

IMTFI

INSTITUTE FOR MONEY, TECHNOLOGY
& FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Call for Proposals for Research 2012-2013

The Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion at the University of California, Irvine is soliciting proposals for original scholarly research on **mobile money services and platforms**, the harnessing of new and existing **social and technological infrastructures** to promote savings and other forms of **value storage** and the **facilitation of payments** at scale for poor people in the developing world.

IMTFI holds a broad notion of value storage and savings: we include both traditional and state-issued money and technologically-mediated instruments and systems, as well as systems based on personal relationships and social networks. IMTFI is most keenly interested in **value storage as is combined with payment capability** (medium of exchange) and in how new types of value storage and exchange media have the potential to be transformative in the lives of the poor. Value storage might include state-issued currency but also livestock, land, gifts of labor, jewelry and other valuables, cards, and the use of mobile phones or other electronic devices. For this call, the Institute specifically encourages proposals that explore: the individual or social client perspective in mobile money systems; the development of new products that use an existing mobile money service; the social and cultural interfaces between new mobile money services and existing savings and money transfer practices. Research will focus on whether and how mobile money, agent networks, or other new systems for money savings and transfer are improving poor people's ability to handle the setbacks and structural conditions that pull them into or keep them in poverty.

Research proposals are especially welcomed that address elements of mobile money as a **platform**. That is: how is mobile money, as a hardware and software architecture, serving as a foundation for new services and functions? Or, how does it have the potential to do so? This includes but is not limited to research on the digitization of transactions, enhancements to mobile money interfaces, and the enrichment of the mobile money platform's functionality. Enhanced functionality may involve new services and features (reversible payments, timed payments, tiered payments, records management) as well as the building of an ecosystem of applications (banking, internet interfaces, card interfaces, P2P, G2P payments, etc.) around mobile money platforms.

❖ **Mobile money services**

A key issue challenging the growth of nascent mobile money systems is that transactions involving the conversion of cash into electronic value are a major driver of cost in the system. Clients still live mainly in a cash-only world and thus wish to go back and forth freely between cash and digital transactions. For digital financial platforms to become sustainable, it may be desirable for more of the transactions to be digital-digital, but this implies that users must be able to do a wider range of transactions in the digital realm (receive income and pay, for example) and to do so easily, safely and reliably. Key research questions include:

- In what ways are mobile money services serving as platforms for other products? How are third-party developers harnessing mobile money services?

- What can we learn from sub-ecosystems (such as networks of informal entrepreneurs and traders) who conduct a high percentage of their transactions with each other over electronic platforms? What are the types of transactions or ecosystems that first migrate onto the system? What are the challenges or barriers experienced?
- What are the behavior changes that occur when groups of individuals (e.g. tea pickers) change from being paid in cash to being paid digitally for the first time (especially in systems which allow them to use the stored value to pay digitally)?

❖ **Social and technological infrastructures and retail or agent banking**

- Many second-generation banking models are based on existing retail networks. These existing networks operate within specific social and cultural relationships. What social factors go into the creation and use of retail and agent banking? Viewed as one kind of infrastructure, how do those social relationships connect to new technological infrastructures for savings products or other forms of value storage? What are the “couplings” between different social and technological infrastructures, and how do they impact people’s decisions of how, when, and what to save?
- What new social practices are emerging with the development of mobile money, as mobile phones and mobile money services become more generally available?
- How are mobile money platforms interacting with existing technological infrastructures, such as the electrical grid (what happens to mobile money when power is unavailable or unreliable), existing payment technologies like point-of-sale terminals, or airtime top-up?
- What are the triggers that lead people to move from one system to another (and back again)? In what circumstances might people use a multiplicity of such systems, and how do they navigate this multiplicity?

The Institute is interested in proposals for research aimed at impacting the design and implementation of new systems for increasing financial inclusion among the world’s poorest people. We are looking for proposals that have the potential for transformative interventions, new thinking and unexplored possibilities. The Institute seeks proposals from researchers in the developing world associated with an organization or institution such as a university that can accept a transfer of research funds.

Human subjects research requirements:

The Institute requires that proposals selected for funding receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before the funds can be disbursed. Some countries have IRB regulations and others do not. Please consult with the relevant parties at your institution first. You may also refer to this link <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/international/intlcompilation/hspcompilation-v20101130.pdf> to determine what the requirements are in your country. The Institute requires that the researcher can provide documentation that the researcher’s institution has reviewed the research proposal to ensure that it is conducted in a manner compliant with the ethical standards for human subjects research in the country where the research will be undertaken. If such guarantee cannot be made, then the University of California, Irvine will conduct a review of the research’s protocols for human subjects protection. Funds cannot be disbursed until this requirement has been met, there are no exceptions.

Eligibility: This call for proposals is open to all researchers who work in the developing world. Researchers are encouraged to submit proposals that involve a partnership with universities or other organizations in the developing world.

