



Research Budget Guidance

Rigorous research projects require specialized technical, programmatic, and operations support. When the quality of research and evidence suffers due to inadequate support, we learn less about how to improve our programs.

HOW MUCH DOES RESEARCH COST?

Costs can vary widely, depending on the type of research, sample size, complexity, and management model. For example, from the IRC's experience, a political economy analysis could cost USD \$40,000 and up. A design study or feasibility pilot can cost \$100,000 and up. Some randomized impact evaluations with large-sample surveys and multiple rounds of data collection can cost up to USD \$500,000 to \$1,200,000.

Cost Categories:

As a broad rule of thumb is that approximately:

- One third of the budget is typically allocated to staff & benefits (including investigator salary / time, enumerators, supervisors, etc);
- One third of the budget is for data collection costs (training, travel, equipment, supplies, etc), and
- One third of the budget is for other costs (translation, research permits and ethical reviews, dissemination, meeting and conference cost, etc).

Unit Costs:

Key unit costs to consider to estimate research costs are:

- Daily salary rates for research staff:
 - Enumerators (typically officer level)
 - Transcribers for qualitative interview audio (typically officer level)
 - Translators (officer or manager level, depending on complexity)
 - Supervisors (typically manager level)
- Cost of vehicle rental (daily, weekly or monthly, depending on the needs)
- Costs of data collection tablets (if needed)

- Training venue rental (if needed)
- Research permits & ethical approvals
- Conference fees and publication fees (for dissemination)

BUDGET LINES TO INCLUDE

Personnel and Benefits

- Lead investigators & research associates
 - For costing studies, add Best Use of Resources staff time & effort (cost effectiveness studies are required for all impact evaluations)
- A fee for IRB administration (only for studies conducted with the IRC and being submitted to IRC's IRB for approval)
 - IRC's IRB has one-time submission fees per study for reviews. In your research budget, add a personnel budget line for "Institutional Review Board" with the following costs:
 - Human subjects research, full board or expedited: \$1,200
 - Salary = \$939
 - Benefits @ 27.75% = \$261
 - Human subjects research in an exempt category: \$500
 - Salary = \$391
 - Benefits @ 27.75% = \$109
 - Innovation research not classified as human subjects research: \$300
 - Salary = \$235
 - Benefits @ 27.75% = \$65
 - This is a "per study" fee. Please adjust if you have multiple studies in your project.
 - It covers unlimited modifications and extensions of your IRB/ethical approval.
- Adequate number and time & effort for all research personnel (research associates, enumerators, interviewers, transcribers, etc).
 - The research team calculator spreadsheet can help estimate team size for surveys (tab 1) as well as for qualitative methods transcription & translation needs (tab 2).
 - Consider trade-offs between a larger team/faster data collection and smaller team/longer data collection.
- Include days for piloting questionnaires, back-checking (up to 10% of sample), and tracking participants.
- Include staff benefits and/or bonuses as relevant.
- For multi-year projects, consider inflation and any relevant performance salary increases.

Travel Costs



- Large-sample data collection can be costly in terms of transportation. Make sure to include the cost of vehicle & driver hire as well as accurate fuel costs.
- Decide whether surveyors will receive upfront per diems for food and accommodations, or whether these costs will be reimbursed. If it is expected that surveyors will need to stay in the field overnight, make sure that this cost is included.

Materials and Equipment

- Budget for laptops, tablets and extra batteries, GIS devices, mobile phones and credit, and software as required.
- Research staff will likely also require a budget for printing, materials like flip charts, pens, markers, visibility/identification for surveyors, locking file folders for paper-based data, etc.

Other

- Insert training costs: trainer salary, room rental, per diems and/or refreshments, printed materials, etc.
- Consider whether you will need translation & back-translation for the questionnaires, incentives and/or small gifts for study participants (water, biscuits), and in-country research permits and/or approvals, as required.
- Add dissemination costs (validation workshops, dissemination meetings and international conferences, article submission fees).
- Depending on project and structure, you may also need to include indirect costs.

Tip! It is important to budget staff time & resources for **dissemination** of research results.

On average, **dissemination costs between \$10,000 and \$60,000** for a large evaluation. Dissemination activities are often carried out for approximately 6 months to one year after the endline data is collected.

If relevant, also add budget for baseline dissemination.

