

# **CIDRN Research Grants**

## **Brochure for 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals**

**November, 2014**



**China International Development Research Network (CIDRN)**



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# I. Call for 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Research Proposals

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals– Deadline 19 December 2014**

### **1. Background**

1.1 With rapid economic growth and the increasing scale of its foreign aid, as well as its state leaders' openness and dynamics in international development cooperation, China's role in international development has increasingly drawn much attention in the world. Moreover, new emerging nations as well as their associations are seeking more potential cooperation opportunities, such as the establishment of a BRICS Bank, the setting up of an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the like. However, current research is not sufficient to meet the required policy needs. A series of talks and discussions have been taking place with implications for how China, as a key emerging nation will shape its role and deal with possible challenges. The main international policy arenas involved are the follow-on from the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4, Busan, Korea in 2011) when global society started the plan for the new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation; the current negotiations in the United Nations on a post-2015 international development agenda, based around sustainable development goals; and the G20, where China will assume the Chair for 2016, and hence also be a G20 "troika" member in 2015 and 2017.

1.2 The China International Development Research Network (CIDRN) was assembled to address this knowledge gap. A kick-off workshop was held in Beijing on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 and 2013-2014 annual meeting was also held in Beijing on 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2014. A Management Committee, a Strategic Oversight Committee and an International Advisory Committee have been constituted. The Research Centre for International Development (RCID) at the China Agricultural University, MOFCOM and DFID provide strategic oversight (See attached CIDRN Objectives and Processes Note –to attach as part of the Brochure).

### **2. Objectives**

2.1 The aim of the China and International Development Research Grant is to generate high-quality, original academic research that supports effective Government policy. Research funded by the grant will benefit from dissemination through the CIDRN and, through the links established by CIDRN, will reach government and international audiences as well.

Publication in refereed academic journals is a key objective. And a CIDRN/RCID Current Issues on International Development has been established (Website: <http://rcid.cau.edu.cn/col/col11028/index.html>). A website has been established, with an important role in disseminating outputs and the CIDRN Newsletter, of which 5 editions have

been issued, provides a wide range of information on the publications and activities of researchers in Network member institutions.

The CIDRN Annual Report for 2013-2014 provides detailed information on the achievements and operation of the Network in its first year, including a summary of the first round of funded research projects. Website: <http://rcid.cau.edu.cn/col/col11130/index.html>

### 3. Call for proposals

3.1 CIDRN invites all post-graduate students and staff from network members' affiliated institutions<sup>1</sup> to submit research proposals by **00:01 GMT+8:00, 19 December 2014** by email to **Ms. Ma Jiewen** at [mjwatcau@gmail.com](mailto:mjwatcau@gmail.com). A duplicate hard copy of the proposal needs to be submitted to Ms. Ma Jiewen by **00:01 GMT+8:00, 19 December 2014** at the following address:

MA JIEWEN  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, CHINA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY  
QINGHUADONGLU NO.17, HAIDIAN DISTRICT, 100083  
BEIJING, CHINA

北京市海淀区 清华东路 17 号, 中国农业大学人文与发展学院, 邮编: 100083  
马洁文 (收)

3.2 Proposals received after the deadlines will not be accepted, and it is the applicants' own responsibility to confirm by telephone with Ms. Ma Jiewen (+86-10-62737745, 15901029942) that their proposal has been received.

3.3 Clarifications may be requested not later than 7 days before the electronic submission deadline.

### 4. Research Field:

4. 1 Research proposals from two broad areas are eligible:

- **China's foreign aid, trade and investment in other developing countries and impact on poverty reduction and development progress**
- **The role of China in international development cooperation and agendas, such as the UN Post-2015 agenda, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, establishment and operation of the BRICS New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, G20 development agenda issues etc.**

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of CIDRN members' institutions can be found at Annex 1

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Applicants should bear in mind that the key objective of the CIDRN research fund is to support effective government policy in the field of international development. The scope of aid in this context is to be interpreted broadly to cover development assistance and foreign direct investment channeled through state and non-state organizations to developing countries. To this end, proposals with any of the following characteristics are encouraged:

- A focus on illuminating the lessons and experiences from China's development of labor intensive industrialization, with comparative studies of Chinese and African contexts and cases, aiming to promote effective development of Africa's industrialization;
- A focus on global attention and reactions to China's foreign aid, trade and investment, elucidating and examining Chinese standpoints and views;
- A focus on the facts and effects of China's foreign aid on "soft" areas, rather than "hardware" such as physical infrastructures in developing countries, notably as values, regulations, indicators and capacity building areas;
- A focus on the role and impacts of China in the evolving international development architecture and related agendas and cooperation.

4. 2 Topic suggestions proposed by CIDRN Members at the Annual Meeting in Beijing on 25 September 2014. Proposals for research on other topics are welcome:

- Chinese Development Finance Statistics: Creation of a Database – What Issues and Systems?
- What is "Smart Aid"? Design of China's aid policies and programming
- China's role in resource extraction industries and its resource-based financing approaches
- China's contribution to building health systems in developing countries
- China's response to the Ebola Crisis – assessing scale and impacts
- Successful development examples in Africa: what can we learn from case studies? (cf Tobacco production in Zimbabwe)
- China's Role in Industrialization in Africa
- China's development cooperation beyond Sub Saharan Africa
- The role of peace and security in development cooperation in contexts of fragility and conflict
- China's policy on non-interference in internal politics: current perspectives on principles and practice
- Global Governance - China's evolution from global Chaser to global Contributor: contributions on the level of values, principles and regulatory standards and regimes

- Designing the BRICS Bank (the New Development Bank) and the Asian International Infrastructure Bank (AIIB): Issues and Roles for China
- China's perspectives on bilateral versus multilateral aid
- China's role as Chair of G20 in 2016 – Potential Contribution to Development Issues

## 5. Proposal Categories

### 5.1

- **Special Research** undertaken on “hot” issues as the basis for policy recommendations to the government, with short versions published in newspapers and longer versions in Journals (10,000-50,000 Yuan)
- **Empirical studies, based on existing and new research**, published in journals or books, Chinese and English, leading to policy recommendations (50,000-100,000 Yuan)
- **Empirical studies based on systematic field work** on China's development cooperation, emerging as multiple products – journal articles, books, conference presentations etc. (100,000-200,000 Yuan).

