

Growth Lab Summer 2026 Internship Program



Background

Each year, the Growth Lab at Harvard University offers Harvard graduate students opportunities to work with its research teams on [applied projects](#) around the world, often embedded with local governments and project counterparts. Teams at the Growth Lab blend research and real-world policy engagements. Profiles and blog posts from several previous interns in past years can be explored [here](#). Opportunities for summer 2026 include work with the Growth Lab's projects in Morocco, Malawi, the Four Corners Region of the U.S., Ecuador, Cambodia, Córdoba, and North American Cities.

The Growth Lab will be holding a pizza lunch on **February 5th at 12 pm** in Nye A/B to provide more information and answer any questions about this year's internship opportunities. We look forward to seeing you there!

Note that the Growth Lab Summer Internship is separate from CID's Global Internship Program (which can be found [here](#)).

General Guidelines

Applicants should have a developed skillset for economic analysis and a strong interest in public policy in developing countries and struggling economies. Growth Lab internships tend to require the ability to manage multiple tasks, significant interpersonal skills to work within government teams, and creativity to work through the challenges that arise in complex bureaucracies. Additionally, interns must be enterprising individuals who can identify problems and propose avenues to address them. All interns will be partially supervised by Growth Lab researchers and Professor Ricardo Hausmann. The degree of oversight and collaboration with the Growth Lab team will vary based on the needs of the assignment.

- **Eligibility:** Please note that our summer internship opportunities are only available to Harvard **graduate** students.
- **Duration:** Internships will have a minimum duration of eight weeks. Priority will be given to applicants who can work for 10 weeks or more.
- **Start/end dates:** Dates will be determined based on the timelines of applicants and internship providers/Growth Lab teams.
- **Internship funding:** Applicants are strongly advised to apply for funding through the various options available via the HKS' [Summer Internship Funding](#) common application. In some cases, and based on existing funds, the Growth Lab may also be able to cover some of the costs, but this is not guaranteed.
- **Application materials and deadline:** Prospective candidates are requested to submit the following materials:

- CV
- Cover letter: In your cover letter, please indicate your top three choices of projects from among those listed in this packet, detailing why you are interested in these projects. Note that you will still be considered for all positions that Growth Lab application reviewers deem appropriate
- Writing sample (no longer than 2 pages)
- First semester transcripts

To apply, [please complete this form](#), which will ask you which internships you are most interested in and to upload the application materials listed above.

The deadline for applications is Friday, February 13, 2026, at 11:59 pm EST; however, we will be reviewing candidates on a rolling basis, so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

Questions? Please feel free to email [Grace Fairweather](#), Program Assistant.

Internship Opportunities

Bolivia

Project Description:

The Growth Lab and the Master's Programs for Development (MpD) at Catholic University of Bolivia (UCB) have a long-standing engagement to strengthen understanding of public policy challenges in Bolivia, for which we have this annual Visiting Scholar position. Led by HKS Faculty, Dan Levy, the engagement incorporates the research of the Growth Lab program and the curriculum and pedagogy of the Harvard Kennedy School, as well as the rest of Harvard. The Visiting Research Scholar position has been designed to generate research about Bolivia's challenges in terms of public policy solutions leading to sustainable economic growth, entrepreneurship, local development, and higher levels of equality and welfare, given the current context of challenging economic times in Bolivia resulting from significant dependence on the extractive sector of the economy.

Internship Opportunities:

This year's Visiting Scholar will lead the implementation of a research project of their co-determination with faculty at UCB. The Growth Lab has conducted several studies on Bolivia in the past year, including on growth diagnostics, economic complexity, tourism, green growth, and macrofiscal frameworks, that may act as a foundation to deep dive into a specific research area. The Visiting Scholar will be trained by and work with Harvard Growth Lab Research Fellows in the elaboration of this research, at least in part from La Paz, Bolivia. While most of the time will be devoted to research, active participation in teaching classes for undergraduate and graduate students, along with assisting in the teaching of workshops, seminars, and executive courses are expected, as desired by the Scholar.

Fluency in Spanish is not required. Given the bilingual (Spanish/English) nature of the Business and Policy School programs, this project offers the opportunity to strengthen Spanish language skills.

Cambodia

Project Description:

The Growth Lab is planning to launch a new applied research collaboration with the Cambodia Australia Partnerships for Resilient Economic Development (CAPRED) and the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). This partnership is motivated by the complex development challenges Cambodia faces as it moves forward in its aspirations of reaching upper-middle income status by 2030 and high-income status by 2050. The project aims to identify the binding constraints to inclusive growth and design diversification strategies to reduce the economy's reliance on a narrow set of sectors and markets. The engagement will utilize Growth Diagnostics and Economic Complexity frameworks to address critical challenges such as LDC graduation, trade policy risks, and the need for industrial upgrading. The project envisions a model where research is conducted in close collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure policy recommendations are actionable and locally owned.

Internship Opportunities:

One or more internships are anticipated to be based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, working directly with the Growth Lab team, CAPRED, and government counterparts. Interns will support problem-driven teams focused on specific constraints or sector opportunities.

