# The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
# Call for Proposals to Coordinate Global Research, Learning, and Norms for Participatory Budgeting

Issuance of RFP: May 3, 2019
Deadline for clarifying questions: May 10, 2019
Submissions deadline: May 31, 2019
Email questions and responses to: PBProposals@hewlett.org
Evaluation of proposals: June 3 –21, 2019

## Summary of the Request for Proposals (RFP)

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation seeks to support the global coordination of peer learning, research, and standards across governments and civil society organizations that implement participatory budgeting (PB) initiatives. PB as a policy reform has expanded faster than our knowledge about its impact and spill-over effects.[1] As new governments adopt PB, public officials and civil society organizations responsible for its implementation have few resources to inform the design and evaluation of their programs. The lessons from previous PB initiatives have not been synthesized and translated to inform the work of newly adopted programs. Similarly, researchers of PB have limited opportunities to coordinate their methods and consolidate a research agenda for the field.[2]

The Hewlett Foundation invites proposals for up to $500,000 over two years to pilot a global hub that coordinates knowledge and peer exchange across participatory budgeting initiatives globally. Applicants must have demonstrated experience coordinating research and peer learning across participatory governance initiatives with international networks of practitioners, public officials, and researchers. The Hewlett Foundation will provide start-up funding for the hub during its first two years; proposals must include a plan to diversify revenue sources.

Proposals should directly respond to the needs and opportunities identified by participatory budgeting implementers and experts during a design workshop in November 2018. Specifically, the workshop participants identified three key focus areas: 1) consolidate research and tools, 2) pilot custom learning networks, and 3) consider the

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[1] https://research.mysociety.org/publications/participatory-budgeting
[2] https://www.transparency-initiative.org/blog/2626/participatory-budgeting-spreading-across-globe-2/

design of guidance and resources for implementers. Each theme and related opportunities are described in greater detail in the workshop's final report.[3]

Proposals will be evaluated by the Hewlett Foundation's Global Development & Population program with the input of a voluntary advisory council of four PB experts.

## Background

In early 2018, the Hewlett Foundation engaged Reboot, a social innovation firm specializing in governance and development issues, to explore the potential of new mechanisms to advance global PB research, peer learning, and coordination. Their work built upon earlier research commissioned by the Hewlett Foundation,[4] which observed that existing analyses of PB tended to prioritize the perspectives of international experts and researchers; the views of local implementers were comparatively limited. Recognizing the critical role of implementers on the impact of PB initiatives, Reboot sought to prioritize implementer perspectives—both from government and civil society.

In November 2018, 40 government and civil society practitioners, funders, and allies from 21 countries convened in Barcelona to co-design a new global initiative to support and coordinate PB knowledge and peer exchange. The workshop had two primary objectives:

1. To share approaches and co-design new resources to address common PB challenges; and
2. To define how these resources can be best coordinated and distributed to support PB implementers and strengthen initiatives around the world.

By the second day of the workshop, participants agreed that PB initiatives would benefit from a hub to coordinate learning and peer exchange. Workshop participants developed a list of possible activities.[5] Recognizing that, in its early stages, a global hub would need to focus on a narrow set of priorities for piloting, participants were asked to rank the relative importance of functions based on relative impact and feasibility. The resulting rankings are available on page 12 of the workshop report.

Based on participants' input, the report outlines considerations for organizational design, including a potential business strategy, research agenda, and models for peer learning.

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[3] https://www.pbexchange.org/resources
[4] https://www.transparency-initiative.org/blog/2624/participatory-budgeting-step-building-active-citizenship-distraction-democratic-backsliding/
[5] A full list of possible focus areas with rationale and examples is available on Annex A of the workshop report on page 22.

## Desired Profile

The Hewlett Foundation invites proposals from established organizations. Applicants must have:

1. Expertise and proven leadership in the field of PB
2. Experience working with a range of global government, civil society, and technology partners
3. Track record of convening thematic networks of organizations and/or practitioners

## Submission of Proposals

In no more than ten pages, applicants should submit a narrative proposal and budget that address the following questions:

1. How is your organization qualified to lead a new initiative that coordinates learning, research, and peer exchange across PB programs globally? What is your international experience working with a range of global government, civil society, and private sector partners? Please provide examples of when you have convened thematic networks of researchers and practitioners and the outcomes that resulted.
2. How would you spend the first six months of the two-year grant? How would you prioritize your time to establish a new initiative while piloting approaches in pursuit of the three themes outlined in the workshop report?
3. How would you staff the initiative to carry out the work? What activities, if any, would be carried out in partnership with other organizations?
4. Describe your revenue strategy to diversify funding sources.
5. What processes would you develop for governance, decision making, and partnerships?
6. What is your approach to geographic prioritization? How would you work with existing national and regional PB networks? How would you work across time zones, and linguistic and cultural contexts?
7. What is your approach to ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in the staffing of the initiative and its programmatic activities?
8. What do you feel is missing from the workshop final report, or how would you prioritize activities differently? How else can a global coordinating body support PB implementers and advance learning?
9. What do you aim to achieve by the end of the initial two-year period?
10. What do you consider to be the central risks and how can these be mitigated?
11. Please include a corresponding, high-level budget for up to $500,000 over two years.