## 6. Proposal Requirements

6.1 All proposals must be written in English and composed of the following elements, with the Administrative Proposal beginning on a new page:

Technical Proposal (maximum 1500 words; up to 2000 words for proposals above 50,000 Yuan)	Administrative Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cover page, specifying the title of the proposal;</li> <li>- Background / introduction;</li> <li>- Describe research and policy target, and relevance to China / other countries' aid practices and to development progress and poverty reduction in low-income countries;</li> <li>- Research methodology outline, including data collection, analysis and aggregation;</li> <li>- List of research outputs;</li> <li>- Research work plan. This section of the proposal should set out the main activities of the research, their content and duration, milestones/indicators, and delivery dates of outputs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget, with each expense corresponding to the research work plan in Chinese Yuan;</li> <li>- Organisation and staffing, setting out the responsibilities of the individual(s) undertaking the assignment;</li> <li>- Personnel qualifications, including Researcher Information Sheets (see Annex 2) and curriculum vitae (see Annex 3);</li> <li>- Signed letter of consent confirming capacity to carry out the research as described in the proposal, including signatures from a member of each affiliated institution if the proposal is collaborative.</li> </ul>



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- Literature review, setting out the current state of research on the proposal's subject matter and highlighting gaps in collective knowledge which the proposed research aims to fill (250-500 words and up to 1000 words for proposals above 50,000 Yuan).	
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## 7. Method and Criteria for Selection of Proposals

Proposals will be assessed by the International Advisory Committee in terms of a scoring system as set out below, adapted from the UK Economic and Social Research Council rating system for use by peer reviewers where 6 =Outstanding;5= Excellent; 4=Good; 3 =Satisfactory; 2= Fair/Some weaknesses; 1=Poor.

**Evaluation Score Sheet**

	Assessment Criteria	Points
<b>A</b>	<b>Research Objectives and Relevance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Research Strategy and Programme</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Outputs and potential impact</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Research Team and Collaboration with Other Institutions*</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Capacity to produce research results in English</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Value for money Index: C+D+E</b>	
	<b>*academic, government, international or civil society</b>	

## 8. Negotiations

8.1 Negotiations will take place between the Research Centre for International Development (RCID) at China Agricultural University<sup>2</sup> and successful applicants to pass on any guidance suggested by the CIDRN International Advisory Committee, and to confirm the proposed methodology, work plan, organisation and staffing, and finalisation of specific contract terms.

## 9. Award of Contract

9.1 After completing negotiations and with approval from the CIDRN Strategic Oversight Committee, RCID will award contracts to the selected applicants.

9.2 Selected applicants are expected to begin the assignment on the date specified in the contract.

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<sup>2</sup> RCID fulfils this role as host of the CIDRN secretariat.

## **10. Confidentiality**

- 10.1 Information related to evaluation of proposals and recommendations concerning awards shall not be disclosed to other applicants who submit the proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with the process, until the publication of the award of Contract.
- 10.2 During the evaluation process, applicants shall not disclose any information related to the application process to agencies and persons not officially concerned with the process.

DFID anti-corruption and anti-fraud provisions shall be observed.

## Annex 1

### CIDRN Members' Affiliated Institutions

<b>Universities:</b>		
● Research Center for International Development/ College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agricultural University	中国农业大学人文与发展学院/国际发展研究中心	<a href="http://rcid.cau.edu.cn">http://rcid.cau.edu.cn</a>
● School of International Studies/ Center for African Studies, Peking University	北京大学国际关系学院非洲研究中心	<a href="http://caspu.pku.edu.cn">http://caspu.pku.edu.cn</a>
● Institute for Global Health, Peking University	北京大学全球卫生研究中心	<a href="http://www.igh.pku.edu.cn">http://www.igh.pku.edu.cn</a>
● School of Public Policy and Management of Tsinghua University	清华大学公共管理学院	<a href="http://www.sppm.tsinghua.edu.cn">http://www.sppm.tsinghua.edu.cn</a>
● Center for International Agricultural Cooperation and Development/ Institute of International Economics, University of International Business and Economics	对外经济贸易大学国际经济研究院国际农业合作与发展研究中心	<a href="http://www.uibe.edu.cn">http://www.uibe.edu.cn</a>
● School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University	北京外国语大学国际关系学院	<a href="http://sird.bfsu.edu.cn">http://sird.bfsu.edu.cn</a>
● Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University	浙江师范大学非洲研究院	<a href="http://ias.zjnu.cn">http://ias.zjnu.cn</a>
● School of Advanced International and Area Studies, East China Normal University	华东师范大学国际关系与地区发展研究院	<a href="http://www.saias.ecnu.edu.cn">http://www.saias.ecnu.edu.cn</a>
● School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Fudan University	复旦大学国际关系与公共事务学院	<a href="http://www.sirpa.fudan.edu.cn/">http://www.sirpa.fudan.edu.cn/</a>
● China Institute for International Development, Economics College, Xiamen University	厦门大学经济学院中国国际发展研究所	<a href="http://www.soe.xmu.edu.cn">http://www.soe.xmu.edu.cn</a>
<b>Governmental Agencies:</b>		
● Institute of International Development Cooperation, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce	商务部国际贸易经济研究院国际发展合作研究所	<a href="http://www.caitec.org.cn">http://www.caitec.org.cn</a>
● China Center for Contemporary World Studies, International Department of Central Committee of C.P.C.	中共中央对外联络部当代世界研究中心	<a href="http://www.idcpc.org.cn">http://www.idcpc.org.cn</a>
● Institute for International Strategic Studies, Party School of the Central	中共中央党校国际战略研究所	<a href="http://www.ccps.gov.cn">http://www.ccps.gov.cn</a>

Committee of the C.P.C.		
● International Poverty Reduction Center in China	中国国际扶贫中心	<a href="http://www.iprcc.org.cn">http://www.iprcc.org.cn</a>
● Foreign Economic Cooperation Center (FECC), Ministry of Agriculture	农业部对外经济合作中心	<a href="http://www.fecc.moa.gov.cn">http://www.fecc.moa.gov.cn</a>
<b>Research Institutes:</b>		
● China Institute of International Studies	中国国际问题研究所	<a href="http://www.ciis.org.cn">http://www.ciis.org.cn</a>
● Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	中国社会科学院欧洲研究所	<a href="http://ies.cass.cn">http://ies.cass.cn</a>
● Institute of West Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	中国社会科学院西亚非洲研究所	<a href="http://iwaas.cass.cn">http://iwaas.cass.cn</a>
● Rural Development Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	中国社会科学院农村发展研究所	<a href="http://rdi.cass.cn">http://rdi.cass.cn</a>
● Institute of West Asian and African Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations	中国现代国际关系研究院西亚非洲研究所	<a href="http://www.cicir.ac.cn">http://www.cicir.ac.cn</a>
● Institute of Agricultural Economics and Development, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	中国农业科学院农业经济与发展研究所	<a href="http://www.iae.org.cn">http://www.iae.org.cn</a>
● Institute for World Economy Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies	上海国际问题研究院	<a href="http://www.sis.org.cn">http://www.sis.org.cn</a>
<b>International Organization:</b>		
● International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)	国际食物政策研究所	<a href="http://www.ifpri.org">http://www.ifpri.org</a>

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**Annex 2****Researcher Information Sheet**

Name	Name of Institution	Area Expertise	of Position Assigned	Task Assigned

### Annex 3

#### Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Proposed Professional Staff

Personal Information			
Name of Staff			
Name of Institution	<i>[Insert name of affiliated institution]</i>		
Date of Birth		Nationality	

Education			
Date	Name of Institutions	Degrees Obtained	Date of Obtainment
Other education: <i>[Main trainings received after obtainment of degree]</i>			
Date	Name of Institutions	Training Content	Output (certificates, etc.)

Work Experience		
Countries of Work Experience	<i>[List countries where staff has worked in the last ten years]</i>	
Language	<i>[For each language indicate proficiency: good, fair, or poor in speaking, reading, and writing]:</i>	
Employment Record <i>[Starting with present position, list in reverse order every employment held by staff member]:</i>		
From [year] To [year]	Employer and Position Held	Main Responsibility

Capacity <i>[Fill in the sheet with the assignments in which the staff has been involved within the last 10 years that best illustrate staff capability to handle this assignment]</i>	
Year	
Name of assignment or programme	
Client	

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Positions held	

Membership of Professional Associations	
Name of Professional Associations	Position Held

Publication <i>[Fill in the sheet with published peer-reviewed articles in international journals with impact factor 1.5 and above related to tendering areas, or have published books related to tendering areas as author or editor within the last 10 years.]</i>

Other <i>[Other narrative description that illustrates staff capacity]</i>

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes myself, my qualifications, and my experience. I understand that any wilful misstatement described herein may lead to my disqualification or dismissal, if engaged.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of staff member)*

*Note: Comments in Italic provide guidance; delete when providing relevant information.*

## II. Guidance for Applicants

### i) Note on Research Strategies<sup>3</sup>

*“Every proposal reader constantly scans for clear answers to three questions:*

- 1. What are we going to learn as the result of the proposed project that we do not know now?*
- 2. Why is it worth knowing?*
- 3. How will we know that the conclusions are valid?”*

- Adam Przeworski and Frank Solomon “Art of Writing Proposals” (Social Science Research Council, 1988)

Every research proposal should have a short introduction answering the three questions that Przeworski and Solomon ask. Additionally, a research proposal should: (a) identify an important and interesting question or proposition for investigation; (b) be justified in relation to existing theoretical and empirical literature; and (c) lay out a clear strategy and methodology for undertaking the research.

#### The Research Question or “Puzzle”

- **What is the central question or puzzle the project seeks to address?**

- A strong research question asks “**why**” something happens or “**under what conditions**” does something happen. In other words it seeks to **explain** an outcome or impact.
- Descriptive content – on the context, the actors and the history-will often be very important – but should serve to throw light on the “why” question of what factors explain outcomes and impacts.
- Research should NOT be based on “should” questions: whether something should or should not be done is a matter of judgment, rather than research. Good research can provide the basis for policy-makers to formulate their judgments and answer “should” questions e.g. as in the Chinese policy-making sequence of “experiment/assess/scale up models that work”.

