

Research Director
The Centre for Tax Analysis in Developing Countries (TAXDEV)
Part-time/Full-time

The **Institute for Fiscal Studies** (IFS) is hiring a Research Director to lead our work on taxation and social protection in low- and middle-income countries through the Centre for Tax Analysis in Developing Countries (TAXDEV). The Research Director will provide intellectual leadership of this agenda - conducting high quality economic research, shaping and guiding the research of colleagues, and working closely with academics, policymakers, and partners to ensure impact.

1. Introduction to The IFS

The IFS is Europe's leading independent microeconomic research institute. Our goal is to promote effective economic and social policies by better understanding how policies affect individuals, families, businesses and the government's finances. Researchers at IFS conduct high quality empirical research, which has gained a worldwide reputation for academic rigour. Our remit and expertise cover important topics such as education, health, public finances, retirement, consumer behaviour, overseas development, tax, inequality and poverty. We communicate our findings widely, impacting upon the policy debate, the media and policymakers.

2. The Centre for Tax Analysis in Developing Countries (TAXDEV)

Since our foundation in the 1960s, researchers at the IFS have studied the design of the UK's tax and spending system. Over recent years, we have extended our work in this area to focus on low- and middle-income countries, and in 2016 this was formalised with the establishment of TAXDEV.

TAXDEV has two major objectives:

1. To conduct high quality, policy-relevant theoretical and empirical research on taxation and social protection in low- and middle-income countries;
2. To support the increased use of evidence in the tax policymaking process through partnerships with governments which support them to use micro-data, build quantitative technical skills, and conduct applied modelling and analysis.

During Phase I of TAXDEV, the IFS team developed strong relationships with Ministries of Finance and Revenue Authorities in Ethiopia and Ghana, and with network of academics, tax research institutes and international organisations. We also started ongoing research projects on the distributional and supply-chain effects of VAT, on corporate income tax incentives, and on taxpayer responses to tax thresholds in Ethiopia.

With support from the Department for International Development (DFID), TAXDEV has recently been extended for four years, and will now expand to two further countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Phase II will allow us to develop additional policy and research partnerships, source and make use of newly-available administrative datasets, and fund a wide range of further policy-relevant research projects, as we develop a broader research agenda. It provides funding for a Research Director, but over time the selected candidate would be expected to apply for additional funding and develop a sustainable funding strategy for this area of research.

3. Job Description

a) Research excellence and leadership

- Take the lead in originating and co-ordinating the development and completion of high-quality research ideas that:

- are both academically rigorous and policy relevant;
 - are forward-looking and cutting edge;
 - Make progress on research outputs that are of sufficiently high quality to eventually be publishable in top academic journals in order to enhance the reputation of IFS and maximise the impact of our research;
 - Provide direction and assure the quality of TAXDEV’s over-arching research agenda, and contribute to IFS’s overall research agenda on tax, social protection and related areas. This will involve coordinating effectively with IFS colleagues, Research Associates, Research Fellows, academics and policymakers, making relevant links across the policy and academic workstreams, and across countries;
 - Work with colleagues and a scientific committee of tax and social protection experts to oversee the establishment and allocation of the TAXDEV research fund – ensuring that the fund delivers high quality, policy-relevant projects which align with TAXDEV’s research themes;
 - Organise seminars, research meetings and policy events which enhance the intellectual life of TAXDEV and the IFS.
- b) Dissemination and partnerships
- Work with other senior IFS staff to ensure that:
 - synergies in research and dissemination across the various research sectors at IFS are exploited fully;
 - the IFS is run as smoothly as possible;
 - Ensure that TAXDEV research is disseminated as widely as possible – both within the UK and internationally - and to academic and policy audiences. This will involve acting as an ambassador for the IFS, representing the Institute effectively and responsibly to external stakeholders. The IFS attaches a high priority to communicating the results of its research to policymakers, the press and the wider policy and academic communities;
 - Build strong relationships with academics and policy partners and representatives from research institutes, NGOs and international organisations;
 - Build new links with researchers in TAXDEV partner countries and develop opportunities for collaborative work and co-authorship.
- c) Developing people
- Work with senior colleagues to manage the TAXDEV research team, ensuring that they undertake high quality, rigorous research in timely and efficient manner, to the high standards that IFS expects;
 - Provide intellectual leadership and support early-career researchers in developing their own research ideas and maximising their potential. This could involve facilitating contacts between IFS researchers and those outside of IFS to draw on their expertise, where appropriate. Directors at IFS have line management responsibility for a number of researchers and monitor progress, oversee workloads and provide ongoing support and encouragement to all members of their team.
- d) Developing a sustainable funding strategy
- Work with colleagues to liaise with project funders, utilise and build on an existing network of funding contacts and explore future funding opportunities;
 - Ensure that appropriate applications are being made to meet funding requirements for the team’s research agenda. TAXDEV is currently funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), but over the long-term the Research Director will develop a sustainable funding strategy for this research agenda.

4. Person Specification

- A very good postgraduate qualification in economics. A PhD is preferred, although candidates with a Master's degree and experience of leading high quality research projects on taxation and/or social protection will also be considered;
- A track record of publishing work on taxation, social protection, or related areas of public-economics in high quality peer-reviewed journals or equivalent high-quality mediums;
- The ability to develop a long-term, strategic vision for TAXDEV, and to take concrete steps towards achieving this vision;
- The ability to lead and motivate a hard-working team and a commitment to supporting others through providing intellectual leadership and taking responsibility for the professional development of the team. IFS researchers work closely as part of a team, share ideas with colleagues, and contribute widely to the intellectual life of the Institute;
- The capacity to successfully build and consolidate close relationships with colleagues at IFS, and multiple academic, policy and funding stakeholders, both in the UK and internationally;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to explain complex economic ideas in plain language.
- Experience of working with policymakers, and a strong interest in ensuring that research outputs are translated into policy impact;
- Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to prioritise work, work calmly under pressure, meet deadlines and handle a variety of work streams in parallel;
- Experience of successfully fundraising to build and support a research agenda;
- A strong commitment to intellectual rigour, objectivity and political neutrality. The IFS is committed to maintaining its reputation for independent and unbiased research on issues of public interest.

5. Further Information about the Role

Appointments may be made of individuals who have a background in academia or in a policy-based role, as our work aims to bridge the gap between these two areas.

The Research Director position could be full-time or part-time. Part-time positions could, for instance, be combined with a university lectureship or professorship.

The post-holder will be based at IFS' central London office but expected to travel to pursue research projects and meet with international partners.

6. Application Process

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Yani Tyskerud (yani_t@ifs.org.uk).

Please send a CV and covering letter (maximum 2 pages), outlining why you would be suitable for the role. These should be emailed to jobs@ifs.org.uk with the subject title **TAXDEV Research Director**.

Deadline for applications: **Friday 15 February 2019**

7. Remuneration

The salary scale for this role will be £70,000 to £85,000. Pay increases are granted annually on a performance-related basis.