

SVRI Data to Evidence Grant 2027

Additional FAQs from Information Session Q&A

1. Dataset Eligibility & Ethical Sourcing

Q: Do I need a formal ethics/IRB clearance in addition to proof of dataset access approval?

A: It depends on the scope of the existing approval. If the dataset already has clearance from an ethics committee, IRB, or equivalent body that covers secondary analysis of the kind you propose, you do not need to reapply — but you must provide us with proof of that approval. If the existing clearance does not extend to your proposed secondary analysis, you will need to obtain approval from the relevant body, and you should build the time this takes into your project timeline.

Q: If my organisation already owns or has a previously collected the dataset, does it qualify as "secondary data" for this grant?

A: Yes. Data your organisation previously collected can qualify as secondary data for this grant, provided three conditions are met: the data was collected with participant consent; the original research was reviewed and approved by an ethics review committee, IRB, or equivalent body; and that approval covers analysis of the data beyond the scope of the original study for which it was collected.

Q: What approval do I need to use an openly accessible dataset such as DHS or VACS?

A: For datasets publicly available through an open-access data portal (such as DHS or VACS, other data sources made available), a separate letter of permission from the data custodian is not required if the dataset's own access terms already grant you the right to conduct secondary analysis and publish findings. Attach a short letter from the lead researcher confirming the name and source of the dataset, and confirming that the dataset proposed for analysis is in the public domain.

Q: What counts as "secondary" data — for example, would court case records held at a national archive, or newspaper articles reporting on cases, be eligible?

A: If court case records are 'public' in your country, then you may use the data. However we will be interested in knowing how do you plan to 'protect' the confidentiality of the people whose records you are using, in how the data is managed, reported etc. Newspaper articles reporting on case could be considered, provided you can demonstrate that you have substantial data of high quality to draw meaningful, rigorous conclusion from their analyses.

Q: Can the proposed analysis inform or feed into intervention development, or must it be purely descriptive/analytic?

A: Yes. Analyses that generate evidence to inform the design of future interventions are within scope, provided the core proposed activity remains secondary data analysis and not the design, piloting, or delivery of an intervention itself. Intervention development or delivery is not a fundable activity under this grant.

Q: Are qualitative datasets eligible, and what does "rich enough to support meaningful further analysis" mean in practice?

A: Yes, qualitative datasets — including existing interview transcripts and case files — are eligible for secondary analysis. "Rich enough" means the dataset contains sufficient depth and volume of material (for example, full transcripts rather than brief summaries, and a sample size adequate to the proposed research question) to support a new, substantive analysis rather than a re-description of existing findings. If you are unsure whether your dataset meets this bar, describe its scope in your application and reviewers will assess fit as part of the review process.

Q: Can secondary analysis combine an existing dataset with another secondary method, or pool data across multiple countries (meta-analysis)?

A: Yes. Proposals may combine more than one existing dataset, or apply a secondary method such as meta-analysis across multiple countries' data, provided the combination is methodologically justified and each dataset meets the grant's ethical sourcing and approval requirements individually

Q: Must the proposed analysis focus on a single country, or can it cover multiple countries?

A: Either is acceptable. You may propose a country-specific analysis or a multi-country analysis, depending on what best answers your research question and what your dataset supports. There is no preference for one over the other.

2. Institutional Eligibility

Q: Can a sole proprietor, or a researcher operating through a registered consultancy/company, apply — independently or in partnership with an institution?

A: The grant is awarded to institutions, not individuals, and for-profit companies cannot be the lead applicant. If you are registered as a sole proprietor or operate your own consultancy, you cannot apply independently in that capacity. You can be included as a co-investigator or named researcher on a proposal led by an eligible LMIC-based university, research institution, or non-profit organisation — the eligible institution must be the lead/administering applicant, not your consultancy.

Q: If a country office is based in an LMIC but is affiliated with, or reports to, a headquarters in a high-income country, is it eligible to apply?

A: Eligibility is based on where the lead applicant and the administering institution are based and operate, not on where a parent organisation's global headquarters is located. If your country office is legally registered and is operationally based in an LMIC, will conduct the proposed research there, and can administer the grant from that office, it may apply as the lead applicant — even if affiliated with a headquarters in a high-income country.

Q: Can a researcher associated with a community-based organisation apply, if the organisation has more community experience than formal research experience?

A: Yes. The organisation does not need a long research track record on its own, but the proposal must demonstrate that the team as a whole — including any named co-investigators or partners — has the capacity to carry out the proposed analysis. Where an organisation's research capacity is limited, partnering with a researcher or institution with relevant methodological expertise strengthens the application.

Q: If our institution held an SVRI grant in a previous round, are we still eligible to apply to the 2027 Data to Evidence Grant specifically?

A: It depends on whether that grant is still active. If your institution currently holds an active SVRI grant under any round or programme, you are not eligible to apply. If your institution held a past SVRI grant that has since closed, you remain eligible to apply, though preference will be given to organisations that have not yet received an SVRI grant.

3. Team Composition & Partnerships

Q: Can the research team include members from different organisations, or can two institutions partner to submit a joint proposal?

A: Yes. Applications may involve a team drawn from more than one organisation — for example, a university partnering with an NGO, or researchers based at different institutions. One institution must be designated as the lead/administering applicant and take responsibility for grant management and financial accountability, and the proposal should clearly describe each partner's role and contribution. Partnerships are welcomed but must demonstrate that the combined team has the capacity to carry out the proposed analysis.