- **Justify the central question:**

- Why is the question interesting or important?
- What does **existing research (in the literature)** tell us and what does it leave unanswered or only partially answered? That is, what is the “received wisdom” about this topic area and why is it inadequate?

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<sup>3</sup> This note was prepared primarily by James Putzel drawing on the research guidance for students developed at the International Development Department of the London School of Economics and the comments of David Mosse, Richard Carey and other members of the IAC of CIDRN.



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- **Make sure it is an “analytical question”:**

- A “why” question is centred on **causality**: something happens **because** of an identifiable and provable reason.
- “Under what conditions” does something happen? This type of analytical question seeks to explain causal relationships: “When x and y..., then z”.

### **Research Strategy: Approaches to answering the central question**

Once having identified the research question, or “puzzle”, a proposal should then lay out the *research strategy* for answering the question or solving the puzzle. Given the particular question, why is a particular strategy being taken to conduct the research? The strategy may be based, for instance, on an *inductive* or *deductive* approach; a *case study* or *comparative approach*; a *longitudinal* analysis (looking at evidence, or data, on a particular case, generated over time) or an analysis based on *cross-sectional* data (gathered in one time across a *large number* of cases). While some research may be entirely desk-based, fieldwork will often be essential.

The proposal should justify the strategy taken in light of the question being asked, accumulated knowledge about the terrain of investigation (in the literature), the particular characteristics of the research terrain, or a clear standpoint on the epistemological foundations of the research (related to debates about what constitutes a *valid explanation* – positivist versus interpretive understandings of the world, for instance). This can also be expressed as anchoring the research in the traditions of a particular academic *discipline* (a sociological, anthropological, political economy, neoclassical economics, international relations, etc., approach). The inter- or multi-disciplinary terrain of development studies values all these traditions, when appropriately justified. The proposal should be based on thinking through questions like these:

- Why is the research proposing an *inductive* (hypothesis-generating) strategy, for instance, based on ethnographic description or conducting surveys rather than, or in advance of, a *deductive* (hypothesis testing ) approach, for instance based on existing theoretical propositions in the literature?
- Why is the research based on a *small number* of comparative case studies, rather than a *large number* of cases (or quantitative datasets)?
- Why undertake a *single* case study, rather than a *comparative* study?
- Why is *economic modeling* being employed and what are the strengths and weaknesses of the panel data being relied upon that justifies this research strategy?

Many research projects actually combine deductive and inductive strategies of investigation.

#### *Deductive Strategies*

A deductive research strategy usually seeks to provide causal explanations and identifies key “variables”, deploying “hypotheses” or “causal mechanisms” that may explain the *relationship* between them. **You should use existing literature to identify potential variables (causes), hypotheses and causal mechanisms, where such literature exists.**

• **Causal variables:**

- The *outcome* you wish to explain is the “*dependent variable*” (y...)
- The *factors that might matter* are the “*independent variables*” (  $x_1, x_2, x_3$  )
- You should justify why factors might matter, or might be independent variables, primarily by reference to **existing literature** (or the research that others have done before you)

• **Hypotheses:**

- A “hypothesis” suggests a *tentative answer* to a question. It is a *conjecture* about the relationship between one or more independent variables and the dependent variable, or outcome you seek to explain.
- A “hypothesis” **MUST be falsifiable**. That is, it should be formulated in such a way that evidence gathered could prove or disprove the tentative explanation.
- You must **justify your hypothesis** in existing literature. In other words, it cannot just “fall from the sky”, but should be grounded in existing evidence. You should be able to identify why you are suggesting a potential explanation (hypothesis).

• **Causal Mechanisms:**

- You may want to lay out **causal processes** that might produce an outcome.
- A “mechanism” is the activity between the cause and the effect: (smoking causes cancer THROUGH *changing the body’s cell structure*); (industrial policy leads to sustained growth and human development WHEN *a disciplined political party controls the state*).

*Inductive Strategies*

An inductive research strategy starts from observations of reality and seeks to identify patterns, connections or regularities, and from there to construct explanations or generate hypotheses for testing to explain the observed reality. It tends to be more open-ended and exploratory.

• **Terrain or arena of research:**

- What and where are the communities or firms you wish to investigate and why have you chosen them (demographic patterns, ethnic composition, sectoral activity, etc.) in relation to your research puzzle or question?

• **The type of observation proposed:**

- Why are you deploying ethnographic investigation, or collecting life-histories, or conducting interviews, or participant observation or undertaking discourse analysis and what do you hope the observations will reveal in relation to your research puzzle or question?
- What precedents are there for this type of research in the literature that lead you to think it will provide answers to your question(s)?

An inductive research strategy usually seeks to generate propositions or hypotheses through the exploration of a particular terrain of investigation.

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### **Outline *how* the research will be undertaken: what means, or methods, will you employ?**

Based on the research strategy, the research proposal should describe clearly the methodology or methodologies that will be employed to observe the world, or to find the evidence to answer your research question. *How* will you go about doing the research? Many methods can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research designs.

- Questions to answer about **quantitative analysis**:

- what sort of data will you use or gather and how will you gather it (government collected data, survey data)?
- how reliable are the data sets you plan to use? What is the evidence of their reliability?
- what accepted methods of data analysis (econometric testing) will you deploy?
- what are the advantages and risks of using this methodology?
- These questions should be answered with reference to existing literature

- Questions to answer about **qualitative analysis**:

- For **ethnographic research or interviewing**: Do you have the language skills to carry out such research? Can you get access to people to undertake such research?
- Are you planning **comparative research**? What is the basis of your choice of cases? Why is comparison between these cases justifiable? What are the differential outcomes you seek to explain? What are the precedents for undertaking this type of research in the literature which lead you to think it will be productive?
- Are you planning to **collect life histories**? What do you expect to learn from these stories? What does the literature say about how to undertake life histories and what can be expected from them?

