

Call for research proposals

Inclusion of people with disabilities



In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), approximately one out of every seven people has some form of disability, a figure that is estimated to increase to one in five over the next three decades due to the rapid aging of the population in the region (Berlinski et al., 2021). Despite advances in the implementation of legal frameworks and policies focused on both directly promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) and making existing public policies inclusive, PWD continue to face barriers that hinder their participation on equal terms with their peers without disabilities, leading to disparities in various dimensions on their life. Disability-based discrimination—such as the lack of accessible infrastructure and inclusive services—deepens these disparities. At the same time, these gaps become even more pronounced at identity intersections² (Ozemela et al.,

2019; Garcia et al., 2022). Moreover, the exclusion of PWD from markets, services, and spaces significantly decreases their resilience, putting them at greater risk in crises (Contreras et al., 2023; Meresman & Ullmann, 2020), such as those caused by the effects of climate change (Bustelo et al., 2023; Jodoin et al., 2020).

While the statistical visibility of PWD has increased in recent decades, there are still knowledge gaps regarding the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at reducing inequalities between people with and without disabilities (Duryea et al., 2023). **This research call aims to close these gaps to effectively address the barriers to social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in the region.**

Objectives of the call

With this call for research proposals, the IDB Group's [Gender and Diversity Knowledge Initiative](#), (GDLab) seeks to fund academic studies that provide solid evidence on **effective programs and policies to promote the well-being and social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in Latin American and Caribbean countries.**

Proposals that analyze one or more of the [26 IDB borrowing member countries](#) will be considered. The proposals must apply **rigorous quantitative methods that establish causal relationships using structural models or experimental or quasi-experimental evaluations.** Proposals that include qualitative analysis will be considered only to the ex-

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Priority Areas

tent that they serve as input for the implementation of quantitative methods. Proposals that generate actionable public policy recommendations for the public sector, private sector, and multilateral organizations are especially welcome.

The studies funded through this call for proposals will be considered for publication as IDB knowledge products in the working documents series. This publication will require an external peer review process prior to publication in the IDB working paper series. The studies that receive funding are expected to be published in academic journals.

This call seeks research proposals that provide quantitative and rigorous evidence in the following **thematic areas**:



Education. Proposals in this area aim to provide causal evidence on interventions that promote real learning opportunities for children and youth with disabilities at all educational levels.

In particular, proposals are encouraged to evaluate solutions for promoting inclusive education—for example, through training teachers to educate students with disabilities, providing assistive technology in schools with students with disabilities (such as text-to-speech screen readers or refreshable Braille displays), or the implementation of accessible infrastructure. Proposals are also encouraged to evaluate the causal effects of inclusive education on the educational outcomes and well-being of students with disabilities. This includes evaluating solutions to prevent—and provide support for the victims of—harassment, violence, and discrimination against students with disabilities by their peers without disabilities, administrative staff, or teachers (for example, through staff training programs or the implementation of teaching materials that raise PWD visibility and promote their inclusion).





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Labor markets. Proposals in this area provide causal evidence on interventions designed to reduce bias against workers with disabilities in the workplace. In this regard, it is encouraged the submission of proposals that evaluate the effect of anti-discrimination laws and labor quotas on employment outcomes for PWD, as well as proposals that evaluate the effectiveness of labor subsidies for companies or programs that recognize inclusion by awarding firms' seals or certificates. Other areas of interest include evaluating workplace support programs, such as personalized on-the-job guidance and support from specialized job coaches or supported employment programs. Also of interest are vocational rehabilitation programs, the provision of assistive technology, or training and skills development programs in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), as well as the challenge represented by the development of new technologies adapted to the specific needs of users. Also, more evidence is needed on public and private solutions focused on self-employed workers with disabilities, as well as workers with disabilities in the informal sector.



Social protection. Proposals in this area may address, among other issues the impact of simplifying processes and reducing barriers related to disability certification and access to disability programs, such as through the implementation of online application systems, expanding office hours, or expanding the geographic coverage of administrative offices handling certifications and applications for disability programs. Proposals examining the effects of dis-

ability subsidies, disability insurance and non-contributory transfer programs are also of interest. Additionally, proposals for causal studies that address the effects of personal assistance programs, broader systems of care, as well as the impact of assistive devices (e.g., screen readers, prostheses, smart canes, wheelchairs, etc.) are also encouraged.



