CEGA-Visa Financial Inclusion Lab

*Fall 2016 Pilot Funding: Request for Proposals (RFP)*

**Release Date:** September 27\(^{\text{th}}\), 2016

**Deadline:** October 25\(^{\text{th}}\), 2016 at 11:59 pm Pacific Time

The Center for Effective Global Action and VISA invite CEGA affiliates and their PhD advisees to apply for small pilot grants to support early-stage, exploratory research on digital financial inclusion in emerging markets. We expect to fund 3 pilot projects of up to $20K each through this RFP. Proposals should address one or more of the following research questions identified by CEGA and VISA:

1. **How can digitizing government-to-person payments promote financial inclusion?** How can making wages and social subsidies electronic increase access to formal savings and credit for the under-banked?
2. **What value propositions can best incentivize small merchants to use digital financial services?** See, for example, VISA’s recent launch of mVisa (mobile payment platform) in Kenya.
3. **What is the optimal design of digital credit products?** See this Omidyar study for an example.
4. **How can block chain be leveraged to promote digital financial inclusion?** See this interview with the Gates Foundation for an example of the potential impact of block chain on financial inclusion.
5. **How can social networks be leveraged to promote digital financial inclusion?** See this CGAP article on the increasingly tight connection between social media and financial inclusion in China.

We encourage all studies to explore the implicit risks that consumers face by using new types of financial products/services (including fraud, identity theft, and over-indebtedness), and potential ways to mitigate these risks. Researchers are further encouraged to test new methods for measuring financial inclusion, either by utilizing new types of data, or using existing data in new ways.

**Use of funds:** Funding may be used to support international travel, partnership development (with Visa or an external partner), preliminary field data collection, database work, and the development of full-scale proposals. Research may be carried out in any country where financial inclusion is a persistent challenge (see Global Findex).

**Timing:** Travel may occur as early as Nov 1, 2016 and must be completed by May 1, 2017. In addition to monthly 100-word updates, a final report will be due to CEGA within 30 days of completion of the project.

**Criteria for review:** Successful proposals will be relevant, rigorous, novel, and have a vision for scaling up beyond the life of the pilot grant. Funding decisions will be made by jointly by CEGA and VISA.

**Applicant eligibility:** Faculty within the CEGA affiliate network, as well as their advisees (PhD students and Postdoctoral Scholars), are eligible to apply. Projects must be in an early, exploratory stage of research. Please direct questions about eligibility or “fit” to Carson Christiano at christiano@berkeley.edu.

To download the application, [click here](#). To apply, [click here](#).

Applications are due at 11:59 pm Pacific Time on October 25, 2016

Applicants will be notified by November 1, 2016.