

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

TITLE: Terms of Reference for Consultant to Work on the Sustainability Plan of the Greater Mekong Subregion Research Network (GMS-Net)

1. Background

The Greater Mekong Subregion Development Analysis Network (GMS-DAN)¹ was founded in 1992 following the establishment of the GMS Economic Cooperation Programme by the six member countries as a vehicle for jointly promoting regional cooperation, spurring growth and reducing poverty. For the two decades since its inception, the GMS programme, with support from ADB and other development partners, has achieved outstanding success evidenced by the improvement in infrastructure, which has led to increased trade and investment, enhanced competitiveness and improved socio-economic development in the region. At present, the programme is still very relevant and serves as a platform for member countries to continue to strengthen their cooperation on a wide variety of issues, and also serves as a complement programme to Asian regionalism efforts including ASEAN and ASEAN +3.

In 2015, Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) sought financial support from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to engage regional thinktanks in a three-year research program on improving job prospects for young, unskilled and female workers in the GMS. The name of the network was then changed from GMS-DAN to GMS-Net (Greater Mekong Subregion Research Network). The network launched a first-ever competitive research call in two streams of research (policy and action). CDRI, as coordinator of the GMS-Net, facilitated the open competitive grant call for research proposals focusing on improving job prospects for young, unskilled and female workers in the GMS. The aim was to advance high quality development research on labour markets in GMS countries to generate concrete evidence-informed policy solutions for the challenges facing workers in the subregion with the following specific objectives.

- Develop policy options, new practices and institutional arrangements for more jobs with better working conditions, especially in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community.
- Examine the current role of the private sector in job creation (labour market demand) and workforce skills development (labour market supply).
- Promote young regional talent to lead policy research and reform options.

¹ Founded in 1992, GMS-DAN has undertaken a series of country research studies on a wide range of topics, from the impact of Asian financial crises on transitional economies to cross-border migration and trade. Research works, the findings of which could be drawn on as inputs into this proposal, include (1) Labour Markets in Transitional Economies in Southeast Asia and Thailand, (2) Off-farm and Non-farm Employment in Southeast Asian Transitional Economies and Thailand, (3) The Cross-border Economies of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, (4) Labour Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion, (5) Inclusive Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion: An Assessment, and (6) Health and Education in the Mekong Subregion: Policies, Institutions and Practices.

GMS-Net selected and funded eight highly promising research proposals from various institutions and thinktanks in the subregion. These research institutes are both producers and consumers of research outputs for academic endowment and policy making.

The followings are research institutes which received the research grant, except Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD), Myanmar.

Affiliation	Country
Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)	Cambodia
Mekong Institute of Cambodia (MIC)	Cambodia
Department of International Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh	Cambodia
Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST)	Yunnan, China
Social Development Alliance Association (SODA)	Lao PDR
Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)	Thailand
The Centre for Analysis and Forecasting, Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences (CAF, VASS)	Vietnam
Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM)	Vietnam
Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD) ²	Myanmar

In addition to research funding, capacity building programmes was one of the activities in the the research programme. Although there was a technical person (mentor) assisting each programme team, a short (intensive) training course was organised to further equip researchers with necessary skills for their immediate research studies and beyond. Additionally, capacity building is necessary for young researchers, who are increasingly empowered by their respective institutions to join the network. Capacity building programmes were on research methodologies, analytical methods and specific labour market research issues. Capacity building were also be organised among research teams to share knowledge on availability of national labour survey datasets and sources, and procedures to collect data.

2. Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results of the Assignment

The aim of this consultancy is to answer how the GMS-Net could sustain itself in maintaining the network with sufficient funding and influence. This would include the assessment of the types of mechanisms and tools contributing to sustainable partnerships—answering the questions of what makes a strong and coherent network and steps taken to sustain it. Findings of the assignment will help CDRI, as the coordinator of the current network, identify strengths and weaknesses and necessary steps taken toward network sustainability.