Health. Proposals in this area may focus on the causal evidence of early identification programs for congenital disorders, rehabilitation programs and medical personnel training. Proposals are also encouraged for causal studies to evaluate the effectiveness of sexual and reproductive education programs, as well as programs to prevent, protect and improve care for PWD victims of sexual and gender-based violence.



Housing, transportation, and urban development. Proposals in this area may evaluate solutions aimed at expanding accessible infrastructure and inclusive delivery of essential services (for example, health clinics, government offices or financial institutions) for the autonomy, well-being, and social and economic inclusion of PWD. This includes addressing transportation barriers that limit the autonomy of PWD and assessing the impact of urban development. Furthermore, proposals examining the accessibility of public and private spaces, as well as government infrastructure and services (including digital services such as accessible emergency lines).



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Who can submit proposals



Climate change. Proposals in this area evaluate the effectiveness of solutions to reduce risks and vulnerability brought on by climate change and to enhance their role as climate action agents with respect to decarbonization and/or resilience to the effects of climate change. In addition, proposals are encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of solutions that improve opportunities for this population to participate in job opportunities relevant to the transition to a zero-net emissions economy.

***Intersectionality.** Proposals that consider the intersectionality of identities and examine the differentiated impact that a disability may have on women, afro descendants, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ+ persons are strongly encouraged. It is also important to explore the specific issues faced by the young and the elderly within these groups.

Both independent researchers and research teams comprised of entities from the public sector, private sector, universities, or research centers may apply. Applicants must meet the following requirements: be a citizen of one of the [48 IDB member countries](#) and not have family members who currently work at the Inter-American Development Bank or IDB Invest (jointly, "IDB Group") (to the fourth degree of consanguinity and second degree of affinity, including husband or wife).¹ **Participation of IDB Group specialists in the research teams is encouraged.** It should be noted that while the specialists may collaborate on the project, they will not be eligible to receive compensation for their contribution. The funds will be given exclusively to the members of the research team who are not part of the IDB Group.

Proposal content

➡ **Composition of the research team.** The research team should include the names of all the researchers and evidence of their ability to meet the objectives of the investigation (including previous relevant experience) and the curriculum vitae of each participant (maximum 3 pages per person). All members

¹ Pursuant to IDB policies, additional ineligibility criteria may apply; for example, certain categories of former IDB Group employees or individuals sanctioned by the United Nations and other international organizations will be ineligible.



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of the research team must be citizens of one of the [48 IDB member countries](#) and must not have family members currently working at the IDB Group up to the fourth degree of consanguinity and second degree of affinity, including spouse.² It should be noted that research teams may include specialists from the IDB Group. It is crucial to note that any change in the composition of the research team after proposal selection must be approved by GDLab. Unauthorized changes to the team may be grounds for termination of the agreement.

- ➔ **Objective and research question.** Clearly define the overall objective of the research proposal and specify the research question(s) that will guide the study. Additionally, identify the country or countries that will be the focus of the research, as well as the specific thematic area to which the proposal is linked.
- ➔ **Relevance in terms of public policy and innovation.** Specify the knowledge gaps that the study intends to address. In addition, the proposal must explain how the study will contribute to closing these knowledge gaps and what innovations it proposes to address the problem identified.
- ➔ **Scalability and replicability.** The proposal should explain the feasibility of wider implementation and the scalability of the proposed study, identifying possible barriers to scaling up the study and whether the results and approaches could be applied in other contexts.

- ➔ **Information sources.** Provide a detailed description of the data to be used, indicating whether it is available to the public or access is restricted. For restricted data, the feasibility of access to such data by the research group must be demonstrated. Additionally, specify whether the databases and source code (e.g. *do-files*) can be shared with the IDB at the end of the study or whether there are valid restrictions that prevent them from being shared.

- ➔ **Methodology.** Detailed description of the proposed quantitative methodology. The proposals must apply rigorous **quantitative methods that establish causal relationships using structural models or experimental or quasi-experimental evaluations**. Proposals that include qualitative analysis will be considered only to the extent that they serve as input for the implementation of quantitative methods. For studies based on experimental or quasi-experimental methods, the proposal must include a discussion of the identification strategy that will make it possible to estimate causal effects. Ideally, proposals should include tests of the validity of the identification strategy (for example, balance tests, common trend tests, placebo tests, etc.).