- Think about the **disciplinary anchor** of your research: is it in comparative politics? Political economy? International relations? Anthropology? Sociology? Econometric analysis? Economic history?

- Why do the theoretical propositions, or the type of evidence and research design in the discipline offer promise to answering your particular question?

### **Your proposal should also include:**

- a clear timeline
- outline of human resources required
- as detailed a budget as possible
- an assessment of risks
- a consideration of ethical issues that may be involved

**All of these should demonstrate the feasibility of carrying out the plan.**

## ii) Content and Presentation

– (Adapted from UK Economic and Social Research Council Guidance)

The research proposal is the means by which you will be trying to convince the Panel that your proposal is worth funding so think carefully about what information you are going to give and how it is presented. Make sure you think your plan through and cover all stages.

Ask yourself the following questions.

1. Have I clearly formulated the problem, have I put it in context of contemporary scientific and theoretical debates, demonstrated the way in which my work will build on existing research and make a contribution to the area? Is there a clear and convincingly argued analytical framework? What will the research do, to whom or to what, and why?
2. Have I established appropriate aims and objectives? Are they clear and concise, do they reflect intellectual aims and practical, attainable objectives?
3. Have I provided a well-thought out research design in which there is a reasoned explanation of the scale, timing and resources necessary? Am I being realistic about these? Am I using the most relevant approach and the most appropriate methods? How will it relate to and deliver the objectives?
4. What will my research design allow me to say in the interpretation of anticipated results?
5. Have I given a full and detailed description of the proposed research methods? Is there any innovation in the methodology I am planning to use? Am I developing any new methods or using established methods innovatively?
6. If I am using data collection have I considered already existing data resources? Am I sure that access will be given where necessary, and do I have written confirmation of this? Am I convinced of its quality, validity, reliability and relevance? Have I considered the costs of cataloguing and preparing data for archiving?
7. Have I demonstrated a clear and systematic approach to the analysis of data and how this fits into the research design?
8. Have I thought about the ethics of what I am planning to do? Are there any sensitive issues or potential problems which need to be addressed? Have I fully consulted on these issues and obtained the approval of an ethical committee where required.
9. Have I recognised and planned for the skills and competencies that will be required to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion?
10. Have I anticipated potential difficulties? Have I shown that I recognise these and discussed how they would be handled?
11. Have I provided a bibliography? This will be used in the selection of referees and will indicate your familiarity with the theoretical grounding and current state of the art of your subject. Where there is genuinely little or no relevant literature, explain this fully. Panel members and referees will not assume your erudition, they want evidence.

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12. This proposal will be subject to the critical appraisal of my peers. Am I satisfied that I have fully defended my chosen research design and made it clear why others are not appropriate?
  13. Have I identified potential users of this research outside of the academic community; have I involved/consulted them in my planning? Have I arranged for their continuing involvement in the research process in an appropriate way?
  14. Have I considered the possibility of co-funding of the research?
  15. Have I provided a clear dissemination strategy for the research demonstrating how the research outcomes will be communicated to all interested parties including potential users of the research outside of the academic community?

Convey to the Panel your genuine interest, understanding and enthusiasm for the work. Keep the following questions in mind as you plan:

- what is the story you are telling?
- what is the audience?
- why does it matter?
- why now?

### iii) Research Proposal Example

#### **Public Goods or Business Opportunities**

#### **----Ethnographic Studies on China Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centers in Africa**

**Prepared by Tang Lixia**

**March, 2014, Beijing**

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#### Part 1: Technical proposal

##### 1. Background

Agricultural assistance has been an important ingredient in China's aid commitment to Africa and has taken many forms. The major modes are farm construction and the establishment of agricultural technology demonstration centers, dispatching of agricultural experts, trainings and food aid. In 2006, China pledged the establishment of a series of Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centers (ATDCs) for Africa on the third Forum of China-Africa Cooperation and to date 15 have been established, with a future 10 planned. These centers, run by a mix of research groups, private and state companies, are supported by the project modality named "Complete Aid Programme" to Africa. Establishment of ATDCs has been regarded as one of eight main approaches to support Africa's development by China in Chinese official and diplomatic discourse. However, ATDCs have gained considerable debates since China announced the plan.

Historically speaking, ATDC is not a new concept. China established agricultural pilot stations and model farms in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. But by the late 1980s, many stations and farms were facing serious problems and ended up going into receivership (Li, et al, 2011:230). On the other hand, along with the foreign aid policy reform, the Chinese government encouraged and allowed some enterprises, especially state-owned enterprises, to join in foreign aid program. The successful cases from Zambia and Mali in this shift further promised Chinese government to introduce the market mechanism to manage foreign aid program to seek the sustainability. This shift also responded China's domestic reform

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process that public agricultural technology extension and applied research had been subject to marketisation (Li, et al. 2011: 233). In this approach, currently 22 Chinese companies and research institutes have been contracted to manage ATDCs in Africa. The project goes for three stages, a three-year physical construction, followed by a three-year technical cooperation to explore the sustainable management model and the final stage of so called "sustainable operation afterwards".

