



Frequently Asked Questions

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Eligibility criteria		
1.	Do I have to be based in South or Southeast Asia?	Applicants may be located anywhere. However, a research proposal focusing on South Asia or Southeast Asia is essential, and both the research outputs produced during the course of this project must fulfill this criterion. Further, applicants will be required to demonstrate regional expertise in South and Southeast Asia, with a track record of work on digitization and gender.
2.	Can I have collaborators from other countries?	Yes. There is no restriction on where applicants are located as long as proposals focus on South and Southeast Asia.
3.	My research team only has two members. Can I still apply?	Yes. There is no minimum team size.
4.	Can I apply if I am affiliated with an entity (Center of Excellence, etc.) that receives government funding?	Yes. Entities that receive government funding may apply, provided they are not government entities themselves.
5.	Can I be part of two proposals?	Yes, you may be part of multiple applying teams; however, you can be the lead on only one application.
6.	Who will evaluate my application?	Our internal team, along with external advisors on the project, will evaluate applications.

7.	Does my team have to be woman-led?	Teams must be co-led by at least one woman (self-identified) or transgender/non-binary person. We welcome leadership from all gender minorities.
8.	Are we allowed to have a Co-PI as well? Can that person be any gender?	You may have a co-investigator of any gender, but the team lead must identify as a woman, transgender, or non-binary person and fulfill all eligibility criteria described in the Call.
9.	Is the FemFirst Research Observatory only for South Asia or the Global South?	We do not have any restrictions on where researchers are physically located. However, your research proposal must focus on countries within South Asia and Southeast Asia.
10.	How big can research teams be?	There is no prescribed limit on how big research teams can be. However, we encourage you to ensure the size of the team you are applying with is commensurate with the deliverables of the project.
11.	I am not a mid-senior-career researcher. However, I have relevant experience and a proposal I'm really passionate about. Can I still apply?	The FFRO is intended to support an interdisciplinary knowledge ecosystem in the region, in order to build a robust body of evidence that can further feminist AI interventions. A strong track record of regional expertise, as well as expertise on gender and digitalization, is therefore essential. We will only consider proposals from applicants who are capable of demonstrating years of experience on this topic, as well as necessary regional expertise.
Proposal Scope and Methodology		
12.	My proposal focuses on children and young girls. Is this within the scope of the call?	We welcome proposals on girl children and technology, provided they align with the thematic areas and methodological approaches outlined in the Call.

13.	Are alternative or non-traditional research methodologies permitted?	Yes, absolutely. The initiative actively encourages methodological plurality, novelty, and creativity. We welcome applied and technical work (such as auditing, red-teaming, and model evaluation), empirical and grounded regional fieldwork (such as ethnographies or participatory research), policy analyses, and conceptual or theoretical work grounded in Southern epistemologies.
14.	Does my research have to focus purely on the technical aspects of AI?	No. The Observatory explicitly welcomes technical, social, or policy-oriented research. The goal is to examine AI as a broader system embedded within political economies of extraction, labor, and power. Therefore, interdisciplinary work that connects technical design with social and political pathways is highly encouraged.
15.	Can I submit a proposal that falls outside the 8 listed indicative thematic areas?	Yes. The 8 thematic areas provided in the Call are indicative. Submissions that extend beyond these specific categories are welcome, provided they engage substantively with gender equality and feminist approaches to AI systems, innovation, or governance in South and Southeast Asia.
16.	What is the required scope of the two final research papers? Should they be on completely different topics?	There are no restrictions on the subject matter for both research papers, as long as they align with the eligibility criteria in the Call. They may pertain to the same topic or theme, or be radically different from each other. However, please note you will be required to outline the methodology and approach individually for each paper, and demonstrate the necessary capacity and expertise to deliver on your selected topics.
17.	Are you looking for original research to be conducted (or already conducted but unpublished research)?	We are looking for original and unpublished research. We expect the research project itself to be carried out during this project's tenure. Further, supplementary funding for the research project should be disclosed, but we will allow submissions that have received/will receive other sources of funding.

Application Form

18.	I couldn't find word counts in the Call for Proposals. Should the proposal, CV, and budget be merged into one PDF?	The Google Form proceeds in two sections. After you add in your personal details and upload your CV, you will be able to access the proposal section, where we have indicated word counts for each question (where applicable). Similarly, there is a space in the same section where you can upload the budget as a separate document. For reference, you may check the application guide.
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Deliverables

19.	What are the primary deliverables expected from selected researchers?	Over a 12-month period, participants must author two high-quality original research papers (6,000 words each, excluding references) and two short blog posts synthesizing key insights. They are also expected to participate in quarterly research exchange meetings, peer reviews, and submit quarterly progress reports.
20.	Do the final research papers have to be written in English?	Yes. While applicants may have varying levels of comfort with English, all final papers and related outputs must be produced in English. Applicants are permitted to budget for copy-editing, translation, or language support in their proposals if necessary.
21.	What are the timelines for the different combinations of outputs listed (research papers, blogs, in addition to podcasts, etc.)?	Timelines will be collaboratively decided with researchers at the outset, tailored to each project's unique research plan and trajectory.
22.	What is the expected timeline to produce the research papers and additional dissemination material?	This will be finalized in conversation with the Observatory team once you are onboarded. It is expected that the first research paper is produced within the first 6 months, and the next within the next 4-5 months approximately.

23.	What is the time commitment required for the Scholars Research Exchange and the overall project?	You can expect a total time commitment of approximately 90 to 120 minutes per month in meetings. This monthly window covers the exchange meetings, your engagement in peer-review activities, and meetings with project advisors, evenly spaced across the 12-month timeline. The time commitment to produce the research papers is contingent on your research proposal, and it is up to you to plan your time such that you are able to meet the deliverables required.
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Finances and budget

24.	How will funds be routed to us?	Funds will be disbursed through a contract with the lead entity. Funds will only be disbursed to the lead entity. Funds will be distributed in tranches over the course of the project.
25.	Considering that the call has a regional scope and involves teams from different countries, are project coordination, mentoring, or monitoring activities conducted exclusively online?	Team monitoring and project advisory meetings will be conducted online.
26.	My project has already received funding in previous rounds. Can I still apply for this Call for Proposals?	Yes, you may apply as long as you disclose any previous funding in the application form.
27.	Is there an in-person component, and should I budget for travel?	Yes. Selected researchers are expected to attend and participate in an in-person regional conference tentatively scheduled for November 2026 in Bangkok. You must factor these travel and accommodation costs directly into your proposal budget.
28.	Does the total 12,000 CAD funding cover the entire application (inclusive of both research papers)? Or, is the budget intended to be calculated on a per-paper basis?	The 12,000 CAD budget covers the entire application, including both research papers, and should be calculated across the whole project.