



## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (“RFEI”)

<b>RFEI Title:</b>  Evaluation of Information and Networks in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa	<b>RFEI #:</b>  17180002
<b>Issue Date:</b>  Thursday, April 20, 2017	<b>Close Date &amp; Time:</b>  Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 IDRC Overview

#### 1.1.1 The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

IDRC was established by an act of Canada's parliament in 1970 with a mandate "to initiate, encourage, support, and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions."

A **Canadian Crown corporation**, IDRC supports leading thinkers who advance knowledge and solve practical development problems. IDRC provide the resources, advice, and training they need to implement and share their solutions with those who need them most. In short, IDRC increases opportunities — and makes a real difference in people's lives.

Working with development partners, IDRC multiplies the impact of investment and brings innovations to more people in more countries around the world. IDRC offers fellowships and awards to nurture a new generation of development leaders.

IDRC employs about 400 people at the head office located in Ottawa, Canada, and in four (4) regional offices located in Cairo-Egypt, New Delhi-India, Nairobi-Kenya, and Montevideo-Uruguay Cairo, Egypt.

IDRC is governed by a board of up to 14 governors, whose chairperson reports to Parliament through the Minister of International Development.

For more details visit: [www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca)

### 1.2 Purpose and Nature of this RFEI

#### 1.2.1 Purpose of this RFEI

IDRC is seeking qualified candidates who are interested in undertaking a final summative evaluation of the INASSA program as per the Statement of Work described in section 2 of this RFEI, to submit an Expression of Interest to the Contract Authority named above.

Expressions of Interest received by the above Contract Authority by the deadline indicated above will be reviewed by the Centre and following the review, a short list of selected qualified candidates may be compiled. Candidates included on the short list may subsequently be invited to submit a full proposal based on specific guidelines and refined selection criteria.

Please note that only Candidates who are included on the short list will be notified and invited to respond to a Request for Proposals. Candidates who have not received any notification from IDRC may assume that they will not be invited to respond to a Request for Proposals.

#### 1.2.2 No Commitment by IDRC

This is not a tender or request for proposals. No contractual, tort or other legal duties, rights or obligations of any kind are intended or created on the part of IDRC or its employees in connection with this invitation for

expressions of interest, the submission of any response, or any decision, act or failure to act of IDRC or any IDRC employee.

IDRC may or may not issue a competitive solicitation (e.g. Request for Proposal (RFP)) for services described in **section 2** following this RFEI.

No contract will result from any response to this RFEI.

No representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, are made in, or in connection with this invitation for expressions of interest. By submitting a response, the person or firm submitting the response acknowledges and agrees to all of the foregoing.

All inquiries relating to this Request for Expressions of Interest are to be directed to the above named IDRC contact.

IDRC reserves the right to reject or accept any or all submissions relating to this Request for Expressions of Interest.

### **1.2.3 No Cost to IDRC**

IDRC will not reimburse respondents for any costs in conjunction with their response to this RFEI.

### **1.2.4 Distribution and Use of RFEI Responses**

Copies of all documentation submitted in response to this RFEI will be available to all IDRC stakeholders for review purposes.

Responses will not be formally evaluated.

Information submitted in response to this RFEI may be used by IDRC for any purpose whatsoever.

## **2.0 STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **2.1 Background**

Information and Networks in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (INASSA) is a five year research programme that is building an evidence base on the connections between the growing use of digital information networks and economic growth, democratic reform and increased educational opportunities in the developing world. It is aiming to identify the most effective strategies for harnessing these opportunities in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa while also providing a critical perspective on the potential negative impacts that could result from the spread of digital technologies.

The programme looks to promote positive social and economic change in a context where public policies and technological practices are increasingly inadequate to serve the goals of enabling better governance, increasing opportunities for learning, and enhancing the quality and production of science and entrepreneurship.

INASSA supports the three primary activities:

- (i) Generating and improving evidence on the linkages between rapid socio-economic change and the increasing diffusion of networked technologies in the areas of governance, learning, science, and entrepreneurship in creative industries through southern led research networks;
- (ii) Strengthening research and research communications capacity of southern researchers within research networks through structured support by IDRC, intra-network mentoring arrangements, and learning-based evaluations;

- (iii) Enhancing research uptake and expanding policy horizons among academic, policy and practitioner communities of findings, emergent research issues, and program level synthesis.

The management and implementation of the programme is carried out by IDRC Canada. In addition to managing DFID's £6.3m contribution to INASSA, IDRC also provides CAD 3.5M (~£1.9m) of funding over the course of the programme, bringing its total value to £8.2m. INASSA began in September 2013 and ends March 2018.

