



**Research Grant  
Request for Concepts**

Advancing Research and Investment Standards for Gender Equity (ARISE)

*Are you a women's rights or civil society organization<sup>1</sup> with experience conducting applied research and are interested in the intersection of gender equality and finance?*

**Submit a paragraph indicating your proposed research question, insight into your methodology, and proposed output by 7 July 2023 [here](#).**

The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) - in consortium with the Criterion Institute and 2X Global - seeks proposals from non-profit organizations for grants of **20,000 - 50,000 USD** to support **8 - 10 research projects for a period of 6 - 9 months** that contribute to research that is transparent, participatory, responsive to power dynamics, and driven by expertise on gender equality and local context.

**What we're looking for:**

Innovative research that is driven by organizational expertise on gender equality and local context that aims to change the way local communities think about and engage with financial actors. This research should focus on collecting and analyzing data that speak to the investment community with a gender lens and supports the building of connections with the local financial ecosystem.

This research invites participation with a [Feminist Financial Imagination](#), recognizing the transformative opportunity when "power and tools of financial systems are channeled toward advancing gender equality and justice".<sup>2</sup>

The ARISE Consortium has identified several example topics, built on Criterion's [Toolkit strategies](#), including, but not limited to:

- Shifting power in gender lens investment
- Investment analysis that uses an intersectional gender lens
- Recognizing the value of community assets in local contexts
- Valuing contextual knowledge to reduce risk
- Reducing the transaction cost of localized investments
- Governance models for market systems investment

Note that you are encouraged to propose research that is locally relevant and applicable to your organization's work within your community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that only non-profit organizations will be considered for this opportunity.

<sup>2</sup> [https://criterioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Fostering\\_a\\_Feminist\\_Financial\\_Imagination.pdf](https://criterioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Fostering_a_Feminist_Financial_Imagination.pdf)

Submissions should propose research activities over 6-9 months beginning July 2023 that include the development of a research product that informs the effective integration of gender analysis into traditional financial spaces and conversations.

### Who we're looking for:

Non-profit organizations that work on matters affecting cis<sup>3</sup> or trans women, non-binary, gender-fluid, or gender non-conforming persons and are interested in shifting the way these communities engage with financial actors. These women's rights organizations (WROs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) should hold an existing understanding of the gendered realities within their communities. There is no geographic requirement for this project; however, locally-led organizations operating in the Global South will be prioritized.<sup>4</sup>

The Consortium has identified several qualities that may make certain organizations better suited to influence – and therefore better qualified as grant recipients. Based on this, we intend to identify applicants who are:

- Innovators and early adopters;
- Engage in systemic change in their local contexts;
- Open to thinking about using the power of the financial system;
- Oriented for multilevel conversations with financial actors (i.e. investors and development institutions).

### The Application Process:

#### (1) Fill out the interest form

(a) **Deadline:** 7 July 2023

(b) Submit up to 300 words describing the question you'd like to explore around the intersection of gender and finance.

(c) Through an evaluation by a diverse selection committee, these proposals will be assessed on their:

- (i) Innovative Ideas & Flexibility of Plans
- (ii) Attention to Equity & Inclusion in Local Contexts
- (iii) Relevance & Potential to Influence Finance
- (iv) Organizational Willingness & Ability to Act

#### (2) Invitation to Work with our Team to Build Out Your Idea

(a) **Notice Date:** Late July

(b) To create an opportunity for collaboration, ANDE's local chapters will work with shortlisted organizations in the refinement of their research questions and the development of a full proposal or live presentation, depending on preference.

(c) Key components of this proposal will include:

- (i) Research Question, Description of Methodology, and Proposed Output
- (ii) Relevance to Finance (eg. Engagement Plan with Local Financial Actors)
- (iii) Project Budget with a Line Item Breakdown (note that overhead costs may not be included in the proposed budget)

#### (3) Selection & Announcement

(a) **Notice Date:** August 2023

---

<sup>3</sup> Cisgender - of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth

<sup>4</sup> Because of the government of India's restrictions around the receipt of foreign funding, only FCRA eligible organizations in India will be eligible for this research opportunity. Many South Asian countries will need to have equivalent necessary approvals from their national governments to receive foreign grants.

- (b) See Annex B for an overview of the selection criteria that will be used to ensure an inclusive and equitable evaluation process.

*(4) Programming*

- (a) Research is expected to begin in August 2023. The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs will lead the contracting process and funding.
- (b) Note that 50% of funding will be provided up front, with the remaining 50% to be reimbursed upon completion of deliverables and financial reports demonstrating the budget has been spent down.

**Have questions and want to go over the RFP?**

Check out the [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Email Program Manager, Kendahl Tyburski ([kendahl.tyburski@aspeninstitute.org](mailto:kendahl.tyburski@aspeninstitute.org))

Join us for an Open House on 21 June 2023 at 9:00 AM ET ([Zoom Link](#))



**ASPEN NETWORK  
OF DEVELOPMENT  
ENTREPRENEURS**



## **Annex A. ABOUT ARISE**

Through support from Global Affairs Canada, *Advancing Research and Investment Standards for Gender Equity (ARISE)* is a three-year project aiming to accelerate the adoption of gender analysis and expertise within investments and ultimately improve gender equality outcomes for women, girls, and nonbinary individuals in emerging markets, with a particular emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia Pacific regions.

In collaboration with [Criterion Institute](#) and [2X Global](#), the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs aims to:

- (a) widen the pool of women's rights and civil society organizations that are equipped to work alongside investors in the fields of Gender Lens Investing (GLI) and innovative finance;
- (b) support the ability of donors to advance these best practices; and
- (c) direct the growing amount of capital flowing to the field of GLI to investments that are more likely to achieve gender equality and development outcomes.

The ARISE consortium will do this by working with actors that can bridge the language and knowledge between their gender equality expertise and the system of finance. This will widen the pool of women's rights and civil society organizations that can influence investors in the field of Gender Lens Investing (GLI) and innovative finance that seek to achieve development and social outcomes. In doing so, the ecosystem of actors will be broadened, as well as the availability of gender analysis and local context that investors can incorporate into their investment analysis and financial decision-making.



**Annex B.  
EVALUATION CRITERIA**

<b>INNOVATIVE &amp; ADAPTIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the proposed research an original contribution and flexible in its approach to meeting the diverse and evolving needs of the local community?</li> <li>● Does it have the potential to influence actors in the financial system?</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABLE &amp; RELEVANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the research applicable locally?</li> <li>● Does the proposed research consider and respect global south contexts and prioritize the needs of these communities?</li> <li>● Does the proposal's theoretical framework have conceptual clarity? (i.e. look for evidence of a solid understanding of power dynamics, gender theory, and intersectionality to ensure a comprehensive approach)</li> <li>● Will the proposed research be relevant to the financial system?</li> </ul>
<b>WILL &amp; ABILITY TO ACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the team have the skills, capacity, knowledge, or lived experience to conduct the proposed research?</li> <li>● Is the research feasible?</li> <li>● Can practitioners implement this?</li> </ul> <p>Re: Ability in Financial Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is your organization a registered non-profit?</li> <li>● Do you have experience working with government organizations or international development organizations?</li> <li>● Does your organization's financial controls include segregation of responsibilities so that no single individual has complete authority over an entire transaction?</li> <li>● Does your organization have written accounting policies and procedures?</li> <li>● Do you keep invoices, vouchers, and timesheets for all payments made from award funds?</li> </ul>