Evaluation process and criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following five criteria. Each of these criteria must be addressed in the proposal:

- 1) Applicant capability: Does the applicant have a track record of conducting research that is of publishable quality? Does the applicant's institution have the administrative capability to process the grant? Evaluators will consider the applicant's training and prior research record.
- 2) Fit of project with Institute goals: Does the proposal speak to the issue of poor people's existing money and financial practices and/or does it address the potential for new technologically-mediated systems to impact those practices? Does it focus on the poorest people in the developing world, defined for these purposes as those making do on less than US\$1/day?
- 3) Methodology/feasibility: Does the proposal have a reasonable plan for accessing the target population? What is the likelihood of success of this plan? Are the methods sound? Does the applicant have or can the applicant be expected to develop the necessary methodological expertise to carry out this plan?
- 4) Significance: Will the project result in research that will shed light on important problems? Is the project potentially transformative or scalable? Will it provide generalizable knowledge, and/or will it result in in-depth knowledge of a particular region, people, or practice?
- 5) Originality: Is the project merely replicating existing studies or will it contribute to new knowledge, new methods, or new research questions?

Proposal format:

Proposals should be in English, French or Spanish. If the applicant wishes to submit a proposal in another language, please inquire in advance via the contact information below. Proposals must be submitted as one document online and must consist of the following

- 1) A proposal abstract of no more than 300 words.
- 2) A project narrative of no more than 10 typed, double-spaced pages, including within that page limit a bibliography of references cited.
- 3) One copy of an abbreviated (2 page) curriculum vitae or resume of all of the people involved in the project.
- 4) Using the template provided, a detailed budget listing specific expense categories (which may include stipend or salary support for researchers) and a budget justification. The budget and budget justification template is also available at our website. The Institute will consider budgets of up to US\$20,000 to be used for direct research expenses only, and expects most budget requests to fall between US\$5,000 and \$15,000.
- 5) A timeline for the research activity and completion of the project, with the expectation that projects will last no more than 12 months. Please plan on using June 1, 2012 as a start date.

Acceptable documents types include: PDF - Adobe's PDF, DOC - Word 2003 or earlier, DOCX - Word 2007, TXT - Text File, RTF - Rich Text Format, WPF - WordPerfect Document, ODT - Open Office Files

Deadline for submission: January 9, 2012. Decisions will be announced by mid-March 2012.

Conditions of accepting the award: As a condition of accepting the award, researchers will be expected to submit a 6-month project report to the Institute as well as attend a conference at the University of California, Irvine at a date to be announced, where researchers funded under this initiative will have the opportunity to meet one another, share their research, forge new collaborations and discuss the dissemination of their research findings with the eventual aim of publication in academic journals and other venues (travel and accommodation to UC Irvine will be paid in full by the Institute in addition to the research grant). After the conclusion of the funded project, researchers will be required to submit at least one article of publishable quality. The Institute intends to publish articles as working papers, and to assist researchers in placing their articles in peer-reviewed academic journals. There are no language restrictions on this requirement.

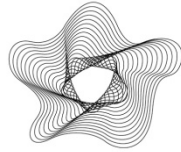
Proposal submission:

Proposals must be submitted online at IMTFI's website at www.imtffi.uci.edu through the submission manager. We will not accept emailed proposals.

If you cannot submit electronically, you may FAX or mail your proposal via any postal service or courier to the below information:

Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion
School of Social Sciences
3151 Social Sciences Plaza
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697-5100
FAX: +1-949-824-2285

Questions may be emailed to imtffi@uci.edu. Telephone inquiries: +1-949-824-2284.



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PROPOSED BUDGET REQUEST

CATEGORY	AMOUNT IN US\$
Salary and Wages:	
Employee Benefits:	
Travel:	
Supplies and Materials:	
Other Direct Costs:	
Indirect cost (Facilities and Administrative Cost): <i>Only allowed if your organization charges for F&A Costs. See explanatory note at the bottom of the budget justification page.</i>	
TOTAL:	

Please use the link below to convert your country currency into the United States dollar.
<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>

***Budget justification is required. Please continue onto next page.**

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Definition and Purpose

The budget justification is a categorical description of the proposed costs. Generally, it explains staffing and supply/service consumption patterns, the methods used to estimate/calculate and other details such as lists of items that make up the total costs for a category. The budget justification should address each of major cost categories (salaries, employee benefits, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs).

A thorough written justification that explains both the necessity and the basis for the proposed costs must accompany the budget. The justification section is critical as it enables the principal investigator (sub-awardees) to emphasize the importance of essential project costs. Please feel free to add additional pages if necessary.

Salary and Wages:

Employee Benefits:

Travel:

Supplies and Materials:

Other Direct Costs:

Indirect cost (Facilities and Administrative Cost):

Only allowed if your organization charges for F&A Costs, you may enter that information here (note that the rates are up to 10% for U.S. universities, and up to 15% for all other non-governmental organizations, international organizations and non-U.S. universities).