The model of private sector engagement to development can be categorized as Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Most recently, the role of business in development was discussed extensively in the lead-up to the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) in Busan (Calan & Davies, 2013). The new model is designed to take advantage of the growing presence of international corporations, foundations, and other private entities in developing countries through formal relationships marked by common objectives, mutual resource contributions, and shared risk (Lawson, 2011). The unbalanced partnership relationships and the resource demands of partnership management lead to a number of potentially negative impacts, such as management burdens, distortion of development priorities and unfair advantage to private partners (Lawson, 2011). Lawson (2011) and Callan & Davies (2013) discussed the main models of PPP, impacts and challenges in US and Australia from macro level; however, the micro-level evidence for typical development projects via PPP approach yet needs to be produced. Recently, China's agricultural demonstration centers in Africa has drawn great attention of the international community because it would be a way to make foreign aid sustainable by linking it with commercial opportunities for Chinese companies (Bräutigam and Tang, 2009). Probably due to the short-term of running and accessibility to ATDCs, there are quite few academic discussions on this issue. The research will explore and develop the argument that the ATDC model initiated by China can promote win-win of public service on technology transferring and business opportunities seeking.

## 2. Literature review

In recent years, the international community has become increasingly concerned about China's agricultural cooperation behavior in Africa (Bräutigam and Tang, 2009; Buckley, 2013). China's agricultural engagement in Africa can be summarized as colonizer and economic competitor development partner (Alden, 2007; Buckley, 2013; Scoones, 2013). The first two framing emphasized China's engagement as a threat to Africa's development, especially in land and agriculture and protracted effort to oust both Western and African control over land and politics on the continent. The economic competitor framing sees China engaged in a self-interested, exploitative grab for resources to feed its fast-paced growth. The development partner framing presents China as a success story and a partner to support Africa development (Buckley, 2013). Although the above three analytical framings have totally different judgments on the impact of China's participation in Africa, the basis for all the analysis is that China is "a new rising power" to Africa (Scoones, 2013). Nevertheless, the existing evidence does not suggest that China's involvement in farmland acquisitions in Africa has been merely negative. African recipients' positive reception to China's

development intervention seems to indicate that China is one of the few actors who have brought about tangible development outcomes (Zhao, 2013). Many African actors believe that lesson learning from the Chinese development experiences matter much for Africa's economic development (Rubinstein, 2009).

In most academic discussions on China agricultural engagements in Africa, the combination of aid and investment have been identified as core features. The international community has also reached a consensus that China's investment is a kind of foreign assistance. Many China's economic investments in developing countries can be considered as foreign aid rather than direct investment, as they are secured by bilateral official agreements, do not impose real financial risks upon the Chinese companies involved and do not result in Chinese ownership of foreign assets (Lengauer, 2011). For example, the activities of the CSFAC and its provincial arms are often closely associated, and are often regarded as aid rather than commercial investment (Freeman, Holslag, Weil, 2008). Many studies talk about China's agricultural investment and aid in Africa together. At the same time, criticism on the commercial character of China's foreign aid and the lack of sense of social responsibility of Chinese enterprises is emerging, and China's aid to Africa is also facing the problem of balancing enterprises and countries, and marketization and public welfare as well (Zhang, 2012). Whether the model ATDC can manage this challenge should be further discussed.

In 2013, IDS Bulletin published a special issue to talk about China and Brazil's participation in Africa's agriculture, which described and analyzed China's agricultural policy discourse in Africa (Buckley, 2013) and China's agricultural assistance and investment in Ghana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. These studies discussed, from the perspective of the recipient countries, the impact of emerging economies represented by China and Brazil. Although they analyzed China's policy on agricultural assistance to Africa, most of the studies were carried out based on the analysis of China's actions in African countries and few involved systematic research on the formation, content and methods of China's policies on agricultural aid to Africa. Bräutigam (2009, 2012, 2013) published several articles on Chinese agricultural engagements with her Chinese research partners since 1998. She used some empirical cases in Africa to try to response international criticisms on motivations of China engagements in Africa such as land grabbing, domestic food security and agricultural imperialism. The common feature of these researches is that main discussion is based on the general profile information of empirical cases including actors, size and activities. They seldom discuss the internal operations and interactive relation of China agricultural engagements. The anthropological framework widely used to discuss the traditional aid architecture had seldom been adopted to China agricultural engagements. Buckley (2013) builds on what Mosse terms an 'ethnography of policy and practices', asking 'not whether but how development projects work; not whether a project succeeds, but how success is produced' to examine Chinese agricultural engagements as an improvisation performance guided by sets of agricultural techniques, tools, practices and ideologies of the individual performers. She discussed the cultural encounter between China agricultural expertise and local actors. The research opened a new window to learn China's agricultural engagements.



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### 3. Research objectives

Main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To explore the political and social logics of the ATDC model;
- 2) To understand how the ATDCs are operated and managed internally;
- 3) To understand the impact of the project with regard to their relations and interactions with different stakeholders under different settings such as business managed and research institute managed;
- 4) To build up a systematic knowledge on the ATDC.

### 4. Research questions

The central question is whether the ATDCs approach will be sustainable? Particularly,

- 1) How China introduced the market mechanism into development aid project? What is the historical trajectory in policy discourse?
- 2) What is the policy framework of ATDC model and how did it made?
- 3) How do the ATDC models operate in receipt countries, such as institutional arrangement, main activities and impacts?
- 4) How do the different stakeholders from China government, recipient countries, companies and local workers interact and encounter?
- 5) How does the ATDC achieve its intended objectives and how to manage the conflicts induced by different objectives?

