

# Application Guidelines: Project Development Fellowship

Please carefully read this document ahead of submitting your application. It contains an overview of the call, the key components of the application, guidelines for documenting your budget, and an application checklist. Student applicants must provide a letter of recommendation from their advisor. Multiple applications from different researchers for the same project will not be accepted.

## Overview

The Larsson Rosenquist Foundation Center for Economics of Breastfeeding (LRF CEB) is now accepting applications to its Project Development Fellowship. Project Development Fellows will be awarded up to CHF 5,000 in starting funds and become affiliates of the LRF CEB. They will receive support to develop their projects to apply for larger funds, training in how to conduct successful research, and regular feedback from experts and a community of other Fellows. The aim of the programme is to support the development of ground-breaking research on the economics of infant nutrition and breastfeeding.

## About the Larsson Rosenquist Center for Economics of Breastfeeding

The LRF CEB at the University of Zurich aims to contribute evidence on the economic aspects of infant nutrition. Good nutrition is important for ensuring a child not only survives but thrives, and there are many underexplored economic factors that influence decision-making about infant nutrition.

The LRF CEB is dedicated to advancing research on the economic aspects of infant nutrition, with a focus on breastfeeding. The center's research focuses on understanding the social and market dynamics of breastfeeding and infant nutrition, with a particular emphasis on addressing issues relevant to low- and middle-income countries. Our vision is to build a holistic understanding of decision-making, market forces, and the cost-benefits associated with different modes of infant nutrition, to guide policy formation and interventions that improve the wellbeing of children, families, and society.

The LRF CEB aims to generate knowledge about infant nutrition through **three research tracks**, which are aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to health, education, economic growth, climate action, and life on land. In addition to producing our own research, the Center aims to support researchers interested in initiating research projects on the economics of infant nutrition. For this reason, we are now initiating the LRF CEB Project Development Fellowship programme.

### Three research tracks

1. **Effects of Breastfeeding:** Understanding the health and socioeconomic outcomes of breastfeeding for children, families, and society.
2. **Economic Decision-Making:** Studying infant nutrition decision-making dynamics through behavioural economics.
3. **The Market for Infant Nutrition:** Examining the economic impact and market dynamics of the commercial infant formula industry.

## About the LRF CEB Project Development Fellow programme

The aim of the LRF CEB Project Development Fellowship Programme is to bring together junior researchers from around the world to help push forward the research frontier in the economics of infant nutrition.

To be eligible for the fellowship, applicants must submit a project proposal. This can be for an early-stage idea at the proposal development stage, or a more well-formed idea at the pilot stage. We are agnostic about the specific methods proposed and are open to applications for both experiments and observational studies. Novel and risk-taking proposals are encouraged.

Fellows will be appointed for one calendar year and meet quarterly online to share their progress with peers and experts. The fellowship will start with an in-person kick-off workshop in mid-June 2025, where fellows will meet in person and present their ideas. Throughout the programme, participants will receive regular feedback and training in grant writing, proposal development and designing implementable research that scales. Fellows will remain affiliates of the LRF CEB once their term ends.

### Eligibility

All economics researchers are eligible to apply, but we will give precedence to junior researchers (PhD students and post-doctoral researchers with less than three years of post-PhD research experience). The provided financial support should be viewed as seed funding to be used towards the development of the research idea, with the aim to support later, larger funding applications.

**Please note that researchers who have received funds from any infant formula company or associated foundation or research institution are precluded from applying to the LRF CEB Project Development Fellow programme (list of companies available [here](#)).**

### Commitment

The Fellowship appointment period will be June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026.

Project Development Fellows will be required to **attend the in-person kick-off workshop, which will be held over two days in Zurich, Switzerland in mid-June 2025**. The LRF CEB will cover costs of travel, room and board related to attending the workshop.

Fellows moreover commit to meeting quarterly online during their appointment period. They commit to actively engaging with their peers and providing constructive feedback. They also agree to provide a written report upon conclusion of their appointment that can be published on the LRF CEB website alongside a short video summarising their research and experience as a Project Development Fellow.

### Application

Prospective applicants must submit a project proposal and a budget documenting how the starting funds will be spent. We accept proposals for both experimental and observational studies.

The Fellowship appointment period will be June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. The proposed project period may extend beyond May 31, 2026 but support from the Fellowship programme is not guaranteed beyond this date.

Applications should be submitted [online](#) by 23:59 GMT on Friday January 31st, 2025. Details on how to write the project proposal and budget, and other documents to include are provided below.

### Evaluation criteria

The submitted proposals will be evaluated according to their:

- Connection to the [Research Tracks of the Center for Economics of Breastfeeding](#)
- Link to the research priorities identified in the adjoining White Paper (available [here](#))
- Contribution: The funded activities should contribute academically. Researchers should highlight the relation to economic theory and previous literature.
- Innovation: Proposals of groundbreaking conceptual or methodological nature, with potential for publication in a general interest journal in economics will be prioritised. Novel and risk-taking proposals are encouraged.
- Design and ability to implement the proposal: Proposed projects must have an appropriate design and have implementation potential.
- Policy relevance and impact potential: We encourage research that is policy-relevant and has high impact potential. In the case of an intervention, we will prioritise research that makes it clear, or states a potential plan for, how the research could be scaled if proven successful.
- Ethics: Research ethics and mitigation of potential risks to participants.