Q: Can co-investigators be based in a high-income country?

A: Yes, in a supporting role. The lead applicant must be based at an LMIC institution and must lead the proposal and hold the majority of the budget, but co-investigators based in high-income countries may be named as supporting members of the team with clear role in the project.

Q: Can an early-career researcher apply as a single lead applicant, or must there be senior co-investigators on the team?

A: An early-career researcher can be the lead applicant — in fact, applications led by early-career researchers are specifically welcomed. Senior co-investigators are not required, but we encourage early-career leads to build a supporting team rather than apply alone, whether through senior mentors or other co-investigators, ideally from within their institution. All applications must be submitted through the applicant's institution.

Q: Can a non-tenure-track or guest faculty member apply together with a permanent professor from the same university, in either lead or co-investigator roles?

A: Yes. There is no restriction on academic rank or employment status for the lead applicant or co-investigators, provided each has a clear and substantive affiliation with the applying institution.

Q: If I work as a research consultant on a long-term basis for an NGO (rather than as a directly employed staff member), can I apply as lead researcher through that NGO?

A: Yes, provided the NGO is the applicant/grant-holding organisation, the NGO supports your role as lead researcher, and you can demonstrate your formal affiliation with the organisation for the purposes of this project.

4. Budget-Eligible Costs

Q: Are journal publication fees an eligible budget item?

A: Yes. Publication fees associated with disseminating the findings of the funded analysis may be included in your budget under dissemination costs.

Q: Can the budget include workshops or consultation activities, for example to validate findings with communities or share results with a research team?

A: Yes, where the workshop or consultation is directly linked to the proposed analysis or its dissemination or a results-sharing session with the policymaker or practitioner audience named in your dissemination plan, these costs can be included in the budget. Workshops that function as stand-alone capacity-building or training activities unconnected to the proposed analysis are not an eligible use of grant funds.

Q: Is there a cap on personnel costs within the total budget?

A: There is no separate cap on personnel costs. Personnel costs (researcher time, salaries for the lead researcher and co-investigators, research assistance) are treated as direct costs. These costs need to be realistic and proportionate to the proposed work and the level of effort of each personnel budgeted. Support staff time (office staff, clerical staff) cannot be covered under 'personnel costs'. The only fixed percentage cap in the budget is on institutional overhead, at 15% of the total budget.

Q: Can the budget include hiring research assistants/research staff after the award is confirmed, rather than staff already in place at the time of application?

A: Yes. Budgeted research assistance or support staff do not need to be hired at the time of application. However, the lead researcher and any co-investigators with substantive responsibility for the research design and analysis should be identified in the application and included in the CVs submitted, since the experience of the core research team is assessed as part of proposal review.

Q: Do we need to provide evidence for budgeted salaries, such as a salary slip?

A: Applicants should calculate personnel costs: use annual salary including fringe benefits, divided by 260, for the daily rate.

6. Application Process & Platform

Q: Does every member of the research team need to register on Proposal Central, or only the lead applicant?

A: Only one person responsible needs to register and submit the application through Proposal Central. Other team members do not need individual accounts; their roles, CVs, and contributions are included as part of the lead applicant's submission. Team members can share the login in for their Proposal Central accounts to work collaboratively on the application.

Q: Is there a specific template or form for declaring approval to use a proposed dataset?

A: There is no separate declaration form and SVRI does not prescribe any particular form of documentation for declaring approval to use proposed dataset. Individual applicants may use any formats that are suitable to them. Some examples of these are: a data use agreement, custodian permission letter, ethics approval covering secondary analysis, or (for open-access datasets) a brief letter from the lead researcher confirming the dataset's name, source, and public-domain status — should be uploaded as a supporting document with your application on Proposal Central.

Q: Is an interview or presentation part of the selection process?

A: SVRI usually does not conduct interviews/presentations for shortlisting, but SVRI has the discretion of requesting an interview if needed. The final outcome of applications will be notified to ALL applicants irrespective of the outcome.

7. Grant Scope & Expected Outputs

Q: Does the twelve-month grant period need to end with a published paper, or is a completed manuscript sufficient?

A: A completed manuscript / report is sufficient. Grantees are expected to produce, at minimum a research report or working paper summarising findings, and at least one policy-facing product such as a brief. A manuscript need not be published or under journal review by the end of the twelve months; publication is encouraged but not a requirement of the grant period.

Q: Can grant funds support translating findings into local or Indigenous languages, or participatory dissemination activities with the communities the data represents?

A: Yes. Dissemination costs, including translation of outputs and activities that share findings with the communities or practitioner audiences named in your dissemination plan, are eligible, provided they are clearly described and budgeted as part of your proposed dissemination plan.

Q: Within VAW, is the grant focused on a particular sub-theme, such as crime and justice data, rehabilitation, or prevention?

A: No single sub-theme is prioritised. Proposals are assessed on how clearly they address a priority evidence gap, drawing on SVRI's geographic and topic-specific research agendas where relevant. Applicants without a fully-formed research question are encouraged to consult these research agendas, available on the SVRI website, for guidance on current priorities, however referencing the research agendas are not a MUST.

Q: Are grant funds transferred to the lead applicant's personal account, or to the administering organisation?

A: Grant funds are transferred to the bank account of the organisation or institution responsible for administering the grant, not to the personal account of the lead applicant. The lead applicant holds responsibility for the research; the administering organisation is responsible for financial management, reporting and accountability in accordance with the grant agreement.