The consultant is expected to liaise with the supervisor (specified in Section 12) to understand the context and enquire additional information for the study to be feasible.

A final report with assignments outlined in Section 3 is expected. The final product shall be written in a way that is easily understood by a wide audience not limited to CDRI and IDRC staff.

3. Description of the assignment

- Liaise with Program Coordinator of the GMS-Net to study sustainability plan of the network.

² CESD was not a grant recipient, but researchers there contributed a manuscript and a policy brief on the impacts of minimum wages on economy and labour market in Myanmar. Future involvement of CESD or other think tanks in the network is necessary.

- Design a study with sound methodology to investigate strengths and weaknesses of the network.
- Provide practical and implementable recommendations on how the network could sustain itself.
- Identify research themes and topics on labour market for the network to continue working.
- Identify possible funding sources from which the network could explore and utilise.
- Design a Computer-Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) to collect primary data from relevant stakeholders.
- Analyse the survey data using the agreed methodology.
- Prepare draft report highlighting main research findings and proposed sustainability plan for the supervisor and other referees to comment.
- Prepare final report accounting for comments from supervisor and other referees.
- Prepare a PPT presentation on the key findings and present to the supervisor and management of CDRI and possibly senior program officer of IDRC.

4. Deliverables

No.	Deliverable	Number of Working Days	Date for submission
1.	Inception Report with literature review, a detail work plan, and proposed methodologies to be used and data collection tools, list of stakeholders to be consulted	5	4 January 2019
2.	Draft report	10	25 January 2019
3.	Final report and PPT presentation	10	8 February 2019

5. Reporting requirements

The consultant should be in regular contact and consultation with Mr Roth Vathana, Program Coordinator of the network, on the progress of the assignment.

6. Duration

Duration: 17 December 2018 – 15 February 2019

Location: home based with travel to concerned countries covered in the study, a mission to selected participating countries is expected. Country selection is subject to discussion and agreement with Program Coordinator.

7. Qualification Requirements or Specialized Skills/Experience Required

This assignment will require the consultant to have the following qualifications:

Qualifications and Experience

- Advanced University degree (Master’s degree or equivalent, or PhD) in economics, public policy, social policy, international development, or similar field
- Minimum of 5 years professional experiences in the area of economics, political science, public relation and communication.
- Prior working experiences with government agencies and ministries and regional experience either in research or communication.

Knowledge and Skills

- Possess technical knowledge on program management issues, especially in regional and cross-country programs
- Possess knowledge and experience in strategy development or strategic planning
- Excellent interpersonal, facilitation and communication skills
- IT literacy (Use of MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Being able to design Computer-Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) survey is an advantage.

Competencies

- Good public relation skills
- Technical knowledge on program evaluation and assessment and skills in data analysis
- Good communication skills

Languages

Fluency in written and spoken English, knowledge in one or more local languages of the partner countries is an advantage.

8. Evaluation process and methods

The assignment will be evaluated primarily by the supervisor (Section 12) and blind reviews by designated referees.

9. Administrative issues

At least one mission to each of the partner countries (Section 1) should be conducted. The exact timing and program of each country mission should be decided in consultation with the supervisor (Section 12).

10. Estimated Cost of Contract

The estimated all-inclusive costs would be **USD10,000**. This also includes, if agree, travel costs to one or more countries to meet with the network partners and researchers. The amount is also inclusive of withholding tax.

11. Payment Schedule

- 20% Upon signing of the contract and completion and submission of Deliverable #1 in Section 4
- 20% Upon submission of a satisfactory inception report

- 30% Upon submission of a satisfactory draft report and other required documents indicated by the supervisor
- 30% Upon submission of a satisfactory final report including PPT presentation

12. Contract Supervisor

The assignment will be supervised by Mr ROTH Vathana, Programme Coordinator of GMS-Net, Cambodia Development Resource Institute. He could be contacted via mail at vathana@cdri.org.kh or (855-23) 883 603/880 734.