



ETHICS APPROVAL PROCESSES

Asia

July 2017



RESEARCH FOR
DEVELOPMENT
IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between
the Australian Council for
International Development
and Australian universities

ETHICS APPROVAL PROCESSES IN ASIA

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INTRODUCTION

In an effort to improve capacity within the sector to undertake effective and ethical development research, RDI Network has mapped the processes of obtaining ethics approval for research in selected developing countries across Asia. Meeting the relevant ethics approval requirements in-country is essential for the integrity of the conducting of and products resulting from research projects.

This document is designed to be used as a guidance by any researcher who intends to undertake research involving human participants (such as surveys or interviews) within any of the eight Asian countries covered by this document. Organisations may also find this information useful, as it provides a starting point in which to begin seeking ethics approval for their own research.

The following pages outline step-by-step processes for obtaining ethics approval in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. When possible, links to relevant application forms have been provided, as well as websites and contact details for acquiring additional information.

The use of ethics review processes in-country by researchers based in Australia should complement the appropriate ethics approval requirements of Australian regulations and institutions.

DISCLAIMER

While all efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, it is recommended that researchers do their own fact checking at the time of application as information can change quickly. The advice provided should be considered as unofficial and is to be used as guidance only.

As information within governments can change quickly, RDI Network recommends that researchers check with the contacts provided to ensure that these approval processes remain current at the time of application.

This information is accurate, to the best of RDI Network's knowledge, as of July 2017.

THANK YOU

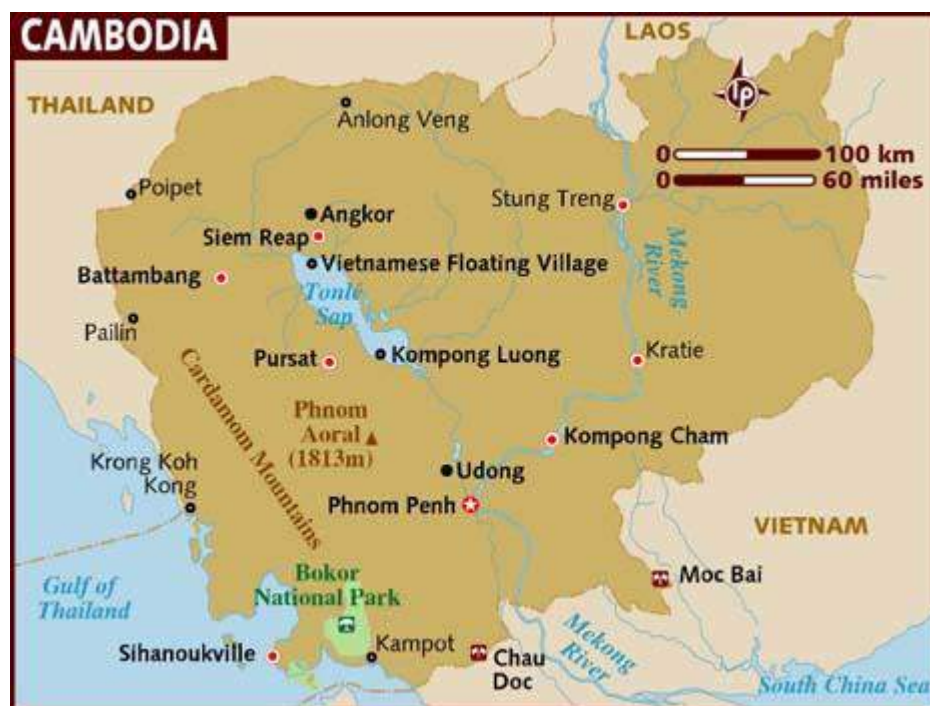
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- Tricia Cerone (RDI Network Intern)
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- Menzies School of Health Research

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CAMBODIA



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ The National Ethics Committee for Health Research reviews all proposed research.
- ◆ Guidelines for conducting research in Cambodia can be found at: http://nechr.org.kh/beta/camhrp/public/Cam_IRBs_HR_SOP_eng.pdf.
- ◆ Applications are reviewed bi-monthly. Turnaround time is dependent on when application is received in relation to when the next Committee meeting is held, and can be anywhere from one week to three months.
- ◆ As applications are processed online, researchers must create an account on the National Ethics Committee for Health Research Portal: <http://nechr.org.kh/beta/camhrp/index.php/camhrp/user/register>.
- ◆ To complete the application, the following documents must be uploaded into the portal:
 - 20 copies of the complete and detailed research proposal, as well as a summary proposal in Khmer and English
 - Current CVs for all investigators
 - Location where research will be conducted
 - Ethics approval from researcher's university or organisation
 - Study tools, information sheets, and consent forms in Khmer
 - Information about donors, if applicable
- ◆ For more information on this process, please email Dr Vannat Saray, sarayvannat@gmail.com or Ms Sarida Nouth, nouthsarida@gmail.com.

INDONESIA



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ The Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education issues research permits for all overseas researchers conducting research in Indonesia.
- ◆ Guidelines for conducting research in Indonesia can be found at: <https://frp.ristekdikti.go.id/index.php/guidance>.
- ◆ Applications are individually reviewed once received. Although processing times may vary, the standard turnaround is two - three weeks.
- ◆ As applications are processed online, researchers must create an account on the Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education Portal: <https://frp.ristekdikti.go.id/index.php/register>.
- ◆ To complete the application, the following documents must be uploaded into the portal:
 - Complete and detailed research proposal (which should include: title, objectives, description of methodology and concepts, and locations where research is to be carried out)
 - Letter requesting to do research in Indonesia, addressed to the Indonesian Representative abroad (e.g. Indonesian Ambassador, Consulate-General)
 - Questionnaires/data collection form, consent form, and information sheet
 - Current CV and passport copy, along with four recent red background passport size (4x6 cm) photographs and two 2x3 size photographs
 - Three letters of recommendation; one from home university or organisation, one from professor or equivalent senior researcher in same field of research, and one from the Indonesian Representative abroad
 - Health certificate from a doctor advising that the researcher is in good mental and physical health to carry out research
 - Letter of acceptance from Indonesian Counterpart (e.g. Indonesian university or research centre)
 - Letter guaranteeing sufficient funds to cover research and living expenses in Indonesia
- ◆ For more information on this process, please email frp@ristekdikti.go.id or frp.ristek@gmail.com or visit <https://frp.ristekdikti.go.id/index.php/info/general/procedure>.

LAOS



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ There are two Ethics Review Committees who review research applications: the National Institute of Public Health (part of the National Ethic Committee for Health Research), and the University of Health Services.
- ◆ Guidelines for conducting research in Laos can be found at: <http://www.laohrp.com/index.php/hrp/about/index/committees>.
- ◆ As applications are processed online, researchers must create an account on the National Ethics Committee for Health Research Portal: <http://www.laohrp.com/index.php/hrp/user/register>.
- ◆ To complete application, the following documents must be uploaded into the portal:
 - Complete and details research proposal, as well as a one - two page abstract, in Lao and English (which should include: title, objectives, methods, study site, period of study, study population, and sample size)
 - Current CVs of all investigators
 - Research tools, information sheets, and consent forms in Lao and English
 - A letter to the president of the National Ethic Committee for Health Research, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR for proposal review from the researcher's university/organisation in Lao and English (Letter should state the name of the Lao research partner, and must include the objective of the research, research site, subjects, and contact details).
- ◆ For more information on this process, please contact Dr Daovieng Douangvichit, ddaovieng2@gmail.com at the National Institute of Public Health or Dr Bansa Oupathana, bansa.oupathana@medlaos.org at the University of Health Services.

NEPAL



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ The National Health Research Council, through the Ethical Review Board, reviews all proposed research.
- ◆ Guidelines for conducting research in Nepal can be found [here](#).
- ◆ Applications are individually reviewed once received. Processing times vary based on the content of the proposal, but standard turnaround time is four to eight weeks. It is recommended that researchers apply early, in case the Ethical Review Board requires additional information to grant approval.
- ◆ As applications are processed online, researchers must create an account on the National Health Research Council website: http://nhrc.org.np/nhrc_erb/public/researcher/register.
- ◆ To complete the application, the following documents must be uploaded to website:
 - Research conceptual framework
 - Current CV, photos, and signatures for all team members
 - Agreement with donor (if study is funded)
 - Ethics approval from the researcher's university or organisation
 - Data collection tools, including interviews, guidelines, and questionnaires should be in Nepali and local languages, if applicable
 - ◆ Important information to note regarding application/research design:
 - If the Principal Investigator is a non Nepali citizen, at least one Co-Investigator should be a Nepali citizen associated with that research.
 - ◆ Additional for student applicants:
 - Approval letter from home Institute/University
 - Recommendation letter from the student's Academic Supervisor
- ◆ For more information on this process, please contact nhrc@nhrc.org.np or visit <http://nhrc.gov.np/ethics/ethical-review-process/>.