Applications will be reviewed by the LRF CEB review board, consisting of Ingvild Almås, Anne Brenøe, David Yanagizawa-Drott, Devon Spika, and selected Centre affiliates. Decisions will be communicated within a few weeks of the application deadline.

## Project proposal

The project proposal, excluding the abstract but including the reference list, should be a maximum of 5 pages, double-spaced with 12-point font. Any appendices may be uploaded separately.

When preparing their project proposal, applicants should ensure they include the following components:

- **Project title**
- **Applicant name**
- **Funding amount**
- **Relevant research track:** Please indicate which of the three LRF CEB research tracks your project relates to.
- **Abstract:** The abstract should include a description of the project with the research question to be explored or evaluated, project design and deliverables, academic value of the project and policy relevance. The proposal abstracts of successful applicants will be added to the LRF CEB webpage. 2500 characters max.
- **Location of the research to be conducted**
- **Context and target population:** What is the context and who is the target population? What is the size of the target population?
- **Problem statement:** What is the problem this project would help to address? How does it fit under the vision of the LRF CEB and relate to the research priorities identified in the adjoining White Paper? How could the results of this project be used to inform policy, and will the results have potential to be generalised beyond the specific research context?
- **Contribution:** What will the unique contribution(s) of this project be? Provide a brief literature review highlighting the potential for contribution.
- **Project design:** What is the proposed study design? In what way will this study innovate on projects that have come before? If proposing an experiment, please provide an overview of the design, including the randomisation strategy, sample size, intervention, outcomes, measurement tools, and any open design-questions left to answer. If proposing an observational study, please provide an overview of the design, including the setting and

institutional context, proposed data sources, outcomes, econometric methods, and any open design-questions left to answer.

- **Causal mechanisms:** Which causal mechanisms are expected to be at play?
- **Impact potential:** What will be the key deliverables from this project? How could the learnings from the project be used to inform future work? How could participation in the fellowship programme help increase the impact potential of the project?
- **Scalability:** To what extent could the proposed idea scale if found to be successful?
- **Risks:** What potential obstacles do you see to successfully completing the project? These could be technical, logistical, ethical, and/or relate to on-the-ground collaborations with implementation partners, staff and community members, among others. Please outline how you propose to mitigate them. Does participating in your project involve any risks for participants, staff or members of the community?
- **Ethical approval:** Is ethical approval required for the proposed project? If yes, what are the plans for obtaining ethical and/or IRB approval?
- **Partner organisation:** Do you propose to work with a partner organisation? Have you already identified one? If so, please provide details on, for instance, the organisation name, what they do, a contact person and the extent of communication the researcher and organisation have had already.
- **Timeline**

## Budget

All applications must include a budget documenting how the starting funds will be spent. This could be on e.g. researcher travel, direct data collection costs, materials, purchase of data, research assistant costs, and/or pilot studies.

Researcher salaries and indirect costs (e.g. overhead costs) are not eligible for funding. If necessary and appropriate, costs such as office rent in the country where the project will take place may be eligible, but only if they are directly related to the project and itemised and accounted for in the proposed budget.

Where the already-envisioned costs of a project exceed CHF 5,000, the applicant should clearly indicate which costs will be covered by the starting funds and which will need to be covered by other means. They should also indicate whether they have already applied for funding from other sources and which sources of funding they might consider applying to for the remaining costs of the project.

The budget should be submitted as a PDF of an Excel spreadsheet. Other sources of funding applied for- or obtained- should also be noted alongside the costs they are intended to offset. **Note that funding from any producers of infant formula precludes you from participating** in the Project Development Fellow programme (list of companies available [here](#)).

All costs should be justified and kept as low as possible. Applicants must submit a brief explanation of the budget (max 2000 characters) with their application. This can be included in the budget PDF. A budget template is available [here](#).

## Funding conditions

**All funding will be provided as reimbursements, upon presentation of valid receipts.** Funds will be reimbursed directly to the Project Development Fellow's account. In all cases, the costs must be motivated and reasonable. In some cases, we may be able to provide funds earlier, or direct purchase of e.g. travel and accommodation, subject to LRF CEB approval.

It is the responsibility of the Fellow to ensure their budget follows the policies of their host institution in terms of costs. To receive the funding, Project Development Fellows must provide a letter from their host institution that approves their participation in the programme.

Project Development Fellows are expected to conduct their research in line with principles of good scientific practice. It is their responsibility to acquire the appropriate IRB/ethical approval, maintain regulatory compliance, before and while conducting any research, and abide by the law in the country of their host institution and the country of their research.

Project Development Fellows commit to meeting quarterly online during their appointment period, where they will actively engage with their peers and provide constructive feedback. They additionally agree to provide a written report upon conclusion of their appointment for publication on the LRF CEB website alongside a short video summarising their research and fellowship experience.

Any presentations and publications must give mention to the LRF CEB as the source of the funds: “This research is funded by The Center for Economics of Breastfeeding at the University of Zurich.”

## Application checklist

The application is done [online](#).

- Applicant CV
- Project proposal
- Budget incl. brief explanation
- Unofficial transcript if the applicant is a student
- Recommendation letter [for student applicants](#). This letter must include a statement that the letter-writer will supervise the project and provide relevant time and intellectual support and must be received by [devon.spika@econ.uzh.ch](mailto:devon.spika@econ.uzh.ch) prior to the deadline.

## Contact

For questions related to the fellowship programme, the identified research priorities, whether your proposal falls within the scope of the call, or the application and review process, please contact [devon.spika@econ.uzh.ch](mailto:devon.spika@econ.uzh.ch).