



Call for EOIs for Consultant/Facilitator(s) - Development Futures Project

June 2020

Background

Established in 2009, the Research for Development Impact Network (RDI Network) is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators - working in international development. 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. 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).

The RDI Network aims to create space for development practitioners, researchers and evaluators to refocus their development work on finding new and innovative ways to address current and future challenges. We understand that development and humanitarian practice do not take place in a vacuum – that they are informed and influenced by the context in which they occur. Through the implementation of the *Development Futures Project* in 2020 and 2021, the RDI Network will support its members to reimagine future development solutions, as they deconstruct, discuss, and debate potential trends, hazards and challenges affecting the sector.

Context

In 2020, as the world grapples with the challenges of responding to a pandemic, the need to generate in-depth conversations about development effectiveness and the future of aid and development is more urgent than ever. The far-reaching effects of the pandemic have also compounded the effects of other recent changes in global aid and the Australian development industry. These changes include the rise of the private sector, climate change, growing instability, trust in institutions and renewed calls for genuine localisation processes, as examples.

Against this backdrop, the RDI Network's *Development Futures* project aims to raise the level of conversation and understanding of development effectiveness, and be a catalyst for changes in development ideas, discourse and thinking. The project aims to draw specifically on *development futures thinking*, alternatively termed *horizon scanning* or *foresight activity planning*, as a proven methodology for supporting practitioners to critically deconstruct and *reimagine* development thinking.

In the wake of significant challenge and disruption driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, recognition of the value of *futures thinking* is increasingly apparent across a range of sectors. Prior thinking that informed the early considerations of this project, including that documented in Australia by development organisations (Oxfamⁱ, ACFIDⁱⁱ) now sits alongside a new wave of analysis and information from multiple sectors – including aid and development, security, foreign policy, health, education. These resources will be drawn on to inform the implementation of this *Development Futures Project*.

Call for Expressions of Interest

June 2020

The RDI Network is currently seeking expressions of interest for a consultant *futurist*, to lead the design, implementation and documentation of its 2020 *Development Futures Project*.

Background

The RDI Network's Development Futures Project aims to raise the level of conversation and understanding of development effectiveness, and be a catalyst for changes in development ideas, discourse and thinking. While project implementation will be guided by a project steering group, with support from the RDI secretariat, the consultant futurist will play an integral role in shaping elements of project design, implementation and documentation.

Project Details

The consultant will support the project steering group to develop a detailed project plan for the delivery of two key project deliverables:

1. Development scenario planning workshop series hosted for participants to discuss, debate and plan for changing futures of development.

- These scenario planning workshops (likely up to three), designed and delivered by the consultant facilitator, will provide a novel and important opportunity for selected stakeholders of international development and aid to:
 - o frame the future of development aid and what it is for them
 - o learn to scan and identify trends, weak signals and visioning
 - o utilise tools for scenario planning and for tackling future scenarios
 - o develop a strategy to guide response to potential hazards and challenges
- Workshop participants will be supported to actively debate and share ideas and evidence on development futures and alternatives and identify pathways for possible development futures that will support human and ecological flourishing.
- Paid workshop participants may include academics, practitioners, managing contractors, the private sector, government actors. Participants may be selected via an expression of interest process, to ensure balanced representation.
- Scoping of potential hazards, trends may be completed via desk review or survey across RDI Members and/or other relevant stakeholders.

2. Public communications products produced and disseminated to further engage the RDI Network membership

- Learnings and recommendations arising from the project will be distilled and shared with the broader RDI Network membership and public.
- Communications products may take the form of a 'toolkit' to 'implementation guide' containing key workshop products, such as scenarios developed, tools used for scenario planning and strategy development, alongside documentation of project experiences
- Communications products may be disseminated via development blogs, policy labs, development course convenors, between ANGOs, Australian Universities, Australian managing contractors, and DFAT
- The consultant will work closely with the RDI Network Communications Coordinator in the development of public communications products

Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

It is expected that following monitoring and evaluation data that will be collected throughout the project.

- *Baseline data on participant knowledge & skills:* snapshot of skills and capabilities level of participating development professionals, collected through methods such as pre-survey on registration, live-polling during workshop events, analysis such as EOI content
- *Demographics:* gender, organisation, level of career stage etc – eg. captured on registration
- *Participation metrics;* number of people/orgs participating, engagement levels (ie. social media/website metrics), referral etc
- *Case study data:* key informant interviews (KII); with select participants, with potential for development into small number of case studies/vignettes

Roles and responsibilities of consultant(s) and RDI Secretariat in collecting and analysing this data will be clearly outline in the consultancy contract.

Project Timeframe and Deliverables

This project will be implemented over a twelve-month period, July 2020 - June 2021. The scope of the project will entail the following outputs/deliverables

July-August 2020

- Recruitment and contracting of successful consultant(s)
- Full project plan drafted and submitted for comment and approval by Project Steering Group. Project plan to including overall methodology, workshop outlines, engagement plan for participants, monitoring and evaluation plan, thoughts on communications packaging. Allow at least ten working days for comment.
- *First tranche payment on submission of confirmed project plan*

Sept 2020 -Feb 2021

- Recruitment of participants for workshop series
- Facilitation of first workshop series, as per format detailed in full project plan
- *Second tranche payment on completion of workshop series*

Feb-June 2021

- Draft content for project knowledge products developed and submitted for comment and approval by Project Steering Group and RDI Network Communications Coordinator. Allow at least ten working days for comments, with two comment rounds before finalisation.
- *Final tranche payment on submission of confirmed communications content*

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

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

Selection Criteria

The consultant(s) will be expected to have:

- Demonstrated experience in design and delivery of projects utilising development futures methodologies;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate engaging and participation workshop sessions, including in online environments;
- Demonstrated experience in, or an understanding of, international development;
- Demonstrated writing skills with an ability to write for multiple audiences;
- Ability to establish good working relationships and consult with a diverse group of stakeholders in the production of materials.

Management

The project will be managed by Jen Branscombe, RDI Network Officer and 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. Final approval of the deliverables will be the responsibility of the steering group.

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Please send our Expression of Interest by **COB Tuesday 21 July** to Jen Branscombe, RDI Network Officer, at jbranscombe@acfid.asn.au.

Please include the following in your EOI:

- 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 budget inclusive of a daily rate (in line with the [DFAT Aid Adviser Remuneration Framework](#)) and anticipated administrative costs (+GST).

Questions can be directed to Jen Branscombe via email at jbranscombe@acfid.asn.au. 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 COB Tuesday 21 July 2020.

ⁱ Oxfam Australia, 2017, 'The Future of Australian Aid: A blueprint for an aid program that delivers on the Sustainable Development Goals', view online at <https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1-Oxfam-AidPolicyBrief-Nov2017.pdf>

ⁱⁱ ACFID, 2017, 'Australia Ahead of the Curve: An agenda for International Development to 2025', view online at <https://acfid.asn.au/content/australia-ahead-curve-agenda-international-development-2025>