PHILIPPINES



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ There is no centralised ethics approval agency. All researchers must obtain ethics approval from one of the approved list of the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board approved Ethics Review Committees. These approved Committees can be found at: <http://www.ethics.healthresearch.ph/index.php/accredited-ercs>.
- ◆ Guidelines for conducting research in the Philippines can be found at: www.ethics.healthresearch.ph/index.php/phoca-downloads/category/4-neg?download=9:pub-ethics-guidelines-2011.
- ◆ All Ethics Review Committees have slightly different processing times. Standard turnaround time is two - four weeks.
- ◆ While each Ethics Review Committee has slightly different procedures, below is a sample of what is likely to be required as part of the application process:
 - Research proposal (which should include: title, significance of study, literature review, study objectives, methodology and procedures, description of study population, data analysis, and ethical considerations)
 - Current CVs of all investigators
 - Information, consent, and assent forms
 - Letter from supervisor, if applicable
 - Information about research budget and funding donors, if applicable
 - Study tools (such as questionnaires, advertisements from recruitment, etc.)
- ◆ Upon completion of the research, a copy of the final published material must be supplied to the Ethics Review Committee.
- ◆ For more information on this process, please contact the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board Secretariat: ethics.secretariat@yahoo.com.



SRI LANKA



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ Foreign researchers need to have a local collaborator to undertake research in Sri Lanka.
- ◆ There is no centralised ethics approval agency, however many universities have their own Ethics Review Committees. A list of approved Ethics Review Committees can be found at: <http://www.fercs.lk/members/institutional-members>. It is highly recommended that researchers work closely with their local collaborator, who can advise the best Ethics Review Committee for their intended research.
- ◆ All Ethics Review Committees have slightly different processing times. It is recommended that researchers allow for at least a two-month turnaround time when submitting their application.
- ◆ While each Ethics Review Committee has slightly different procedures, below is a sample of what is likely to be required as part of the application process:

- Application form (most are readily available on the website of the chosen Ethics Review Committee)
- Current CVs of all investigators
- Research Proposal
- Information, consent, and assent forms (in English, Sinhalese, and Tamil)
- Letter from supervisor, if applicable
- Bank receipts, or detailed information about funding, if applicable
- Information about research budget

- ◆ For more information on this process, please contact the Forum of Ethics Review Committees Sri Lanka: fercs12014@gmail.com.



TIMOR-LESTE



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ The Technical and Ethical Committee of the Cabinet of Health Research and Development of Timor-Leste reviews research proposals. As official avenues can be difficult to navigate, it is highly recommended that researchers work closely with locals, who will be able to assist with this approval process.
- ◆ Processing times vary considerably. While some applications are processed quickly, others may take at least six months. As such, it is recommended to apply well in advance to allow for this. If possible, in-person, in-country applications are recommended, as the processing time is significantly reduced.
- ◆ A copy of the application form can be found [here](#).
- ◆ To complete application, the following documents must be emailed to the National Institute of Health Administrator, Ms Mery Estela Laot at elaot2014@gmail.com:

Application Form
Cover Letter

Attention this email to Mr Antonio Bonito, Executive Director of the National Institute of Health.

- ◆ Researchers are required to travel to Timor-Leste to present their proposal in person to the Committee. Once Committee has gone through initial approval processes, Mery Estela Laot will contact researchers to set up this presentation time. Please note, it is expected that researchers bring at least 15 copies of the application form to the presentation for distribution amongst the Committee.
- ◆ After this presentation, it takes approximately one week for approval to be granted. After approval is granted, research can start immediately.
- ◆ Once approval has been received, researchers are required to report on the progress of their study to the Committee every six months. Additionally, a final presentation upon completion of research is required.
- ◆ For more information on this process, please email Ms Mery Estela Laot, elaot2014@gmail.com.



VIETNAM



STEPS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL

- ◆ As there is no centralised government body who provides approval, it is highly recommended that researchers work closely with a local university or organisation. Most universities and medical facilities, and some NGOs and private organisations, have their own Ethics Review Board. While there is no list of approved Ethics Review Boards, it is likely that the local collaborator may give their own.
- ◆ All Ethics Review Boards have slightly different processing times. Depending on the content of the proposal, turnaround time can be anywhere from one - five months.
- ◆ While each Ethics Review Board has slightly different procedures, the majority of applications can be submitted online through an online portal. Below is a sample of what is likely to be required as part of the application process:

- Application letter (obtained through Ethics Review Board)
- Research proposal
- Consent form
- Template of project description and methodology
- Intended research tools
- Current CV

- ◆ Overseas researchers also need to obtain a Business Visa to travel to Vietnam prior to departure. As this process will take additional processing time, it is recommended that researchers start this process well in advance of their intended commencement of study. More information on this process can be found at: <http://vietnamembassy.org.au/thu-tuc-cho-cong-dan-Viet-Nam-va-nguoi-goc-Viet/ArtMID/432/ArticleID/59/Business-visa>. A copy of the visa form can be found [here](#).