- ➔ **Execution period and work plan.** Submit a work plan detailing the main tasks and the estimated time for execution. Depending on the type of study, the maximum period to complete the research is 12 to 18 months.

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Evaluation criteria

- ➔ **Budget.** The budget should detail the resources to be used in the context of the research work plan, distinguishing between sums allocated for professional fees, data collection, activity implementation, and other main categories of research spending.
- ➔ **Ethics committee.** Indicate the name of the institutional review board (IRB) where the research proposal will be presented if selected.

Selection process

The Scientific Committee of this call for proposals will evaluate them based on relevance, innovation, scalability, replicability, quality of the methodology, and ability of the team to carry out the research project. The Scientific Committee is made up of specialists on these issues from the IDB Group and by **Marcus A. Winters** (Boston University) and **Beatrix Eugster** (University of St. Gallen), external academic advisors. The decisions of the Scientific Committee will be final and unappealable.

The selected teams must be willing to receive and respond to comments from the advisors of the call for proposals and from IDB Group specialists throughout execution of the study, as well as to participate in discussion seminars held during the consultancy period.

The following questions will guide the evaluation in the following four areas:

- **Relevance and innovation.** Does the proposal address a knowledge gap? How would the study contribute to closing these knowledge gaps? What is the innovation proposed by the study to address the problem? What is the study's relevance in terms of its impact on policy design in the region?
- **Data and methodology.** Does the proposal present a clear and rigorous research design and methodology? Is the approach to the research question explained in detail and does it justify why the selected methodology is the most appropriate to achieve the objectives of the study? Is the data collection process described in detail, including how potential challenges will be met and overcome? Is the estimation strategy well-articulated, justifying its ability to identify causal relationships and the robustness of the expected results? Are quantitative methods clearly presented and is there adequate justification for their choice over other methodological alternatives?
- **Implementation capacity.** What is the demonstrated experience of the research team in relation to the subject matter and methodologies of the proposed project? How does the team exhibit its capacity to effectively execute the proposed project? Does the proposal include a detailed and realistic implementation plan that aligns with the proposed activities? Is the budget justified and consistent with the project objectives and scope?

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- **Scalability and replicability.** How can the results of the project be applied to other contexts or environments? What strategies have been considered to ensure project scalability? Have barriers been identified that could impact the replicability and expansion of the project? What mechanisms are included in the proposal to overcome these barriers and enhance the study's adaptability?



Financing categories

Subject to the decision of the Scientific Committee and the signing of a consulting contract with the IDB, participants may apply for one of the following funding categories based on the scope of the work proposed:

CATEGORY I – Quantitative diagnoses that establish causal relationships.

Studies in this category require resources to complement existing funds, or to cover research activities without data collection. Proposals in this category can access a maximum of **20,000 US dollars (USD)** and have a maximum of **12 months** to complete the study from the signing of the contract.

CATEGORY II – Pilot interventions. Studies in this category require resources to rigorously evaluate the impact of an intervention or pilot program. Proposals in this category can access a maximum of **100,000 US dollars (USD)** and have a maximum of **18 months** to complete the study from the signing of the contract.

The researchers or consulting firms in charge of the studies selected must sign a consulting contract with the IDB to access the resources available through this call for proposals. The resources of both categories will be disbursed upon presentation and approval of the outputs defined in the consulting contract. The IDB reserves the right to revoke this call for proposals at any time prior to the signing of the consulting contract.



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Activities timeline

During the execution of the research proposals, two closed discussion seminars will be held to present preliminary versions of the studies and receive feedback from external advisors and IDB specialists. These seminars are designed to foster ideas for coordination and exchange among the participating researchers or research teams.

Depending on the funding category applied for, the studies will have a maximum of **12 to 18 months to deliver the final draft of the working document**. The intermediate and final drafts of the working paper will be submitted to a peer review process by the external advisors of this call for proposals. The final product of this agreement will be the presentation and approval of the publishable version of the working paper, along with a response letter to all comments received in the various peer reviews, with the aim of publication in the IDB working paper series..