As stated in the initial INASSA programme document, a key activity of the last year of the INASSA program is the final evaluation which will serve both accountability and learning purposes (detailed below).

## 2.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will cover the following ten projects that have received INASSA funding.

Networks	Think Tanks
DL4D - Digital learning for development	<b>Research ICT Africa</b>
OCSDNet - Open and collaborative science for development network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalyzing broadband in Africa</li> </ul>
ROER4D - Research on open educational resources for development	<b>LIRNEasia</b>
SIRCA III - Strengthening information society research capacity III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging mobile network bid data for development</li> <li>Towards a networked economy in Myanmar</li> <li>Inclusive information societies: Creating growth and employment opportunities in Asia</li> <li>Inclusion in the information society in Asia</li> </ul>
Open Air - Scaling technology start-ups in Africa	

Three projects will be excluded as they have all been recently evaluated:

- Seed Alliance – evaluated 2014
- OD4D – evaluated 2016/7
- DECI 2 – evaluation 2016/7

INASSA has gone through three annual reviews in [2014](#), [2015](#), and 2016. Evaluators will be expected to draw on these past evaluations and reviews as part of the INASSA evaluation.

## 2.3 PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES / RATIONALE

The INASSA final evaluation has two primary purposes:

- Ensure accountability to DFID and IDRC for the implementation of the program and delivery of program results; and
- Provide input to future programming for learning and improvement.

## 2.4 INTENDED USER(S) AND USE(S)

The primary intended users of the evaluation are DFID management and staff responsible for overseeing the INASSA program. The evaluation will provide insight and guidance to determine the program's results and potential for future contributions. IDRC Networked Economies management and program staff will also use the evaluation to inform potential future programming. The INASSA evaluation is a component of Networked Economies five year learning plan and the evaluation findings will contribute to a key moment of reflection at the mid-point of their 2015-2020 strategy period. Secondary users of this evaluation also include IDRC's Board of Governors.

**User**

**Uses**

DFID (PRIMARY)	Accountability and learning
IDRC Networked Economies (Secondary)	Learning – improving programming
IDRC Board of Governors (Secondary)	Accountability

## 2.5 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### 2.5.1 ACCOUNTABILITY:

Q1. Overall, was the quality of the research produced by INASSA research networks and think tanks acceptable (given the context/intended purpose/etc.)?

Q2. To what extent and in what ways was INASSA capacity strengthening of southern researchers effective, relevant, and significant?

Q3. To what extent and in what ways were the INASSA supported projects successful in achieving relevant and significant research to policy influence? Where policy influence was below expectation, were there ways in which INASSA could have been more effective in supporting research to policy uptake?

Q4. Was the implementation of INASSA efficient and economical, relative to its purpose and intended outcomes? Were resources (e.g. staff) used efficiently to manage the projects and program? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the program's management? AND/OR the value proposition of funding (e.g. business case, leveraging existing programming).]

### 2.5.2 LEARNING:

Q5. How did the modality of projects (network- versus institution- led) contribute (or not) to achieving project outcomes? What worked? What did not? How could the modalities be improved?

Q6. Was the role of the IDRC staff significant in contributing to project outcomes? (e.g., formative learning, meta-synthesis, network buildings, networking, building credibility/legitimacy of the field). How could these contributions be improved?

## 2.6 THE PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH THAT WILL GUIDE THE EVALUATION

### 2.6.1 Utility:

Each evaluation is designed to meet the needs of its intended users, including IDRC management, donor partners, program staff, and/or grantees. Evaluations should produce actionable findings to help us learn from successes and failures, to manage uncertainty and to take appropriate risks. Users' participation in evaluation processes helps ensure relevance and ownership of the evaluation findings.

### 2.6.2 Independence:

External evaluators must be, and must be seen to be, credible and independent in order for the final evaluation to be rigorous and useful. A strict standard must be maintained to guard the independence of the evaluation. Evaluators may not:

- have received any project funding from the program over the program period,
- be in negotiation for future projects or consultancies with the program,
- have a personal relationship with program member(s) that would impede their impartiality, or
- anticipate receiving funding from the program under review for one year from the completion of the review.

Evaluators who have worked with the program as evaluators can be considered. Evaluators must have no conflicts of interest with the program and have no stake in the outcome of the review. Reviewers and program staff and management are responsible for declaring any potential conflicts of interest.

