

## Call for Expressions of Interest

### Research Communications and Uptake: Sector Snapshot

The Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network ([www.rdinetwork.org.au](http://www.rdinetwork.org.au)) is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development.

The Network exists to lead, stimulate and support:

- Effective, ethical development research practice
- Cross-sector partnerships and linkages
- Uptake and use of evidence in policy and practice

Working in close partnership with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the Network functions as a key cross-sectoral platform for shared learning and action in international development.

#### THE PROJECT

The RDI Network is currently seeking expressions of interest (EoIs) from qualified consultants or consultancy teams to produce a robust sector snapshot of the practice of **research communications and uptake** in international development.

The snapshot development process is outlined in the [Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) detailed below, and will be formalised through a development plan drafted by the consultant and agreed with the project steering group at the outset of the project.

#### OVERSIGHT

The consultancy will be managed by the RDI Network Communications Coordinator, Jenny Vaccari, and will be supported by a steering group of experts from across the Network.

The contract will be between the consultant(s) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), as the signatory authority for the RDI Network.

#### SELECTION CRITERIA

The consultant(s) will be expected to demonstrate:

- Excellent written communication skills, including formal reporting. Please provide example(s) of relevant past work with your application
- Excellent verbal communication skills, including group facilitation experience
- Qualitative data analysis and synthesis skills, with quantitative data analysis skills desirable (familiarity with mixed methods approaches)
- A robust understanding of the value of research communications and uptake in the process of influencing policy and practice
- Ability to travel within Australia, for up to four days to conduct in-person FGDs or interviews.

- A consultative and flexible manner, including responsive to feedback

Additional desirable criteria:

- Familiarity with the international developments sector in Australia, inclusive of the different actors and stakeholders it comprises
- Location in Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra will be preferred (not essential).
- Experience working at the interface of evidence and practice, including an appreciation of the role of evaluation and research in influencing policy and practice.

### **SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Eoi)**

Using the [Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) on the following pages, please send an Expression of Interest (Eoi) to Jenny Vaccari at [jvaccari@acfid.asn.au](mailto:jvaccari@acfid.asn.au) with:

- A capacity statement on your / your team's suitability, relevant experience and availability to undertake the scope of services as per the above selection criteria, including links to or examples of your work (max 4 pages);
- A brief statement of the proposed approach for the consultancy (max 2 pages);
- A timeline for completion of expected deliveries; based on that proposed in the ToR; and
- A proposed budget inclusive of a daily rate (in line with the [DFAT Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework](#)) and anticipated administrative and travel costs, up to a limit of \$20,000 (+GST).

Any questions regarding this consultancy can be directed to Jenny Vaccari at [jvaccari@acfid.asn.au](mailto:jvaccari@acfid.asn.au) or 02 8281 3158.

**Expressions of Interest are requested to be submitted no later than COB Friday 16 March.**

# Terms of Reference

## Research Communications and Uptake: Sector Snapshot

### Background

As part of a long-term project to improve research communication and policy and practice uptake<sup>1</sup> in the development sector, the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network is seeking to produce a robust snapshot of current practice based on the experience of research producers, knowledge brokers and research users.

More specifically, this exercise will aim establish and report a rough baseline understanding of:

- The level of value or recognition of the importance of research communications and uptake held by research producers and brokers (research academics/institutions)
- The extent of skills, capacity and practice currently in the sector for research communications and uptake
- Barriers that get in the way, and enablers that would support increased focus on this area
- Existing initiatives to improve research communications and uptake
- Awareness of available resources, training and strategies related to research communications and uptake

Concurrently, the exercise will seek to:

- Gain an insight into specific needs and interests held within the sector; and establish where RDI Network may offer a value add to address gaps, make connections, support strategies for improvement or provide training in research communications and uptake.

To date, a broad-ranging survey has been shared with relevant target groups within the development sector, capturing initial qualitative and quantitative data of current levels of understanding, skills and practice in research communications and uptake.

A research assistant will be assigned to synthesise and conduct an initial analysis of this data during February 2018.

A consultant(s) will take this initial synthesis, and following the specifications of this ToR, progress the production of this sector snapshot.