- One or more internships are anticipated on sector-specific diversification strategies. These would involve deep-dive research into high-potential industries such as electronics, agro-processing, and high-value tourism. Interns would analyze value chains and identify specific public goods required to unlock investment in these areas.
- One or more internships are anticipated on macroeconomic and trade policy analysis. These roles would focus on navigating Cambodia's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status and managing risks related to trade preferences and global supply chain shifts.

Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.

Córdoba, Argentina

Project Description:

The Growth Lab is initiating a nine-month research collaboration with the Province of Córdoba, Argentina, in partnership with the Ministerio de Economía y Gestión Pública (MEGP) and the Consejo Federal de Inversiones (CFI). The project focuses on analyzing current and future economic growth opportunities for the province, with a particular emphasis on green growth and decarbonization strategies. Building on the Growth Lab's previous work in Argentina, this engagement aims to provide a strategic roadmap for the province to leverage its renewable energy resources and industrial capabilities. The research will apply Growth Diagnostics to identify binding constraints to growth and Economic Complexity methods to map opportunities for diversification into green supply chains.

Internship Opportunities:

One or more internships are anticipated to be based in Córdoba, Argentina. Spanish language proficiency is likely to be required or strongly preferred for these roles, given the interaction with local government counterparts.

- One or more internships are anticipated on Green Growth. These would focus on strategies for capitalizing on Córdoba's renewable energy potential to attract energy-intensive industries and integrate into global green technology value chains. Interns would assist in analyzing the "adjacent possible" for Córdoba's industrial base to produce inputs for the green economy.
- One or more internships are anticipated on subnational growth diagnostics. These would involve descriptive analysis of Córdoba's growth trajectory, labor markets, and firm-level data to test potential constraints to economic development.
- One or more internships are anticipated on agricultural modernization and bio-economy. Building on Córdoba's strong agricultural base, this workstream would explore opportunities to increase the complexity of agricultural exports and modernize production processes.

Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.

Ecuador

Project Description:

This project, likely starting in February or March of this year, is a research collaboration between the Growth Lab at Harvard Kennedy School and the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries (MPCEIP) of Ecuador, with support from the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF). The initiative is primarily focused on addressing the country's limited diversification in productive and export sectors, a structural weakness that has constrained economic growth and left Ecuador highly vulnerable to sudden external fluctuations. By applying the Growth Lab's unique research methodologies—specifically Economic Complexity and Growth Diagnostics—the team aims to identify high-potential sectors for diversification at both the national and provincial levels. The project will also diagnose institutional, regulatory, and investment constraints preventing these industries from thriving and will propose evidence-based public policy options to remove these barriers. A key component of this engagement involves capacity building to transfer technical knowledge to the MPCEIP, ensuring the long-term sustainability of these economic strategies.

Internship Opportunities:

Since the project has not yet started, the specific details regarding internship roles are yet to be finalized. The scope of work suggests several areas where interns could make significant contributions. Interns could assist with data analysis and economic complexity modeling, using rich datasets to visualize subnational economic capacities, with a specific focus on lagging provinces. There will likely be opportunities for sectoral research, where interns would help investigate industries that constitute key growth opportunities. This work would start by analyzing existing industries with promising room for expansion and likely extend to new sectors—such as green

growth, high-quality tourism, or knowledge-intensive products and services—to understand their unique market dynamics and regulatory challenges. This research would take place within working teams composed of Growth Lab members, representatives of the Government of Ecuador, and other local collaborators. Additionally, interns could support the team in policy analysis by reviewing Ecuador's legal frameworks and existing development policies to help formulate new policy recommendations. Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.

Four Corners Region of the United States

Project Description:

The Growth Lab, in partnership with Harvard's Project on Indigenous Governance and Development (HPIGD), is planning to launch a research collaboration with the State of Arizona, the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe to conduct economic analysis and empower local leaders with new capabilities for economic development of the region. This effort builds on recent Growth Lab work with the State of New Mexico, the State of Wyoming, and on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The project is intended to begin with participation by economic development leaders from the Navajo and Hopi governments in Harvard Executive Education in April 2026, followed by targeted analytical support and policy problem-solving by a small Growth Lab team with the help of summer internships and HPIGD-organized course projects.

Internship Opportunities:

The project envisions 2-4 summer interns to be based in the region for the summer and embedded within the Navajo and Hopi governments and economic development agencies, as well as with the State of Arizona through the Office of the Governor. Summer interns will provide flexible support based on key constraints and opportunities nominated by local leaders and aligned with growth diagnostic research. Support could include, but is not limited to: advancing and packaging relevant data analyses, applying economic growth frameworks, developing comparator case studies between tribal areas, and working hand-in-hand with local stakeholders on piloting initiatives and community engagement. We are seeking students who are problem-oriented and interested in working with low-capacity governments. Initial exposure and interest in the frameworks of growth diagnostics, economic complexity and/or problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) is preferred. Initial exposure to the work of Harvard's Project on Indigenous Governance and Development is also preferred. These internships would be likely to hold possibilities for continued PAE or SYPA projects during the next academic year. Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.

