**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT** | **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, DATA SCIENCE, & COMPUTING HUB**    ∞ **Meta**

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS
# META REGIONAL RESEARCH
# GRANTS (META - RRG)

In an era marked by rapid advancements in technology, the capacity for industry to drive significant economic development is substantial. Open innovation and open-source can transform the business landscape by providing small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) with access to cutting-edge technologies. These collaborative approaches enable communities to leverage collective intelligence, fostering innovation, inclusion and operational efficiency. Whether for social, professional, or entertainment purposes, the digital connectivity and immersive technologies can enhance economy, user experiences and streamline resource management and service delivery.

By lowering barriers to technology adoption, open innovation and open-source AI empower SMBs, drive economic growth.

However, the documented impact of such technologies is notably sparse in the MENA region, where different economic, social, and infrastructural contexts influence adoption and outcomes. To fully understand the landscape and maximize the positive impact of these technologies in such a region, targeted research is essential to examine best practices and challenges.

Committed to fostering sustainable communities and impactful AI utilization, the Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Computing **(AI-DSC Hub)** at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in collaboration with innovation-focused **Meta**, invites original proposals that examine the use and the economic impact of Meta's offerings, particularly focusing on open innovation, open-source AI and how AI and Meta's related products can empower communities and SMBs. We seek research proposals across diverse sectors such as tourism, entertainment, culture, creative industries, healthcare and education.

This initiative aims to deepen  the understanding of Meta's deployment of advanced tools such as social media, virtual and augmented reality, AI-driven enhancements, and smart wearables in the MENA region. We encourage submissions that not only critically assess Meta's products and family of apps on the economy but also introduce impact measurement methodologies, propose forward-looking strategies, and outline roadmaps for future initiatives in an AI-enhanced business environment inline with Meta's mission of community-focused sustainable development.

# GUIDELINES

Up to 6 proposals will be funded with a budget ceiling of **21,000 USD** per proposal to cover expenditures that include research assistants or associates, data collection, travel and computing resources. The total duration of each grant is a maximum of 5 months, with a progress report throughout the project's mid-lifetime, a final report 15 days after the end of the grant and a round table discussion for results' dissemination.

Each awardee will receive guidance and support from a designated AUB faculty member to support the development and timely implementation of their projects.

# ELIGIBILITY

Principal investigators should be faculty members and/or researchers at universities or research centers located in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. They are eligible to apply also with industrial partners.



# SUBMISSION DEADLINE & GUIDELINES

Interested candidates are invited to submit a concise proposal, not exceeding 4 pages, by **November 28, 2024 | 11:59 PM (Beirut time).** The proposal should clearly outline the originality and focus according to the research pillars listed below. It should also incorporate the following elements: positioning with respect to current state-of-the art literature or market analysis; well-defined research plan which lists objectives, impact measurement approach, anticipated outcomes, expected impacts, team qualifications; and a project timeline. A detailed budget breakdown and curriculum vitae for the applicants will also be required as part of the submission process.

# RESEARCH PILLARS

| UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF META'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS | EMPOWERING SMALL & MEDIUM BUSINESSES | UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF OPEN INNOVATION & OPEN SOURCE AI |
|---|---|---|
| By measuring the enabling role & impact of Meta's products & family of apps on the economy as a whole & on certain economic sectors such as tourism, entertainment, culture, health, education etc... | By exploring the enabling role & impact of Meta's products & family of apps on SMBs across key countries in the Middle East & North Africa | By exploring the value to local economies & communities & leveraging Meta's library of open source AI tools such as Llama3, Seamless, Auditcraft, Detectron2, Densepose etc... |

## RESEARCH AREAS BUT NOT LIMITED TO

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Tourism industry development & growth.<br>• Influence on digital health services.<br>• Economic value of WhatsApp to small businesses.<br>• Impact on the creative economy.<br>• Influence on GDP employment &/or other macroeconomic indicators. | • Meta's products & services as a support the growth of SMBs in the MENA region.<br>• Knowledge, learning & career development inside SMBs.<br>• Business generation & creation of new leads for SMBs. | • Impactful/innovative use-cases using Meta's suite of open source AI tools.<br>• Meta's open source AI tools & competitiveness of SMBs in the MENA region.<br>• Benefits & challenges of open-source AI in the MENA region.<br>• Open innovation & global economic competitiveness. |

# SELECTION PROCESS

A committee with related expertise from Meta and AUB will oversee the review process. Submitted proposals will be evaluated based on impact, novelty, choice of research pillar and feasibility. Awards will be announced on **December 6, 2024** and effective immediately.

---

For any questions, you can email: **hub@aub.edu.lb**

**PLEASE RESERVE YOUR SEAT**

in the joint Meta-AUB informational webinar scheduled for **October 17, 2024** | **12:00 PM (Beirut time)**

**CLICK TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSALS**