



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) Application for External Reviewers

RFP Title: External Reviewers for evaluation of IDRC's Information and Networks (I&N) Program	RFP #: 14150029
Issue Date: January 5th, 2015	Close Date & Time: February 13th, 2015 at 11 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS RFP

The International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Policy, Strategy and Evaluation Division is looking for evaluators to serve on an external review panel for the Centre's *Information and Networks* (I&N) program.

The external review panel will be comprised of three (3) people with complementary skills and expertise in program evaluation and the specific themes and results of the I&N program. The Policy, Strategy and Evaluation Division (PSED) is seeking individuals and will select members of the review team not only on the basis of individual strengths, but also on how individuals will fit together in a team that can address the breadth of the programming under review. It is not expected that any single candidate will hold all the requisite strengths needed for an external review.

1.2 OVERVIEW TO EXTERNAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

External reviews are independent evaluations of IDRC's work. They are performed for each program once every 5 years. They are summative evaluations which focus on the performance of a program. Previous external reviews of IDRC programs are available on the [IDRC website](#).

The Centre's Board of Governors are the primary intended users of the external reviews. Senior management, the programs themselves, and IDRC donor partners are secondary users. The reviews are used for accountability to the Board for implementation of the program and delivery of program results, to guide future programming, and to improve program effectiveness.

1.3 IDRC OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMS TO BE REVIEWED

IDRC is a Canadian Crown Corporation established by an act of Parliament in 1970.

IDRC was created to help developing countries find solutions to their problems. It encourages, supports, and conducts research in the world's developing regions, and seeks to apply new knowledge to the economic and social improvement of those regions. IDRC aims to reduce poverty, improve health, support innovation, and safeguard the environment in developing regions.

IDRC employs about 400 people at its Ottawa, Ontario, Canada head office and at its global regional offices. For more details visit: www.idrc.ca

The program that will undergo external review is [Information and Networks \(I&N\)](#). I&N explores the positive and negative impacts of widespread access to mobile telephones and the Internet

in developing countries. I&N works to promote positive social and economic change, particularly in the areas of creative industries, governance, learning, and science. The program aims to strengthen a critical southern perspective to catalyze positive and inclusive benefits from information networks, as well as dampen their negative tendencies. It supports interdisciplinary and systemic research that seeks to facilitate positive digital transformations, particularly in the thematic areas of creative industries, governance, learning, and science, as information networks are radically changing practices in these four areas.

SECTION 2: SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The terms of reference for the external review panel asks for a judgment on the performance (strengths/weaknesses) of the program in terms of the following:

1. How did the program perform in implementing its prospectus?
2. Overall, was the quality of the research supported by the program acceptable (given the context/intended purpose/etc.)?
3. To what extent are the program's outcomes relevant and significant?
4. What are the key issues for IDRC's Board of Governors and senior management?

2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

The starting point for the review will be a summative self-assessment (also called a Final Prospectus report or FPR) prepared by the program and based on information they have collected during the implementation of the program. The role of the panel is to question, critically reflect upon, and ultimately judge the program. They will verify the content of the program's final prospectus report for evidence and reasonableness. To formulate its views, the panel will design an evaluation using appropriate evaluation methods.

2.3 REQUIREMENTS OF EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Each External Reviewer will be asked to do the following.

- Contribute 25 days of work.
- Participate in a 2 day orientation workshop in Ottawa, Canada in late July 2015 (exact dates still to be determined).
- Contribute to developing a work plan and evaluation framework.
- Review program documents; collect and analyze supplementary data via interviews, surveys, and focus groups; and use other evaluation methods. *Travel for data collection is not anticipated.*

- Participate in a 5 day panel meeting in Ottawa, Canada in November 2015 (exact dates still to be determined). The purpose of this meeting is to consolidate evidence, present and discuss preliminary findings, and continue writing the draft report.
- Contribute to a 15 page report on the review panel's findings and conclusions, plus annexes.
- Contribute to an executive summary of the external review.
- If requested by the program after the review is finished, member(s) of the panel may be contracted for up to three additional days of work to provide advice as the program develops its concept note and/or prospectus for their next five year program plan.

2.4 OUTPUTS AND TIMELINES

Timeline for the external reviews for each program	Date
Panel receives background documents about IDRC, the I&N program, the scope of work for the evaluation, and the I&N Final Prospectus Report	Early June 2015
Panels meet in Ottawa for 2-day orientation and introduction to IDRC, PSED, and I&N	July 2015
Panels submit work plans and evaluation framework	August 2015
Panels present draft findings Panels and programs discuss findings and conclusions	November 2015
Panels submit draft external review reports	December 2015
Panels submit final external review reports and draft findings brief*	January 2016

* The findings brief will be based on the external review executive summary and will be finalized and translated by PSED. The programs' Final Prospectus Report, the external review report, and the findings brief will be submitted to the Centre's Board of Governors. Once accepted by the Board, PSED will post the external reviews on the IDRC website:

<http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Evaluation/Pages/External-Program-Reviews.aspx>

2.5 LOCATION OF WORK AND TRAVEL

Due to the type of Services required, the successful proponent will be able to work from his/her own location. IDRC will not provide onsite facilities for the proponent, other than providing facilities for on-site meetings.

Travel will be required by the proponent to attend the 2 day orientation workshop and the 5 day panel meeting in Ottawa, Canada. This contract offered for the external reviews will cover the costs of travel to Ottawa from the proponent's home. Travel and accommodation will be organized by IDRC's travel agent.

2.6 EXPERTISE REQUIREMENT IN THE REVIEW PANELS

Each external review will be undertaken by a panel of up to three (3) people who, together, have skills and senior-levels of experience in the following areas:

- Experience with research for development.
- Understanding of how to evaluate the quality and results of development research programming.
- Sectoral and thematic knowledge relevant to the Information and Networks (I&N) Program, including:
 - The impact of digital transformations in low-and-middle incomes countries, particularly in the areas of creative industries, governance, learning, and science.
 - The context, dimensions, variations, implications and quality of digital openness and open data.
 - The expansion of networked societies and implications for human rights.
 - Catalyzing inclusion in the benefits of information networks.
- Broad knowledge of the Open Development field, including issues, trends, institutions, networks and policy communities in the low-and middle-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Language capacities (within each external review panel, we need reviewers who speak and/or read English, French and Spanish. But we do not expect all panel members to speak all three languages).
- Independence from the program under review (have not received IDRC grants from I&N in the last two years, no conflicts of interest, and no stake in the evaluation outcome).

Note: Each external review panel will receive the support of a junior consultant identified by IDRC and contracted separately. This junior consultant will serve as a research assistant and will coordinate communications and logistics for the panel. This person is not expected to be involved in the judgment of the program, but supports the evaluative work of the panelists.

2.7 BUDGET

IDRC's fees for each external reviewer will be 900 CAD per day, plus HST if applicable.

IDRC will arrange and pay for travel associated with the review.

Each external review panel will have a budget of up to CAD 2,500 for expenses related to the evaluation.

SECTION 3 - PROPOSAL FORMAT

For this request, a “proposal” consists of a cover letter and CV only. Submissions can be submitted in French or English.

The cover letter must:

- discuss recent relevant experience considering the expertise required in the external review panel (section 2.6); and
- include a statement regarding your independence from the program, or highlight any potential conflicts of interest that PSED should consider.

CV’s should highlight sections that are most relevant for this external review.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

This section describes the process that IDRC will use to evaluate proposals and select proponents for the external review panels. The process is divided into three (3) steps:

Step 1: Each proponent’s submission (cover letter, CV, and statement of independence) will be reviewed to ensure demonstration of the following mandatory requirements:

- Submission date/time;
- Statement of independence;
- Experience with development research;
- Understanding of how to evaluate the quality and results of development research programming; and,
- Sectoral experience and knowledge relevant to the program (see Section 2.6).

We suggest that a proponent clearly addresses these criteria in the cover letter and highlights them in their CV.

*** Mandatory requirements:**

Each proposal will be examined to determine compliance with each **mandatory** requirement identified in this RFP. A mandatory requirement is a minimum standard that a proposal must meet in order to be considered for further evaluation. Mandatory is defined as having substantial compliance as assessed by IDRC in its sole and absolute discretion.

Important Note: Proposals which fail, in the sole discretion of IDRC, to meet any mandatory requirement will be eliminated from further consideration in the evaluation process. However, IDRC reserves the right to waive any mandatory requirements if it deems fit and appropriate to meet the interests of and provide best value to IDRC. This clause should be interpreted solely for the benefit of IDRC and not for the benefit of the Proponents.

Step 2: Proposals which demonstrate that the proponent satisfies each of the mandatory criteria will be rated based on the individual strengths stemming from the list of requirements within Section 2.6. In addition, proposals will be rated vis-à-vis other qualified applicants with a view to building a team of complementary reviewers.

Step 3: Each shortlisted proponent will be invited for an interview (in person or via teleconference) with the IDRC staff members. Final selection will be based on individual strengths (Section 2.6), and on how individuals will fit together in a team that can address the breadth of the programming under review.

SECTION 5 – RFP CONDITIONS

The purpose of this section is to inform the Proponent about IDRC’s procedures and rules pertaining to the RFP process.

<p>Target Dates for the RFP</p>	<p>The following schedule summarizes significant target events for the RFP process. The dates may be changed by IDRC at its sole discretion and shall not become conditions of any Contract which may be entered into by IDRC and the selected Proponent(s).</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="553 785 1029 814">Event</th> <th data-bbox="1040 785 1419 814">Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 821 1029 850">RFP issued</td> <td data-bbox="1040 821 1419 850">January 5th 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 856 1029 886">Question and Answers</td> <td data-bbox="1040 856 1419 886">January 14th 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 892 1029 921">RFP closing</td> <td data-bbox="1040 892 1419 921">February 13th, 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 928 1029 957">Evaluation, selection and award</td> <td data-bbox="1040 928 1419 957">March 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="553 963 1029 993">Finalize Contract</td> <td data-bbox="1040 963 1419 993">April 2015</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Event	Date	RFP issued	January 5 th 2015	Question and Answers	January 14 th 2015	RFP closing	February 13 th , 2015	Evaluation, selection and award	March 2015	Finalize Contract	April 2015
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<p>Proposal Submission Procedure</p>	<p>1. Submissions must be made electronically to the Contracting Authority noted on page 1.</p> <p>2. Proponent’s email subject line should cite: “RFP# 14150029, External Reviewers for evaluation of IDRC’s Information and Networks (I&N) Program”</p> <p>Important note: Late proposals will not be accepted. No adjustments to submission will be considered after the close date and time.</p>												
<p>Enquiries</p>	<p>Proponents should aggregate requests for clarifications and shall submit them in writing via email to the Contracting Authority noted on page 1, by January 14th 2015 at 11am EDT.</p> <p>The Contracting Authority will provide all Proponents, all answers to significant enquiries received without revealing the sources of the enquiries, via the Buy and Sell Website, under the original posting.</p> <p>In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP as a result of any enquiry or for any other reason, an amendment to this RFP will be posted on the Buy and Sell website, under the original posting.</p>												
<p>Proposal Validity</p>	<p>Proposals must be valid for sixty (60) days following the close date of the RFP.</p>												
<p>Incurring of Costs</p>	<p>All costs and expenses incurred by the Proponent in any way related to its response to the RFP, including but not limited to any clarifications, interviews, presentations, review, selection, or delays related thereto or</p>												

	occurring during the RFP process, are the sole responsibility of the Proponent and will not be chargeable in any way to IDRC.
Governing Laws	This RFP is issued pursuant to the laws of the province of Ontario and the laws of Canada.
Rights of IDRC	<p>IDRC does not bind itself to accept any proposal submitted in response to this RFP, and may proceed as it, in its sole discretion, determines following receipt of proposals. IDRC reserves the right to accept any proposal(s) in whole or in part, or to discuss with any Proponents, different or additional terms to those envisioned in this RFP or in such a Proponent's proposal.</p> <p>After selection of preferred proposal(s), if any, IDRC has the right to negotiate with the preferred Proponent(s) and, as a part of that process, to negotiate changes, amendments or modifications to the proposal(s) at the exclusion of other Proponents.</p> <p>Without limiting the foregoing, IDRC reserves the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. seek clarification or verify any or all information provided by the Proponent with respect to this RFP, including, if applicable to this RFP, contacting the named reference contacts; b. modify, amend or revise any provision of the RFP or issue any addenda at any time; any modifications, amendment, revision or addendum will, however, be issued in writing and provided to all Proponents; c. reject or accept any or all proposals, in whole or in part, without prior negotiation; d. reject any proposal based on real or potential conflict of interest; e. if only one proposal is received, elect to accept or reject it; f. in its sole discretion, cancel the RFP process at any time, without award, noting that the lowest or any proposal will not necessarily be accepted; g. negotiate resulting Contract terms and conditions; h. cancel and/or re-issue the RFP at any time, without any liability whatsoever to any Proponent; i. award all or any part of the work to one or more Proponents based on quality, services, and price and any other selection criteria indicated herein; j. retain all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
Proponent Selection	<p>Acceptance of a proposal does not oblige IDRC to incorporate any or all of the accepted proposal into a contractual agreement, but rather demonstrates a willingness on the part of IDRC to enter into negotiations for the purpose of arriving at a satisfactory contractual arrangement with one or more parties.</p> <p>Without changing the intent of this RFP or the Lead Proponent's proposal, IDRC will enter into discussions with the Lead Proponent for the purpose of finalizing the Contract. If at any time IDRC decides that the Lead Proponent cannot satisfy IDRC's requirements, IDRC may terminate negotiations. If at any time IDRC feels that the secondary</p>

	<p>Proponent may meet the requirements, IDRC will continue the process with the secondary Proponent and so on.</p> <p><i>We appreciate the interest of all proponents, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.</i></p>
General Terms and Conditions of a Resulting Contract	<p>The General Terms and Conditions shall apply to any Contract that may result from this process.</p> <p><i>Important Note:</i> <i>-Any objections to these terms and conditions should be specified in the proposal.</i></p>