Malawi

Project Description:

The Growth Lab initiated research on Malawi in mid-2025, focused on improving understanding of the country's worsening macroeconomic position in advance of national elections in September. Following the election, which returned President Arthur Peter Mutharika to power with a strong mandate to address the growing macroeconomic crisis, the team has continued to conduct research on key macroeconomic policy challenges. This project is likely to expand in 2026, in which case HKS internships will be critical, providing targeted research and ongoing capacity-building support

to the Ministry of Finance and/or Reserve Bank of Malawi. Additional internships may also focus on key issue areas such as the electricity system, modernizing agricultural policy, mining projects and/or tourism if local host organizations in Malawi are interested in hosting summer interns.

Internship Opportunities:

Opportunities will depend on demand from local counterpart organizations expressed over the early months of 2026, especially in the following areas. All internships would take place in Malawi.

- Macroeconomic policy research and joint work with local leaders in the Ministry of Finance and/or Reserve Bank of Malawi on topics such as foreign exchange management, debt operations, banking sector oversight, and tax policy.
- Electricity system diagnostic work and policy response to expand and improve electricity access and reliability.
- Agricultural policy reforms to improve food security, to increase agriculture’s contribution to the economy, and to accelerate structural transformation.
- Reforms for social protection and social welfare, including analysis of existing cash transfer programs and potential new programs
- Analysis of transportation and logistics, especially rail, ports, and roads,s and their potential for spurring growth
- Targeted research and strategy support in key growth sectors such as mining, tourism, and business services.

Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.

Morocco

Project Description:

The Growth Lab is continuing a wide-ranging research collaboration on Morocco in partnership with a newly formed research group — the Economics and Complexity Unit — housed at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P). In previous years, this project has hosted HKS interns who conducted early diagnostic research on the Moroccan economy in 2024 and who worked within operational units of the OCP Group around the country in 2025. This year, internship opportunities will relate to several key joint research topics of the Growth Lab and Economics Complexity Unit — including on innovation, city-level growth, and “powershoring.” A focus will be on interacting with local organizations in Morocco that are stakeholders in the research.

Internship Opportunities:

These opportunities are anticipated but are subject to change. New opportunities are likely to be added between January and March. All internships would be located in Morocco. French language proficiency is preferred or required for many of the roles.

- One or more internships are anticipated on **innovation strategy**. These would include a mix of contributing to research on innovation patterns across Morocco and operational support with local institutions. Host organizations may include University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P) under its Chief Transformation, Innovation and Impact Officer and/or OCP Group's Specialty Products & Solutions (SPS) strategic business unit. French proficiency is preferred.
- One or more internships are anticipated on **urban policy and housing issues**. These would build upon a research workstream on city-level growth diagnostics across the country. Host organizations may include local offices of the Agence Urbaine and/or other national or regional hosts. French proficiency is required.
- One or more internships are anticipated that would **partner with key data partners** such as the Bank Al Maghrib's SME Observatory (OMTPME) and the National Social Security Fund (CNSS). These internships would work to advance project research on **topics related to understanding good jobs, female employment, and city-level economic research**. French proficiency is required.
- One or more internships are anticipated on the topic of **powershoring** — i.e., strategies for capitalizing on Morocco's (green) energy to host electricity-intensive production. These would build upon project research in fall 2025/spring 2026 and would aim to interact with local stakeholders toward actualizing a strategy. French proficiency is preferred.
- One or more internships are anticipated on the topic of **agricultural complexity and agricultural modernization across Africa**. This is a new workstream of the project in spring 2026 with a focus on understanding challenges of agricultural modernization through an economic complexity lens. Internships would contribute to the early stages of the internship and partner with local stakeholders. French proficiency is not needed in this case.
- Additional opportunities are likely to be included closer to summer.

North American Cities

Project Description:

The Growth Lab, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, is expanding its network of city-level engagements across North America. This initiative aims to empower local leaders in mid-sized U.S. cities with advanced economic capabilities to drive sustainable and inclusive local development. Interns will be placed in specific partner cities within the network, potentially including locations such as Savannah, Albuquerque, Montgomery, or Dearborn. The work focuses on applying the Growth Lab's "City Growth Diagnostics" framework to understand the unique economic challenges of these urban environments. The project is intended to bridge the gap between academic research and municipal policy, providing city administrations with rigorous, data-driven strategies to unlock economic potential.

Internship Opportunities:

Several summer interns are envisioned to be based in partner cities across North America. Interns will work directly with city hall officials and economic development agencies.

- Summer interns will provide targeted analytical support to city governments. This includes applying the City Growth Diagnostics framework to identify binding constraints

to local economic growth, such as housing availability, workforce skills, or infrastructure bottlenecks.

- One or more internships are anticipated on economic development strategy and stakeholder engagement. Interns will work hand-in-hand with local stakeholders to pilot initiatives and develop strategic roadmaps for diversification. This may involve conducting data analyses for city leaders and developing comparator case studies.

We are seeking students who are problem-oriented and interested in municipal governance. Interest or experience in urban economics, U.S. local policy, and data analytics is preferred. Please note that this project is not yet confirmed for summer 2026, so applicants are encouraged to apply for other Growth Lab opportunities as well.