RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT NETWORK | A collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development and Australian universities

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Research Communications and Uptake supplementary resources

Terms of Reference and call for expressions of interest

Background

Established in 2009, the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network (formerly the ACFID University Network) is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development. With over 1,900 individuals, the Network has become a key outlet for accessing diverse research expertise, brokering partnerships, convening forums and conferences, as well as supporting ethical research practice among NGOs and academia in Australia. The RDI Network is a partner of, and hosted by, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and funded by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

As part of a long-term project to improve research communication and policy and practice uptake in the development sector, the RDI Network is seeking to produce a user-friendly database of resources supporting learning in research communications and uptake, collated from existing thought leadership around Australia and internationally, including from outside the development sector.

The collection of curated resources, and other practical learning tools, will supplement the [Research Communication and Uptake snapshot](#) produced by RDI Network and Coffey International that identified the skills, capacity, practice, barriers and enablers that exist in the sector for research communications and uptake.

Deliverables

The Research Communications and Uptake snapshot identified factors that helped or hindered research communication and uptake including academic paywalls, skill shortages, and lack of time to synthesize results of research. Survey respondents noted further upskilling in research communications would be beneficial.

A large number of national and international resources currently exist to encourage researchers to think about and operationalise research communications and uptake pathways, actions and strategies. This project's primary task is to design a guiding framework to enable users (research producers, users and other stakeholders) to easily find high-quality material and resources via the RDI Network website that meets their needs. We envisage targeted sector engagement to facilitate a user-centred design process that develops a guiding framework (or frameworks) for curating and accessing the existing resources in a useful and easily navigable way.

A related task is to collate additional resources building on a set of resources already gathered by RDI Network in this area, including covering areas mentioned in the recommendations of the 'Research Communications and Uptake Snapshot'. In curating the material, it is likely that 'mini' summaries of various resources (or parts of resources) to orient users and help them find the most

relevant resources will be required. Existing resources already collected by RDI Network includes academic literature, guidance documents, training materials etc.

As a secondary priority, based on a gap analysis of the existing literature and resources and sector engagement, the consultant will produce written material (which could be case studies, stories of change, blogs or other written material) to reference the Snapshot recommendations that show how they can and have been adopted and implemented in practice. Such written material could demonstrate both successful and unsuccessful examples so lessons and learning, both positive and negative, can be shared.

Written material, such as case studies, stories of change or reflection blogs, should be sourced from a combination of desk research and outreach. RDI Network's simultaneous projects [Enhancing Research Use in International Development: An action research project"](#) and ["Toolkit for enhancing research impact in international development"](#) may also provide useful sources.

The existing resources with associated navigation (and mini-summaries as needs) and any newly developed written material will be made available on the RDI Network website; through a carefully curated online platform and associated database. Decisions will be required about where and how to ensure resources are stored in an RDI database (to prevent broken links etc.), versus linking to the websites of other actors who are also curating related materials. The consultant will work with RDI Network's website developers to design, develop and launch the online platform.

The consultant will also develop a dissemination and M&E plan to reach the appropriate researcher and practitioner communities.

Call for expression of interest

The RDI Network is looking to engage a consultant(s) to collaboratively produce a new platform to provide users with easy access to resources to support good practice in research communications and uptake.

The resource deliverables will be further defined collaboratively with the Steering Group during the early stages of the work.

Proposed timeframe

Consultant(s) engages with Steering Group, begins background research on existing resources and initial steps in developing a guidance framework to test with users through sector engagement. Engages with RDI website providers to understand available options.	Nov 2019
Sector/user engagement to facilitate user-centred design, sourcing additional resources and gap analysis.	Dec 2019
Draft of guidance framework, resources, proposed approach to curated resources, M&E and dissemination plan, is developed and submitted for	mid-Jan 2020

comment by the Steering Group – allow 10 working days for comment (first tranche payment).	
If needed, consultant(s) organises written material outreach including interviews or engagement in consultation with Steering Group.	Jan-Feb 20
Commence design of online resource platform and associated database with website developers Curated resources, framework and written material finalised.	Feb 2020
Completed design of online resource library with website developers and tested with users and Steering group - allow 10 working days (second tranche payment).	Mar 2020
Revisions and amendments, including testing with sector/users as required.	Mar 2020
Website design submitted for final review and sign-off by the Steering Group.	Apr 2020
Design for online platform finalised.	May 2020
Final version of resources launched online (final tranche payment).	June 2020

The consultant may be required to continue to report to the RDI Network according to the dissemination and M&E plan, outside of the contract period.

Any changes to this timeframe will need to be agreed on in advance by the RDI Network and the consultant(s).

Selection Criteria

The consultant(s) will be expected to have:

- Demonstrated experience in designing successful digital platforms to curate content, with a focus on user-centred design thinking
- Ability to establish good working relationships and consult with a diverse group of stakeholders in the production of materials
- Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to write for multiple audiences
- A demonstratable understanding of the value of research communications and uptake in the process of influencing policy and practice
- Ability to collate information from a range of sources, to critically evaluate information and synthesise content.
- Familiarity with the international development sector in Australia, inclusive of the different actors and stakeholders it comprises (desirable)

Management

The project will be managed by Dr Philippa Smales, RDI Network and Partnerships Manager, to whom the consultant(s) will report. The RDI Network steering group will also engage at key points during the process to provide input, ideas and high-level oversight. The consultant(s) must also be available for regular teleconferences with the steering group.

Drafts of the resources will be presented to the steering group for feedback prior to final drafts version for submission. The RDI Network will retain the opportunity to make final edits in consultation with the consultant(s).

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Please send an EoI to Dr Philippa Smales RDI Network and Partnerships Manager, at psmales@acfid.asn.au with:

- A capacity statement on your / your team's suitability, experience and availability to undertake the scope of services as described in the terms of reference and the above selection criteria (max 2 pages);
- A brief statement of the proposed approach for the project with a detailed timeline (max 2 pages);
- Brief samples or a link to two original samples of your own / your teams work; and
- An accompanying consulting budget inclusive of a daily rate (in line with the DFAT Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework) and any anticipated administrative costs (+GST).

Questions can be directed to Philippa Smales via email at psmales@acfid.asn.au or at 03 8373 2551. The RDI Network works in partnership with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and has a secretariat based in Melbourne.

Submissions are requested no later than 2pm on Thursday 17 October 2019.