*

USD 18,000

1. Other Sources of Funding

*Does this project have other sources of funding? If so, what is the source and what proportion of the total funding does this proposal comprise?*

TPI-LUMS intends to match the funding provided by CERP-BCURE using its core funds which comprise of contributions from a consortium of donors.

1. This initiative and implemented by a consortium of organizations led by Evidence for

   Policy Design (EPoD) at Harvard Universityandis funded by the UK Department

   of International Development (DFID), however, the views expressed do not necessarily

   reflect the UK Government’s official policies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Open Data Indicator’s Open Data Barometer (ODB) 2015 http://barometer.opendataresearch.org/report/analysis/rankings.html [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Basic demo version available at <http://106.186.112.144> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)