### 5. Research approach

The empirical approach will be adopted to collect data and information.

To answer research question 1 and 2, the policy documentaries on this issue will be collected and key informants from MOFCOM, MOA will be interviewed. The study will also try to review historical trajectory of China agricultural aid policy, especially ATDC model. The discourse analysis framework will be adopted to explore the hiding political economical logistic frame of China aid policy.

To answer research question 3, the key informants from domestic companies and institutes which were engaged in building up and operating ATDC will be interviewed. Now there are four different types of institute involved into ATDC, namely stated-own agricultural company, agricultural university and research institutes, private agricultural company and state-owned non-agricultural company. In this research Hubei Farm (stated-own agricultural company, Mozambique), Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Science (research institute, Congo-Brazzaville), China Africa Cotton Company (private agricultural company, Malawi), China Shandong International Economic and Technical Cooperation Group Ltd (Non-agricultural company, Sudan) will be visited in China. Some key topics including initiation process, institutional arrangements, cooperation with recipient countries and administrative framework will be discussed.

Question 4 and 5 are core issues for this research. The anthropological research methodology will be adopted to collect data and information. ATDCs in Zimbabwe and Rwanda will be selected as typical case study. and in Rwanda by an agricultural university. Due to its nature of identity, these two ATDCs performed differently. The company model seeks more business opportunities and the research institute model works more on public services. The study will introduce the comparative framework to discuss two models from their own operational mechanism, interaction with other actors, and the intervention of recipient countries, et al. The actor-oriented approach launched by Norman Long and concepts of actors, interface and encounter will be adopted to discuss the ATDC's performance.

## 6. Research output

- ✓ 3 working papers: covering 1) Domestic policy discourse analysis on China agricultural aid; 2) Status analysis on ATDCs; 3) Empirical case study in Zimbabwe;
- ✓ 3 articles published: covering 1) Domestic policy discourse analysis on ATDC model; 2) Empirical studies from Zimbabwe; 3) Aid or Business
- ✓ 2 policy briefings: covering 1) Experiences and challenges of ATDC model; and 2) Recommendations on policy framework
- ✓ 1 final research report: Public Service or Business Opportunities---analysis on China Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centers in Africa

All the research output will be drafted in Chinese and abstracted in English. Working papers and publishing articles will be selected to present in English.

## 7. Research work plan

Following the research questions and approaches outlined above, the main research activities, taking place over a 24-month period, will be:

- ✓ Team building and inception discussion: at which the research team will discuss and agree the methodology, responsibilities, timelines etc. The research will invite some leading scholars on China engagements in Africa to review the detailed research framework and give their comments and suggestions. It will be organized in March of 2014.
- ✓ Literature review: covering 1) China-Africa agricultural cooperation policy; 2) China's agricultural engagements in Africa: status and impacts; 3) ideas and values on China in Africa; 4) analytical discussion on China Agricultural Technology Demonstration

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Center; and 5) understanding of technology transfer. It will be organized from March to June of 2014.

- ✓ Key-informants review in China: covering 1) the history of ATDCs policy; 2) the implementation and administration of ATDCs model; 3) the expectations on ATDCs from government, company and research institutes. The officials from MOA and MOFCOM. It will be organized in May, October of 2014.
- ✓ Field Study in China: using the semi-structure interview approach to collect data and information from management groups in contracted company and university and the working staff who have come back from ATDCs. It will be organized in 2014 and 2015.
- ✓ Field study in Africa: using the anthropology approach to collect data and information in ATDCs in Zimbabwe run by a company. Chinese working staff, African stakeholders including officials, local workers and local farmers nearby will be interviewed. The daily activities in ATDCs will be observed. It will be organized in 2014 and 2015.
- ✓ Policy dialogue: with the policy advocates in China and Africa. The objectives are to share the insights and lessons from the field work in Africa and to promote the policy improvement. It will be organized after field work.
- ✓ Publications: including working papers, articles, policy briefings which will be drafted immediately and final research report will be draft from September to December of 2015.

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## Part 2: Administrative proposal

### 1. Research budget

Overall funds requested: RMB 200,000

Research personnel: 2 research assistants

$3,000 \times 2 \text{ person} = 6,000$

Workshop: inception and policy dialogue, 3 times

Workshop:  $2,000 \times 3 = 6,000$

Field study in Africa: 2 persons \* twice (30 days in Zimbabwe and 30 days in Rwanda)

Flight ticket:  $12,000 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 2 = 48,000$

Accommodation:  $400 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 2 \times 30 \text{ days} = 48,000$

Local transportation:  $5,000 \times 2 = 10,000$

Meals and others:  $200 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 2 \times 30 \text{ days} = 24,000$

Subtotal: 130,000

(Note: We only can stay in Zimbabwe for 30 days for one trip due to visa)

Field study in China: Beijing – Shandong (2 cities), Hainan, Hubei, 2 persons \* 4 places \* 5 days

Flight ticket:  $3000 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 4 \text{ places} = 24,000$

Accommodation:  $200 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 4 \text{ places} \times 5 \text{ days} = 8,000$

Meals and others:  $100 \times 2 \text{ persons} \times 4 \text{ places} \times 5 \text{ days} = 4,000$

Local transportation:  $500 \times 4 \text{ places} = 2,000$

Subtotal: 38,000

Project coordination:

Communication: 2,000

Material: 3,000

Printing and distribution: 5,000

Subtotal: 10,000

Overheads charged by CAU (5%): 10,000

### 2. Research Team

#### 2.1 Researcher Information Sheet

Name	Name of Institution	Area of Expertise	Position Assigned	Task Assigned
Tang Lixia	College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agricultural University	International development aid	Associate Professor	Design, field study, writing and overall management
Qi Gubo	COHD, CAU	International development studies	Professor	Field study in Africa

