 

**WHAT LEVEL FOR LEVELLING-UP? RESEARCH FUNDING CALL**

Rebuilding Macroeconomics (RM), is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and hosted at the Institute for Global Prosperity at University College London. We have recently obtained some further funding to support three specifically policy related areas of research. In this call we invite research proposals under the ‘Levelling-Up’ agenda.

Our long-term aim is to transform macroeconomics back into a policy-relevant social science. Towards achieving this objective, we are particularly interested in interdisciplinary proposals and the introduction of new methods to macroeconomics. We will consider proposals which are genuinely innovative; which are oriented towards policy-relevant problems; and which are rigorous but may be overlooked by traditional funding sources.

## Research Funding Call

Levelling-up is the core socio-economic objective of the current UK Government. The regional divides across the UK have been widely reported, with both the richest and poorest regions across Europe all within the UK borders. These inequalities are reflected across many social economic and environmental measures, including inactivity rates, productivity levels, digital access, school performance and access to green spaces. Just as concerning is how economic under-performance is reflected in measures of social well-being, from life expectancy rates, mental health and serious illnesses.

The question we wish to examine is: what is the appropriate level of analysis for understanding these inequalities? It is not the individual level, as traditional analysis might suggest, because that would not explain groups with very different outcomes. Neither is it obvious that the level of analysis is regional, for the same reason. How can we explain these groupings, how they emerge, how they fit into the wider regional picture; and how the connections or interactions can be measured to understand these outcomes? When considering such questions, the following sub-questions emerge. Do we need to think about a new intermediate meso (community or local area) level that captures intra-regional inequalities and disparities? How do we include citizens’ voices in the levelling up process, and address the democratic deficit? How do we take account of and encourage more secure livelihood infrastructures? How does the adequacy of our welfare system impact levels of inequality? How can we effectively capture the factors that are most important to citizens for levelling up, e.g. use of prosperity indices? What is the role of social solidarity and social networks in driving economic innovation and value?

**Application process**

This is a directed call, meaning that it follows from earlier discussions or research that have been submitted to RM. This Call involves a single stage application process. Depending on the number of applications we receive, we hope to have a workshop where applicants may present their ideas in a collaborative workshop before the end of October 2021. We will then make a final decision.

The maximum available for the research project is £60,000 which will be funded at 80% Full Economic Cost (fEC). The Development Group stresses that they put high weight on proposals that are interdisciplinary, introduce new methods and insights and enhance our understanding of macroeconomics. Above all, the project proposals should be new and ambitious, and should have direct policy relevance.

Applicants to this Call should complete the application form at the end of this proposal, and the associated budget spreadsheet. Completed applications should be submitted as e-mail attachments to Richard Arnold, at Richard.arnold@ucl.ac.uk by 23.59 on **12 November 2021** (extended from 29 October).

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| **Name of Main Applicant** |  |
| **Host Institution** |  |
| **Contact address** |  |
| **Telephone number** |  |
| **e-mail address** |  |
| **Title of Project Proposal** |  |
| **Names of other Group members(if known or applicable)** |  |
| **Details of Project Proposal: please provide a clear, non-expert summary of the issue, challenge or opportunity to be explored. (Maximum 2000 words, excluding references: see below)** |  |
| **Description of the project activities, including proposed methodology and deliverables**. **(Maximum 500 words)** |  |
| **Description of the interdisciplinary nature of the project, including the different academic disciplines involved, and other knowledge partners (if any) from outside academia who will be brought together as part of this proposed project.** (**Maximum 500 words)** |  |
| **Please list references here, if cited in the above texts** |  |
| **Please provide a short justification for the financial resources requested in the budget.** **(Maximum 500 words)** |  |
| **Please provide an outline timetable for the proposed project** |  |
| **Please provide an outline plan for Communications and Impact in relation to this project. (Maximum 500 words)** |  |
| **Please supply brief research “track records” for the individuals named on this application.** |  |
| **Costing at 100% fEC** | Please complete the separate costing spreadsheet (to include indexation) and attach the spreadsheet when submitting the application. |

Any questions about the call should be referred initially to Richard Arnold at richard.arnold@ucl.ac.uk, tel: 07880 981743. Completed applications should be sent as e-mail attachments to richard.arnold@ucl.ac.uk by 23.59 on **12 November 2021** (extended from 29 October).