



LISTENING
AND LEARNING
in a Polarized World

TEMPLETON
World Charity Foundation

Global Request for Planning Grants

APPLICATION GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



LISTENING AND LEARNING IN A POLARIZED WORLD GLOBAL REQUEST FOR PLANNING GRANTS

Templeton World Charity Foundation launched Listening and Learning in a Polarized World (LLPW) to support research for new scientific discoveries that can help humans flourish in a world confronted with increasing polarization. In this Request for Proposals (RFP), we seek to fund planning grants that will advance the knowledge base for researchers seeking to measure and map polarization between and within societies and cultures.

KEY DATES

- Submission Deadline for Planning Grant Proposal: March 6, 2026
- Notification to Finalists: Early April, 2026
- Submission of Revised Planning Proposal: April 2026
- Earliest Start Date: June 1, 2026
- Submission Deadline for Full Mapping Proposal Draft: January 15, 2027



THE OPPORTUNITY

Increasing levels of social, political, and cultural polarization threaten the stability of societies, undermines collective action on global challenges, and impedes human flourishing. While polarization is widely acknowledged, our scientific understanding of its fundamental drivers, manifestations, and potential antidotes remains fragmented and insufficient, especially outside of Western contexts. We lack robust, comparable data across cultures and innovative frameworks, and we have a limited evidence base for what effective depolarization looks like in practice.

This initial planning grant opportunity is a strategic investment in the foundational research required to map the complex ecosystem of polarization and depolarization globally. The USD \$100,000 planning grants offered in this stage provide time and resources to build the teams, tools, and contextual understanding necessary for a new scientific enterprise on a global scale. Ultimately, these planning grants aim to ensure the subsequent multi-million dollar research investment is transformative.

Those selected for the planning grant will each be eligible to apply for a second round of funding of up to USD \$2.5 million to carry out the larger mapping project proposed in the planning grant.

We seek proposals for planning activities that will enable future research to:

- Develop novel, multi-dimensional models, frameworks and metrics for polarization (or depolarization) that are valid across different cultural and political contexts.
- Design methodologies to systematically map polarization to identify key leverage points and emerging patterns of depolarization. This can be at any scale (e.g., communities, between groups, and across nations)
- Build the collaborative partnerships needed to explore the mechanisms that drive polarization (e.g., social media algorithms, economic inequality, identity threats) and the factors that foster flourishing and cohesion (e.g., cross-group contact, shared narratives, institutional trust). And establish the governance, data-sharing, and communication infrastructure, etc to allow for a lasting, equitable international consortium dedicated to the project.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- Legal Organization must be a university, research institution or non-profit organization.
- Must be a plan for global study with network partners based in different countries.
- Must commit to preregistering the experiments in the mapping study.
- If you have a past or current TWCF grant larger than \$260,000k and this work will build upon that, you will need matching funding to be eligible.
- An individual can only be involved in a maximum of 3 submitted proposals.



APPLICATION GUIDANCE

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Start Date

Projects should start by June 1, 2026.

Project Duration

6 - 9 months.

Mapping Proposals Submission

If selected for a planning grant, draft proposals for the larger project must be submitted by January 15, 2027.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To maintain a standard across all submissions, the Foundation has provided some guidelines to assist in crafting the project description. Please provide a description that is no more than 2500 words (excluding references). If applicable, tables, graphs and figures should be uploaded as a single pdf document.

Successful proposals will demonstrate:

- A clear articulation of model/mechanism/factor of polarization or depolarization, or research questions to be explored, and possible measurements.
- Clear description of the aims and activities of the planning period.
- Importance of the proposed question(s) and potential impact.
- Clear articulation of collaboration plans & mechanisms.
- Strong explanation of capacity for success.
- Innovation and creative thinking.
- Adherence to best practices in open science.

We highly encourage:

- Engagement with varied stakeholders such as practitioners, policy makers and community leaders.
- Interdisciplinary approaches.
- Innovative dissemination plans.
- Robust capacity building plans.

THE BUDGET

We require a brief budget to help TWCF decide whether or not the estimated expenses are both reasonable and necessary for the project.

Budgets can be broken down into:

- Personnel
- Operational Research Costs
- Travel and Lodging
- Events
- Overhead

There are a few restrictions on the budget:

- **Overhead:** The Foundation will approve an added component for overhead within the budget of \$100,000, which is no more than (fifteen) 15% of direct costs. Overhead costs are general overhead and administrative expenses that support the entire operations of a grantee and are incurred for common or joint objectives. The Foundation welcomes proposals that request a lower percentage for overhead costs.
- **Travel and lodging costs** associated with anyone who is not employed by the Legal Organization, such as a Project Co-Leader at another institution or a conference presenter from another institution cannot exceed 10% of the total budget. Please note that TWCF will not pay for first class or business travel.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

We will require the following uploaded in addition to your project description:

- Team members information ([template provided](#))
- CVs
- Letters of Support for individuals who are not employed by the legal organization