Lu Yan	COHD, CAU	International development studies	PHD candidate	Literature review
Gao Ming	COHD, CAU	International development studies	Master candidate	Field study in China
Song Zheng qing	COHD, CAU	International development studies	Master candidate	Field study in China
Jia Yan	FECC, MOA	International development	Master	Link the research to the current China-Africa cooperation issues, and bring the research to the policy dialogue

## 2.2 Curriculum Vitae of Tang Lixia

### Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Proposed Professional Staff

Personal Information			
Name of Staff	Tang Lixia		
Name of Institution	<i>College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agricultural University</i>		
Date of Birth	<i>June-22-1979</i>	Nationality	<i>China</i>

Education			
Date	Name of Institutions	Degrees Obtained	Date of Obtainment
<i>09/2009-01/2013</i>	<i>Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany</i>	<i>PHD</i>	<i>Sep, 2013</i>
<i>09/2005-06/2009</i>	<i>China Agricultural University</i>	<i>PHD</i>	<i>June, 2009</i>
<i>09/2000-07/2003</i>	<i>China Agricultural University</i>	<i>Master</i>	<i>June, 2003</i>
<i>09/1996-07/2000</i>	<i>China Agricultural University</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>June, 2000</i>
Other education:[Main trainings received after obtainment of degree]			
Date	Name of Institutions	Training Content	Output (certificates, etc.)
May, 2013	IDS, Sussex University	Summer School of The Pathway to Sustainability	
Oct, 2007	Chiang Mai University of Thailand	Participatory Research Methods	
Jan- March 2005	ISS, De Hague, Netherland, Kerala,	Post Graduate Diploma of	diploma

	India, Organized by ISS, SEWA and CDS	Univerlizing Social Economic Security for the Poor	
Oct, 2003	Chiang Mai of Thailand	the Reward on Environmental Ecology for Poor	

Work Experience		
Countries of Work Experience	China, Thailand, India, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Germany, Netherland, UK	
Language	Chinese, mother language English, fluent	
Employment Record [Starting with present position, list in reverse order every employment held by staff member]:		
From [year] To [year]	Employer and Position Held	Main Responsibility
2012-	Ass. Prof., COHD/CAU	Teaching, research and supporting
2006-2012	Lecture, COHD/CAU	Teaching, research and supporting
2003-2006	Assistant Lecture, COHD/CAU	Teaching, research and supporting

Capacity <i>[Fill in the sheet with the assignments in which the staff has been involved within the last 10 years that best illustrate staff capability to handle this assignment]</i>	
Year	
Name of assignment or programme	“Conservation of cultural landscapes through diversification of resource-use strategies and technologies for agro-ecosystems in mountainous Southwest China
Client	Humboldt University
Positions held	Co-leader for sub 8 project and published articles on technology transferring at Tropentag conference and IFSA conference

Membership of Professional Associations	
Name of Professional Associations	Position Held

Publication <i>[Fill in the sheet with published peer-reviewed articles in international journals with impact factor 1.5 and above related to tendering areas, or have published books related to tendering areas as author or editor within the last 10 years.]</i>
Li Xiaoyun, Tang Lixia, et al, What can Africa Learn from China’s Experience in Agricultural Development?, IDS Bulletin 2013(04)
Sérgio Chichava, Jimena Duran, Lídia Cabral, Alex Shankland, Lila Buckley, Tang Lixia, et al. Brazil and China in Mozambican agriculture: Emerging Insights from the Field, IDS Bulletin

2013(04)

Tang Lixia, Review of India Development Aid, South Asia Research Quarterly, 2013

Zhang Meizhu, Tang Lixia, Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone, 2013(03)

Zhao Lixia, Tang Lixia, Changing and Impacts of Africa Forums, International Economic Cooperation, 2012(12)

Tang Lixia, Zhou Shengkun, Lixiaoyun, The development of international aid and China, International Economic Cooperation, 2012(9)

Tang Lixia, Zhao Lixia, Wang Haimin, What Can Learn from China's Experience in Agricultural Development, Journal of China Agricultural University, 2011(4)

Tang Lixia, Wujin, Li Xiaoyun, International Development Assistance to Africa, World Agriculture, 2011 (7)

Ming Liang, Tang Lixia, Agriculture and Food Security in Uganda, Guangdong Agricultural Science, 2010(7)

Tang Lixia, Li Xiaoyun, Review on Food Aid, International Economic Cooperation, 2009(10)

Li Xiaoyun, Wang Yihuan, Tang Lixia, Development Assistance of OECD-DAC Member, World Knowledge Press, Beijing, China, 2013

Li Xiaoyun, Qi Gubo, Tang Lixia, etc. Agricultural Development in China and Africa -A Comparative Analysis, Routledge, UK, 2012

Other[Other narrative description that illustrates staff capacity]

- Li Xiaoyun, Qi Gubo, Wang Yihuan, Xu Xiuli and Tang Lixia, 2012. The second prize awarded by Beijing Municipal Government, Pilot in Fostering the International Talents for Rural Development, December
- 2013, Tang Lixia was selected as Youth Elite Supporting Planning in Beijing

### 3. Signed letter

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes myself, my qualifications, and my experience. I understand that any willful misstatement described herein may lead to my disqualification or dismissal, if engaged.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of staff member)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Comments in Italic provide guidance; delete when providing relevant information.*