

Request for Proposals (RFP)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

International Research for the Study of China's Urban Development and Land Policy
9/8/2026–11/10/2026

Summary

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Program on the People's Republic of China cordially invites proposals for academic and policy research papers addressing land, urban, fiscal, and environmental issues relating to urbanization in China. Preference will be given to policy-oriented empirical studies and international comparative studies. This RFP focuses on scholars who are based outside of mainland China; the Peking University-Lincoln Institute for Urban Development and Land Policy runs a [separate RFP](#) in April for applicants based in mainland China.

Context/Background

The focus areas are indicated below:

- **Land Use, Carbon Neutrality, and Spatial Planning and Governance.** This area focuses on the relationship between land use and carbon neutrality at national or regional levels, and the modalities of spatial planning and governance to achieve carbon neutrality.
- **Urban Regeneration.** This area includes empirical and policy analyses of critical issues facing urban regeneration in China, such as benefit sharing, spatial inequalities, impact on rental housing, and provision of affordable housing through urban regeneration.
- **Municipal Finance and Land Value Capture.** This area focuses on the effects of municipal finance and land value capture instruments on urban economies and the quality of life; the effectiveness of municipal finance and land value capture instruments in local public service delivery; and issues relating to municipal fiscal sustainability.
- **Impacts of New Urbanization.** This area focuses on the impacts of new urbanization on population movement, spatial patterns of urban development, municipal fiscal health, shrinking cities, and infrastructure usage.
- **Land Policies.** This area focuses on the effects of recent land policy reforms on the efficiency and equity of urban and rural land use, land redevelopment, urban regeneration, municipal finance, and rural-to-urban migration.
- **Housing Policies.** This area focuses on housing market performance, the effectiveness of housing policy (especially affordable housing policy), and housing for migrant workers.
- **Urban Environment and Public Health.** This area focuses on the quality of urban environments, the effectiveness of urban environmental policy and regulations, and impacts of urban land use on the quality of urban life and public health.

- **Land and Water Conservation.** This area focuses on land and water conservation, including the analysis and assessment of land and water conservation practices, policy, and finance.

Projects may touch on as many or as few focus areas as appropriate.

Expected Cost

Two winning proposals are expected to be selected. The award amount will be around US\$35,000 for each winning proposal. The funds awarded under this RFP are contracted as work-for-hire, and recipients are not permitted to subcontract to third parties unless specified in the application and budget.

Publication and Dissemination

Exceptional papers will be considered for inclusion in the Lincoln Institute Working Paper series.

Ownership and Third-Party Copyrights

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If the Work Products are accepted for publication in an academic journal or volume, Lincoln Institute may grant copyright ownership to the publisher in exchange for royalty-free use by Lincoln Institute of the article.

RFP Schedule

Literature Review	May 31, 2027
Progress Report	November 30, 2027
Rough Draft	March 1, 2028
Final Draft	May 15, 2028

Application Guidelines

Minimum Requirements:

Applicants for the China Program's International Research for the Study of China's Urban Development and Land Policy must have a PhD at the time of submission. Qualified applicants do not need to be affiliated with a university or research institute.

To support a broader pool of scholars, we will not consider applications from former principal or coprincipal investigators who propose holding the same position.

Proposal Requirements:

Proposals must be submitted online via the web-based application form. Please do not submit your proposals by email or mail.

The following sections must be included in proposals:

- **Project Abstract:** Maximum length of 1,500 characters

- **Project Description:** Maximum length of 23,000 characters (4–6 pages). It should identify the following:
 - Research objective and specific research questions
 - Theoretical or conceptual framework and main hypothesis to be tested
 - Methodology, sources of empirical data, and data collection strategy
 - Expected results
 - Description of partnerships (if research involves collaboration with academic institutions, government organizations, private sector, etc.)
- **Calendar of Activities:** Attach to the proposal form an estimate of a work plan with a projected schedule of activities to be completed.
- **Detailed Budget:** Please outline the costs for research assistance, equipment, data, fieldwork, travel, etc. Please be advised that overhead or indirect costs may be charged at a maximum of 15 percent of the budget.
- **CV and Publication Records:** 3 pages maximum

Additional Requirements:

In the web-based form, please indicate whether [human subject research](#) will be performed and, if it will be, what IRB will be used and a brief description of the procedures you plan to follow to comply with standards concerning human subject research.

Evaluation Criteria

The Lincoln Institute will evaluate the research proposals based on the following criteria:

Merits of the research and its relevance to the RFP's theme	40%
Quality of the proposed methodology and design	35%
Feasibility of data	20%
Qualifications of the research team members and skill of the proposal's writing	5%
Total Score	100%

Timeline:

Submission of proposals is due **on November 10, 2026**, by 11:59pm (EDT). Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Awards will be announced by the Lincoln Institute in **mid-January 2027**. Contracts with selected proposals will be finalized in **mid-February 2027**, and the final working papers are due on **May 15, 2028**.

Confidentiality

The information submitted during the application process will be kept confidential by the institute, any third-party reviewers, the applicant, and any coapplicants listed in the submission.

The Lincoln Institute reserves the right to publicize information about successful proposals as appropriate.

Expectations Regarding Research

Applicants selected for research funding must adhere to the Lincoln Institute's [research integrity](#) statement.

Questions about this RFP

Questions regarding proposal guidelines should be sent to Linus Glenhaber, program coordinator of China Program and Asia, at chinaprogram@lincolninst.edu.

About the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy seeks to improve quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land. A nonprofit private operating foundation whose origins date to 1946, the Lincoln Institute researches and recommends creative, nonpartisan approaches to land as a solution to economic, social, and environmental challenges. Through education, training, publications, and events, we integrate theory and practice to inform public policy decisions worldwide.

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposal Format

- **How detailed should the project description be?** Whatever best conveys the objective, methodologies, and data availability of your proposal in clear language.
- **How flexible is the character count for each section?** Not at all. You must adhere to the specified character count. The part of your proposal exceeding the length limit will not be accepted by the system. The character count is for English characters (letters, punctuation, special characters, etc.).
- **Should all submissions be electronic?** Yes.
- **Do I need to send a hard copy of the proposal?** No. Hard copies of submissions will not be considered.
- **What if the application link does not work for me?** If the submission portal does not work, please email chinaprogram@lincolnst.edu.
- **What is the format for the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Working Paper?** This format will be sent to the authors of the selected proposals later. Examples of working papers can be found on the [Lincoln Institute website](#).

Budget

- **Can the budget be changed during the research?** No, except in case of reallocation of funds in consultation with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- **Does the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy cover institutional overhead or indirect costs?** The budget of US\$35,000 may include overhead or indirect costs up to 15 percent, but the total may not be increased to include these costs.
- **What does the award amount cover?** The award covers all direct research expenditures including personnel, research assistance, data, books, research-related travel and software, or other items deemed indispensable for the development of the project.
- **Is there a maximum budget amount?** We expect the budget to be no more than US\$35,000. You are expected to determine the budget based on the scope of the project.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Is it necessary to be a US citizen to apply?** No. Any scholar based outside of mainland China is eligible to apply.
- **Can the paper be coauthored?** Yes. Contact details for all authors must be listed in the proposal, and a lead researcher must be designated as the person responsible for the project.
- **Can I submit more than one proposal?** Yes. Each proposal should be submitted in a separate application.