### Snapshot development process

This development of this sector snapshot will be conducted through the process outlined below.

The consultant(s) will be guided by a steering group of nominated members of the RDI Network, representing both academics and practitioners in the development sector.

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<sup>1</sup> The Network refers to the following definitions of research communications and research uptake:

**Research Communications:** "The ability to interpret or translate complex research findings into a language, format and context that people who are not experts in that particular issue can understand." (DfID)

**Research Uptake:** "The application of research outputs by users, resulting in outcomes. This may involve complex processes over time, whereby research outputs... are adapted, built upon and operationally applied." (Australian Research Council)

**1) Open survey: Research producers and knowledge brokers**

Survey responses will be available to the consultant upon commencement of assignment, including an initial level of analysis of the quantitative data. The consultant(s) will be required to undertake analysis of responses made to qualitative questions (open-ended questions), and combine this with the existing quantitative analysis to draw out patterns or trends from the combined data.

**2) Target interviews:**

The consultant(s) will undertake between 8-10 semi-formal interviews. The steering group will support the consultant to identify interviewees, representing a combination of research producers, knowledge brokers and research users.

The interviews will aim to gain further insight into the practice of research communications and uptake, including expanding on themes and questions explored in the open survey. Interview questions will be drafted by the consultant, in consultation with the steering group.

**3) Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

The consultant(s) will facilitate 4-6 focus group discussions in person with invited groupings of Network participants, representing a combination of research producers, knowledge brokers and research users.

These group discussions should offer an open forum for cross-organisational representation, and will aim to encourage honest dialogue drawing out insights associated with enablers, barriers and capacity building opportunities related to research communications and uptake.

The steering group will identify potential FGD participants and will support the consultant to extend invitations for attendance. The consultant(s) will be responsible for identifying an appropriate time and venue for the discussions.

The content for the FGDs will be drafted by the consultant(s), with opportunity for feedback from the steering group.

**4) Open survey: Research users**

A survey targeted towards users of research will be developed, reflecting the survey of producers and brokers above. Inputs and insights from users gathered during the FGDs and interviews above will inform the final design of the user-focused survey. The consultant(s) will draft the survey questions, with opportunity for feedback from the steering group.

The RDI Network will support the dissemination of the survey and collection of responses, with a target of 30-50 responses. Analysis of survey results will be undertaken by the consultant(s), with additional skills support provided by the Network on an as-needed basis.

**5) Case studies:**

The consultant will source illustrative examples of research communications and uptake practice, representative of a range of actors and research types. These will be integrated throughout the snapshot in brief narrative excerpts, to support key snapshot findings.

Case studies will be sourced from a combination of desk research and outreach as well as through the interviews and FGDs outlined above.

## **Products:**

### **1) Snapshot:**

The consultant will produce the snapshot in the form of a report which captures, synthesises and analyses the aggregation of information collected through the process above. The report will aim to present an accurate and clear reflection of current understanding, capacity and practice within the development sector.

The snapshot will take a broad view, addressing the practice of research producers, knowledge brokers and research users in a de-identified manner, unless otherwise appropriate. The snapshot should aim to prompt a broad interest within the sector for improving practice into the future, and should be designed to be replicable at a future date to track change over time. The snapshot will be prefaced by a series of key findings and/or executive summary.

A draft of the snapshot will be presented to the steering group for feedback prior to a final draft version for submission. The RDI Network will retain the opportunity to make final edits in consultation with the consultant(s), and will be responsible for coordinating the publication process of the final document.

### **2) Recommendations:**

The consultant will draft a series of recommendations for the RDI Network aimed to inform next steps for future capacity building work in the area of research communications and uptake. These recommendations will be for internal use only, and not for publication.

## **Proposed Timeline:**

Analysis of Researcher Survey	March 2018
Design of interviews and Focus Group Discussions	Early April 2018
Case studies sourced	March-May 2018
Conduct of interviews and FGDs	April-May 2018
Design of user survey	End April 2018
Conduct of user survey	May 2018
User survey analysis and draft of Snapshot	May-June 2018
Finalisation of Snapshot	July 2018