The general timeline is as follows:

Participation in the first discussion seminar	September 2024
Submission of revised proposal and response to the comments received at the first seminar	October 2024
Delivery of the first draft of the working document for peer review by external advisors	May 2025
Delivery of revised version of the first draft and response to advisors' comments	July 2025
Participation in the second discussion seminar	September 2025
Delivery of the final draft of the working document for review by external advisors	Category I Studies: September 2025 (12 months after the first discussion seminar) Category II Studies: March 2026 (18 months after the first discussion seminar)
Delivery of the revised version of the final draft and response to comments from the advisors	Category I Studies: January 2026 Category II Studies: July 2026
Final peer review and delivery of the publishable version of the working paper	Category I Studies: January - March 2026 Category II Studies: July - September 2026



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Use of funding

The resources provided must be used **exclusively** for financing research activities, collecting primary data, accessing secondary data sources, and certification of the research proposal by an IRB. The amount of funding requested must be clearly justified.

The funds from this call for proposals cannot be used to cover the costs of materials for disseminating the study (dissemination of the outputs of this call for proposals will be the responsibility of the IDB), travel, or acquisition of goods and services (except when they are shown to be essential to achieving the research objectives). Additionally, overhead can account for a maximum of 15% of direct costs.

The payment schedule is as follows:

CATEGORY I

- 30 percent 30 days after participation in the first discussion seminar and upon presentation of the revised proposal and response to comments received at the workshop for approval by the IDB..
- 25 percent upon submission of an IRB and submission and approval by the IDB of the revised version of the first draft of the working paper and response to the comments received during this stage of the review process.
- 25 percent upon participation in the follow-up seminar and submission and approval by the IDB of the revised version of the final draft of the working paper and response to the comments received during the review process at this stage.
- 20 percent upon delivery of the publishable version of the working paper and response to comments received during the final review process.

CATEGORY II

- 30 percent 30 days after participation in the first discussion seminar and upon presentation of the revised proposal and response to comments received at the workshop for approval by the IDB.
- 20 percent upon submission of an IRB, pre-analysis plan (PAP), and submission and approval by the IDB of the revised version of the first draft of the working paper and response to the comments received during this stage of the review process.
- 20 percent upon participation in the follow-up seminar and written response to comments received at the workshop.
- 15 percent upon submission and approval by the IDB of the final draft of the revised version of the working paper and response to the comments received during the review process at this stage.
- 15 percent upon delivery of the publishable version of the working paper and response to comments received during the final review process.

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Deadline for submitting proposals

This call for research proposals will be open until **May 12, 2024**. To ensure proper processing of all proposals, it is strongly recommended that you submit your proposals well in advance of the deadline. The results of this call for proposals will be announced in July 2024.

How to apply

To apply, teams must download and complete the application form (**in English**) and submit the duly completed form through GDLab's [call for proposal's website](#). Applications sent by email or those that do not follow the format of the form will not be accepted.

For any questions or comments regarding the call, please do not hesitate to contact the GDLab team at gdlab@iadb.org

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References

- Berlinski, S., Duryea, S., & Perez-Vincent, S. M. (2021). Prevalence and correlates of disability in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evidence from 8 national censuses. PLOS ONE, 16(10), e0258825. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0258825>
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- Contreras, M. I., Duryea, S., & Martínez, C. (2023). The effect of the pandemic on the transition to tertiary education in Chile: A focus on students with disabilities. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 100, 102779.
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- Ozemela, L., Ortiz, D., and Urban, A-M. 2019. Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities, Latin America and the Caribbean. Policy Brief N IDB-PB-302. Gender and Diversity Division, Inter-American Development Bank.

Arbitration, applicable law, and privileges and immunities of the IDB

All questions, matters, or disputes related to this call for proposals shall be governed by the laws of the District of Columbia, although no part of this clause or the conditions and rules of the call for proposals may restrict, limit, or impede any right, privilege, or immunity granted to the Bank or Bank personnel under any national or international treaty or law.

Should any dispute arise related to the call for proposals that cannot be resolved through a friendly settlement, then once one of the parties gives notice of the disagreement or dispute to the other, it shall be submitted for arbitration and final resolution before a single arbiter. The arbitration will be administered by the American Arbitration Association, in accordance with the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association. The location of the arbitration proceeding shall be Washington, D.C. The costs of any arbitration proceeding shall be borne by the Participant and the Bank in equal parts.



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