

CALL FOR PAPERS ON:

“THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE ARAB WORLD”

The Economic Research Forum (ERF) is pleased to announce a call for papers under the theme of “Political Economy of Transformation in the Arab World”. This is an important topic as countries of the Arab region have entered a period where political and economic transformations can interact in ways that will be more potent than in the past, and which can produce good or bad economic and political outcomes.

The papers will seek to answer key questions such as what is driving political economy changes in the Arab world? How are the existing political settlements likely to be transformed, and what does this imply for political, social, and economic reforms? And more normatively, are there ways to improve the evolution towards democracy and developmental outcomes, for example, by fostering particular coalitions of social forces, or by designing policies in a particular way? The ultimate concerns center on the core demands for better social justice, more jobs and better distribution, and better state services.

Researchers are invited to submit proposals for an original research paper on topics related to the sub-themes described below.

THEME AND SUB-THEMES:

- A better understanding of the strength, interests, influence, and recent evolutions of some of the actors that will have more voice in the future, such as the middle class, labor unions, armies, political parties, women groups, and the rich; and on how these actors interact to produce political-economic outcomes.
- A better understanding of past trends in fiscal policy and service delivery related to the rolling back of the state, and of potential future reforms that would be technically and politically supported, including the modernization of the state, with a focus on civil service reforms, improved service delivery, and fiscal policy.
- An analysis of state-business relations, including cronyism, and how it can be reduced or eliminated in the future, with consideration of politically feasible reforms of competition policy, financial markets, support for SMEs, and other.
- Transitional challenges, including economic challenges with a focus on the balance between policies that can have short term effects and those that are needed for medium term benefits.

Other related themes would also be considered, for example, the examination of the causes of the revolutions (or lack of), or the economic implications of different types of

constitutions. The papers should focus on the Arab countries, but may cover non-Arab countries as comparators.

Methodologically, the proposals can focus on case studies or cross countries/cross sector analysis. They can use quantitative or qualitative approaches, and focus on the micro or macro level. Researchers are encouraged to use innovative approaches. The proposals should have economic grounding and include political economy considerations. Openness on other social science fields such as sociology or anthropology is welcome.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated by a refereeing committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- The value added from the project in terms of contributing to existing knowledge,
- The methodological soundness, be it econometric or in-depth case studies,
- The policy relevance of the findings,
- The effectiveness of the dissemination strategy, and
- The extent to which the project involves a capacity building component.

PLEASE FORWARD YOUR SUBMISSION, according to the format outlined below, by 15th September 2012, with your CV(s), and two published papers

TO: yfahim@erf.org.eg Cc: rnada@erf.org.eg

For further inquiries, please contact Ishac Diwan, Program Director at ishac_diwan@hks.harvard.edu, and/or Yasmine Fahim, Senior Program Officer, at yfahim@erf.org.eg .

IMPORTANT DATES

Submission of proposals deadline	15 th September 2012
Announcement of winning proposals	15 th October 2012
Submission of draft papers	1 st April 2013
Workshop for discussing draft papers	June 2013 (TBD)
Submission of final papers	15 st August 2013

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS

Authors should submit a proposal of a maximum length of ten pages. It should be structured to contain five sections in the following format:

1. Statement of the research problem: A clear and concise description of the nature and importance of the proposed research; its scope and boundaries; its general context; and objectives with explicit reference to policy relevance.

2. Value Added: A selective and analytical review of the relevant literature, with a view to both demonstrating knowledge of past theoretical and empirical work, as well as identifying the knowledge gap that the proposed research is intended to address. A list of references should be attached.

3. Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology: A clear statement of the conceptual framework should be provided elaborating on the set of concrete questions for which the proposed research is intended to provide answers. This is to be followed by an elaboration of the research methods to be employed and why they are best suited to answer the research questions. The section should also indicate the nature of the information used (and when applicable, the data collection techniques). Finally, it should explain how the information will be analyzed and interpreted using quantitative and/or qualitative methods.

4. Time Frame: the timetable must follow the schedule above.

5. Budget: should be submitted in US dollars, itemized and inclusive of all research expenses. Research costs should be by deliverables. Other budget items may include travel, if necessary, research assistance, data collection, office supplies and photocopying. The purchase of equipment is not allowed under ERF grant rules.