### 2.6.3 Quality & Ethics:

Evaluation must meet high quality standards. Quality includes the utility of evaluation, the use of rigorous methods, and safeguarding ethical standards. Evaluation is not value neutral, and specific attention needs to be paid to including diverse perspectives and addressing inequalities in the evaluation process.

#### **2.6.4 Knowledge sharing and transparency:**

Learning about the findings, practice, and theory of evaluation should be documented and shared. Knowledge sharing helps build evaluation capacity both within IDRC and among our grantees, and ensures evaluation remains relevant to the issues and priorities for development and development research.

Evaluations should be publicly accessible. Evaluations commissioned by IDRC are available through the Centre's public digital library.

### **2.7 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY GUIDANCE**

We will be looking for creative solutions on how to address the key evaluation questions, in particular evaluation designs will have to address causality with an assessment of the contributions being made by INASSA projects to longer-term outcomes. If deemed appropriate, IDRC will make available existing frameworks for adaptation by the successful proponent(s) such as:

- Research Quality-Plus Assessment Framework, includes scientific rigor as well as research legitimacy, importance, and positioning for use as dimensions of research quality. It also takes into consideration key influences (enabling or constraining factors) either within the research endeavor or in the external environment, and includes customizable assessment rubrics that make use of both qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Knowledge to policy. Making the most of development research, shows how research can contribute to better governance in several ways: by encouraging open inquiry and debate, by empowering people with the knowledge to hold governments accountable, and by enlarging the array of policy options and solutions available to the policy process
- Capacity development for research, elaborates good practices for capacity development and sets out the 'Research into Use' framework for five categories of capacity development activity for IDRC.

We expect the level of effort for this evaluation to include:

- Review of relevant documents from the Networked Economies program and up to 10 INASSA funded projects, including possible travel and project visits;
- Review of previous program and project evaluations;
- Communication with DFID staff, IDRC staff, and project representatives
- Communication with targeted research users
- Additional data collection as determined by the evaluation design

Some travel to project sites for data collection is anticipated.

### **2.8 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

We expect:

- a) An initial work plan and evaluation methodology
- b) A draft written report of no more than 25 pages
- c) An oral presentation of preliminary findings to be shared with the IDRC Networked Economies team
- d) A final written report of no more than 25 pages
- e) A five-page Executive Summary that will be shared with IDRC's Board of Governors
- f) A two-page brief of key findings and recommendations for the IDRC Networked Economies team.

### **2.9 TIMELINES AND MILESTONES**

Expected start date: June 15, 2017  
 Expected end date: December 15, 2017

Preliminary schedule of activities, to be confirmed with the evaluation workplan:

Activity	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Planning							
Data collection / collation							
Data analysis							
Presentation of preliminary findings							
Reporting							

### 3.0 INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO THIS RFEI

#### 3.1 How to Respond

##### 3.1.1 Enquiries

Any questions or other communication regarding this RFEI **must** be directed to the Contracting Authority named on page 1.

As this is not a competitive solicitation, IDRC will not necessarily respond to questions in writing or circulate answers to all potential respondents.

##### 3.1.2 Method of Sending

Respondents **must** send one (1) **electronic copy via email** of their responses in Microsoft Word or PDF format to the Contracting Authority named on page 1.

Respondents *email subject line* should cite the RFEI # and the RFEI title.

##### 3.1.3 Close Date

Responses to this RFEI **must** be received at IDRC by the date and time noted on page 1.

#### 3.2 Format of RFEI Responses

##### 3.2.1 Official Languages

Responses may be submitted in English or French.

##### 3.2.2 Response Guidelines

Responses to this RFEI should include the following sections:

**a. Cover Letter:** including the respondent's primary contact person's name with respect to this RFEI including their address, telephone number, and email address;

**b. CV:** including a CV of each of the proposed team members, if a team is being put forth.



**c. A short two (2) page statement of interest:** indicating the applicant's qualifications and ability to undertake the project and timelines as outlined in the scope of work. This should include a description of evaluations undertaken of similar services with a budget if applicable. And highlighting the following skills and experience:

- The ability to work in a multicultural, multi-disciplinary context
- The ability to understand the constraints of conducting research in low and middle income countries
- Knowledge of evaluating development research aimed at informing policy and practice;
- Basic knowledge of existing evidence on the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies in developing country contexts;
- Knowledge of program level evaluation of research and innovation for development
- Specialist knowledge of the challenges and complexities of research to practice and policy

#### **4.0 Review and Clarification**

To fully comprehend the information contained within a response to this RFEI, IDRC may seek further clarification, which may be requested verbally by telephone or in writing via email.